



# Building a Culture of Safety Starts With Everyone

A Playbook for Implementing a Cross-Functional  
Workplace Violence Prevention Team in Healthcare

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# Introduction

Creating a safer healthcare environment begins with a strong, collaborative foundation. Workplace violence prevention isn't the sole responsibility of the safety and security team—it requires input and ownership across multiple departments, with expectations and guiding principles delivered from the top down. This guide will help healthcare leaders, particularly in safety and security, effectively engage their cross-functional counterparts to build a successful and collaborative Workplace Violence Prevention team.



## Why Cross-Functional Teams Make a Greater Impact

Violence in healthcare settings affects everyone, from clinical staff to risk managers, emergency preparedness, and executive leadership. An isolated approach can overlook important insights, create implementation gaps, and spark division. On the contrary, a multidisciplinary team ensures:

- Broader expertise and perspectives
- Stronger alignment with institutional goals
- Better adoption across departments
- Greater success in building a supportive culture of safety

# Constructing the Team

Who should be involved, and how to leverage their expertise

## Safety & Security

*Tactical and mission-driven, focused on prevention, preparedness, and response effectiveness*

Security leaders are essential to translating prevention strategies into practical, real-time protocols. They understand access control, response timing, surveillance, and the daily rhythm of potential safety incidents. If your organization does not have a safety and security leader, look for other participants who bring experience with incident data, emergency protocols, and threat assessments, and engage them as key implementation partners.

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Lead de-escalation and duress response training
- Analyze incident patterns and response times
- Recommend technology and staffing needs
- Drive ongoing continuous improvement efforts
- Manage drills, ad-hoc exercises, and simulations



*"There is absolutely no worse feeling for a nurse or clinical partner than feeling like they're in a room by themselves when something terrible is happening. Giving them the ability to call for support and that sense of de-escalation process is really so important. It's so monumental for the safety and security of our patients and staff."*

— Eddie Jones, Director of Security Operations



## Clinical Staff

*Empathetic, patient-focused, and results-driven problem solvers who thrive on teamwork and direct care experiences.*

Clinicians, especially nurses and frontline caregivers, are the heart of your healthcare organization—and often the most affected by workplace violence. Their participation brings real-world experience and an authentic understanding of high-risk moments in care delivery. They offer a critical lens when defining areas of concern and evaluating potential solutions. To engage this group, focus on how safety improvements will directly support them in their care responsibilities, minimize distractions, and protect their well-being. Bring them in early to vet potential mitigation measures.

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Identify common violence triggers and escalation points
- Provide feedback on training and policy effectiveness
- Offer insight on solution usability and practicality
- Help shape post-incident debriefing and support
- Advocate on behalf of initiatives to clinical peers

## Human Resources

People-centric, compliance-oriented professionals focused on employee experience, policy alignment, retention, and recruitment

HR leaders play a crucial role in ensuring safety strategies are integrated into the employee lifecycle. Their ability to connect WPV prevention efforts to onboarding, performance, and well-being programs makes them a vital partner in culture change. Engage them with data on turnover, burnout, and time off related to workplace violence.

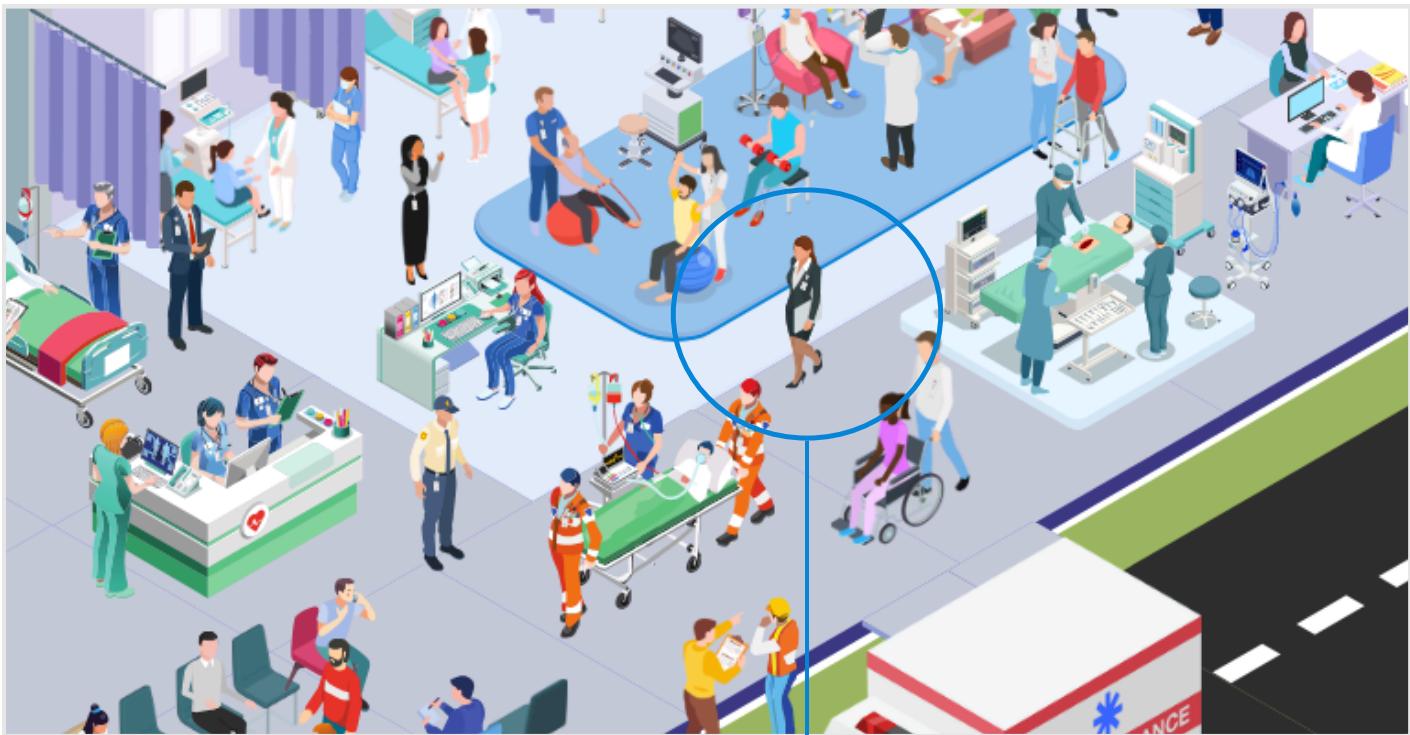
### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Integrate WPV prevention into onboarding and training
- Shape and promote zero-tolerance and behavioral policies and expectations
- Champion mental health, well-being, and post-incident support resources
- Provide a feedback loop for employee safety concerns



*"We have to ask our employees what they think and let them know it matters. That's a big part of people feeling safe—when they know someone is listening to them."*

— Jay Martindale, Director of Organizational Development



## C-Suite & Executive Leadership

*Visionary, mission-focused executives who manage operational efficiency, workforce health, and organizational reputation*

When executives lead on safety, it sets the tone for the entire organization. Their role in allocating resources, driving accountability, and shaping long-term strategy makes them indispensable allies. Approach them with clear metrics that connect WPV to bottom-line outcomes like turnover costs, litigation risk, patient satisfaction, and HCAHPS scores.

*A commitment to workplace violence prevention empowers the workforce to perform at their highest level, driving focus, engagement, and action across every layer of the health system.*

— Nancy Shendell-Falik, former President and SVP of Hospital Operations

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Champion WPV prevention efforts as a strategic business priority
- Assign point person to oversee team efforts
- Reinforce accountability and alignment across all leadership levels
- Ensure consistent updates via internal comms
- Secure budget allocation for safety tools and programs

## Compliance & Risk Management

*Detail-oriented, standards-driven professionals concerned with minimizing liability and ensuring adherence to regulations*

Risk and compliance leaders ensure that your violence prevention efforts meet regulatory expectations and reduce liability. Their lens ensures that your protocols, documentation, and training satisfy the legal and ethical dimensions of healthcare operations. Highlight the reputational and financial costs of non-compliance and underreporting.

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Align with CMS, OSHA, and state-specific mandates
- Strengthen documentation practices and post-incident follow-through
- Lead internal audits and policy reviews
- Provide oversight on risk mitigation strategies





## Emergency Management & Local Law Enforcement

Strategic, community-focused thinkers with a deep understanding of crisis planning, response coordination, and public safety

Emergency managers excel at designing system-wide responses and anticipating future risk scenarios. They bring structure, continuity planning, and a command-and-control lens to workplace safety plans. Engage them by showing how violence prevention overlaps with broader incident response plans, which can improve readiness and save lives.

Local law enforcement brings a vital outside-in perspective that strengthens emergency response coordination, enhances situational awareness, and builds critical relationships that improve outcomes in high-stakes events. Engage them by emphasizing your shared goal: protecting both the public and the professionals who serve them.

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Maximize emergency communication and digital facility blueprints/mapping
- Participate in threat assessments, walk-throughs, drills, and simulations
- Provide input on emergency response protocols
- Collaborate on public guidelines and zero-tolerance policies
- Share intelligence to identify potential community threats

*“First responders need to know exact locations and what they’re arriving to. They need to know where the resources are...they need to know what tools and equipment to deploy when they arrive on scene.”*

— Jeri Williams, Former Phoenix Chief of Police

## Information Technology

*Innovation-driven strategists focused on data integrity, integration, and long-term digital sustainability*

Technology leaders like CIOs and IT Directors are critical for ensuring that solutions are scalable, secure, and compatible with the organization's broader digital ecosystem. Their influence spans cybersecurity, interoperability, and strategic investments. If technology is being considered as part of a safety solution, you'll want to involve this group. Leverage their expertise early when evaluating new technology to avoid roadblocks later in the process. Engage this group by framing safety solutions—like wearable duress buttons—as smart investments that support workforce privacy, uptime, and trust.

### Suggested Areas of Contribution:

- Ensure safety tech aligns with data security and privacy protocols (HIPAA, NIST, etc.)
- Support integration with existing systems like EHRs, access control, and communication platforms
- Evaluate infrastructure readiness for new safety tools (network, compatibility, etc.)



# Activating the Team

A step-by-step guide to get started

## Step 1: Get Executive Buy-In

Engage C-suite leaders by aligning WPV prevention efforts with broader institutional goals like patient safety and experience, and talent acquisition and retention. Share data on violence-related costs and turnover to build urgency.

## Step 2: Identify Core Representatives

Start small with one representative from each core area. Choose team members who are solution-oriented, respected by peers, and willing to advocate for change.

## Step 3: Establish Clear Goals

Develop a shared mission statement and charter outlining roles, goals, and reporting cadence. Align on what "success" looks like.

## Step 4: Outline Risks and Gaps

Leverage multidisciplinary insights to identify your most vulnerable areas. Use incident data, staff feedback, and security audits to prioritize.

## Step 5: Choose Tools and Resources that Support Everyone

Opt for safety solutions that are easy to use, integrate across departments, and respect staff privacy. Duress alert systems like CrisisAlert™ can equally empower all staff to feel safer and access support whenever needed.

## Step 6: Build a Culture of Reporting and Response

Work together to normalize incident reporting, improve communication channels, and follow through with support. Transparency builds trust and engagement.

## Step 7: Continuous Improvement

Workplace violence is an evolving risk. Leverage your Workplace Violence Prevention team to monitor progress, trends, and areas for improvement.



# Additional Resources

While gathering buy-in from your organization's leaders and cross-functional counterparts, you may need additional data and resources to build your case. The materials below can help position you for success in these conversations.

## Getting Started

- [A Comprehensive Checklist for Facilities Focused on Increasing Safety](#)

## The Impact of Safety on Patient Care

- [Patient Safety Begins with Healthcare Staff Protection Article](#)
- [AHA & CENTEGIX Webinar: The Impact of Safety on Employee Well-Being and Patient Care](#)
- [Case Study: Elevating the Continuity of Care with CrisisAlert™](#)

## Grant and Funding Opportunities

- [A Healthcare Funding Guide](#)

## Showcasing the ROI

- ["It Pays to Protect Your People" Retention One-Pager](#)
- [The Cost of Workplace Violence in Healthcare, AHA Report](#)

## Leveraging Technology to Drive Workplace Safety

- [CENTEGIX Safety Platform™ Brochure](#)
- [Case Study: Improving Workplace Safety and Well-Being with a Scalable Solution](#)

# Final Thoughts: Safety is a Shared Mission

No single department can fix workplace violence alone. But together, with a team built on diverse expertise and a shared purpose, your organization can create a healthcare environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and empowered to speak up.

Workplace safety isn't just a program—it's a culture. And culture is built by people, together.

CENTEGIX is your partner in safety, from preparation to continuous improvement. See how we can build a culture of safety, together. [LEARN MORE](#)