

Preventing/Dealing with Work Place Violence

Warning Signs of Violence - Things to look for in your employees.

Various combinations of the following "signs" may be displayed by a potentially violent person. Most are progressive in that they become more pronounced over time. Successful intervention at an early stage can preclude an individual from acting on violent impulses.

- Difficulty accepting authority or criticism
- Holding grudges - especially against supervisors
- Sabotage of university property or equipment
- Expressing a desire to harm co-workers or management
- Unwanted romantic interest/sexual harassment
- Physical/verbal intimidation (e.g. stalking, phone calls)
- Progressive misconduct
- Argumentative/uncooperative behavior
- History of interpersonal conflict
- Recently terminated or expects to be terminated
- Unstable/dysfunctional home life
- Extremist opinions and attitudes
- Paranoid or depressed behavior
- Sense of entitlement
- Preoccupation with weapons
- Substance abuse
- Obsession with a particular person(s)

Ways to Defuse Violence -when confronted by an angry individual.

- Make eye contact (but don't stare).
- Stop what you are doing and give the person your full attention.
- Speak in a calm voice and create a relaxed environment.
- Have goals of building trust.
- Be open and honest.
- Let the person have his or her say.
- Listen attentively.
- Ask for specific examples of what the person is saying.
- Be careful to define the problem.
- Ask open-ended questions. For example: Why do you feel the way you do? What do you think the real problem is? What would you like to see happen? Anything else? Give me an example. Tell me more...