

LEFT OF BOOM

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF CLINICAL SECURITY SOLUTIONS



MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS - THE FOUNDATION OF EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

A well-organized and well-trained multidisciplinary team is the key element to a successful workplace violence prevention program.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) recently updated the standard for Workplace Violence and Active Assailant Prevention, Intervention, and Response WPVI-2020 which identifies the operation of a **multidisciplinary threat management team as a best practice.**

The challenge in forming such a team is to get the right people at the table. All too often organizations fall into the “STP dilemma,” which means the **"same ten people"** are always in the room.

Some of this is inevitable and ultimately makes good practical sense. There are certain key members of any organization with specific subject matter expertise who should be at the table during a crisis. The risk is becoming so reliant on the same ten people that you lose redundancy if key personnel are not available. Additionally, it is also important for an organization to identify, recruit, and train the next generation of crisis leaders. **This is best accomplished by investing in emerging leaders within the organization and providing them with real crisis response experience while under the tutelage of seasoned experts.**

Diversity in a multidisciplinary team fosters better collaboration and better decision-making. While there's much to be said for the smooth functioning of a team that has worked together frequently in high-stress situations, a fresh perspective is extremely valuable. **New insights can help overcome confirmation bias, which is our tendency to only focus on those facts and events that confirm what we already believe.**



CONTINUED

The selection of members for your multidisciplinary team is a crucial step. Members must not only be subject matter experts for their discipline but they must also be committed to the mission of workplace violence prevention. The member should also have the support of their unit's leadership and **feel empowered to make decisions** and speak for the unit with other members of the organization.

It is important to realize, that many high-performing members of an organization are already overscheduled and saturated with responsibilities from executive leadership. Sometimes it becomes difficult to even schedule meetings due to the overlapping schedules of high-ranking members of the multidisciplinary team. **Therefore, backup staffing is critical for seamless crisis intervention.** Members of the multidisciplinary team should come from all levels of leadership in order to provide the best continuity and perspective.

Support for the workplace violence prevention multidisciplinary team must come from the highest levels of the organization, usually, this is the CEO, the COO, and functional department heads. This support cannot be an unenthusiastic launch of the project followed by little communication; executives **must champion this program each step of the way and provide visible and vocal support** for all efforts to reduce workplace violence. **Many projects and initiatives go through a natural lifecycle of enthusiasm before settling into a graveyard of good ideas.** Continued, sustained support from executive management will help propel the program towards lasting success.

In our review of corporate workplace violence prevention programs, we have discovered that many multidisciplinary teams merely become statistical reporting mechanisms for prior incidents of workplace violence.



CONTINUED

The multidisciplinary team will report the number of incidents that have occurred since the last meeting, but there is little analysis of trends, gaps, and vulnerabilities that are taking place. **A truly effective workplace violence prevention multidisciplinary team should not limit itself to statistical reporting** but should also conduct an ongoing analysis of workplace violence incidents and the organization's response to such events.

Our recommended approach is that the team should analyze all reported workplace violence events since the last meeting, **as well as review and analyze the organization's current efforts to in place to mitigate and respond to violence based on current best practices.** The analysis should also review the environmental design and other facility issues that relate to workplace safety and violence mitigation. An organization's training and education efforts should also be assessed.

Questions to ask include:

- *Are the right people being trained?*
- *Are there other occupational populations that need to be included?*
- *Is the current training program sufficient to meet identified needs/threats facing the organization?*

Practitioners of workplace violence prevention should vigorously pursue new knowledge and best practices within the industry. Professional associations such as **ASIS**, the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety (**IAHSS**), the Society for Human Resources Management (**SHRM**), and the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (**ATAP**) are all outstanding resources for data regarding best practices.

Wondering how to get started? **We can help.** Our team of experts can help you select and train your own workplace violence prevention multidisciplinary team. We can even act as your multidisciplinary team through our and you will Virtual Threat Manager® retainer program. We can also conduct a comprehensive worksite gap analysis to include a comprehensive policy review to ensure you're in compliance with industry standards and best practices.

Call us at 1-888-705-1007 for a free consultation.