CONFRONT VIOLENCE IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Violence isn’t always predictable or preventable, but there are always steps that employees can take to protect themselves in the aftermath.

In accordance with your written Workplace Violence Prevention Program and OSHA’s recommendations, train your employees on how to respond to violent situations in the workplace.

In your training session:

1. **Explain what should be done after a violent incident occurs.**
   - Review the following considerations as they are addressed in your written company policy:
     - When 911 should be called
     - What follow-up is needed with the patient or other aggressor
     - To whom you should report the incident
     - What services are available to staff after an attack (i.e., trauma-crisis counseling)

2. **Read the following scenarios of workplace attacks. Ask your employees to describe what can be done to respond to the violence.** Consider substituting these situations with examples that are specific to your workplace.
   - A developmentally disabled client bites a staff member.
   - An elderly resident in a nursing care facility strikes a staff member during his attempted escape.
   - Two residents in a rehabilitation facility begin to fight.
   - A client’s family member verbally threatens a social worker when she is alone in the parking lot.

3. **Explain your company’s policy towards violence.** Address your no-retaliation policy, both in your training and in your written Workplace Violence Prevention Program. Encourage prompt incident reporting, keeping all reports anonymous.

What does OSHA require workplace violence prevention programs to do at a minimum?

- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for workplace violence
- Guarantee workers a way to report violence without reprisals
- Implement prompt incident reporting and logging
- Address the company’s strategies to prevent violence
- Designate who is responsible for which roles in the program
- Affirm management commitment to worker safety
- Brief employees on violence prevention and incident follow-up

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(Name of Company) views keeping its employees safe as a first priority. We aim to ensure that all of our employees recognize workplace hazards in the social services field. Upon completion of a violence management and prevention safety training, we require all of our employees to agree to follow certain safety rules to protect themselves from unnecessary risks.

Please read and initial the following statements to indicate that you understand and agree.

• I have read and agree to follow company policies for interacting with clients at a high-risk for violence.*

• I will call for help if I feel threatened in the workplace.

• I will report all incidents of workplace violence to my employer. I understand that these reports will be kept anonymous.

I, ____________________________ (Employee Name), understand and agree to follow the aforementioned safety policies. I understand that violating any of these rules may affect my position here at the company, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

Signature: ____________________________

*Note to employers: Please attach a written copy of your company’s Workplace Violence Prevention Program.