

Protecting Victim Service Providers Against Workplace Violence



STEPS WE CAN TAKE IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

Speaker Info

Tanya Grassel-
Krietlow

Gayle Thom





Tragic incidences of violence against victim service providers in the workplace are increasing. Between 2011-2013, there were 23,000 workplace assaults, and nearly 75% of these were in healthcare and social service settings.

In 2018, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that victim service providers were nearly five times as likely to suffer a serious workplace violence injury than workers in other sectors.



Workplace Safety

Victim service providers
face unique
vulnerabilities at work



This issue is especially acute in the many geographic areas where there is

- a vast coverage area,
- severe shortage of advocates, qualified mental health providers, law enforcement and health providers,
- technology barriers, and
- limited referral resources.



► Far too many social workers, advocates and health professionals have lost their lives to workplace violence. The alarming statistics do not capture the substantial number of unreported assaults, which, according to one survey, are as high as 85% of all assaults.



Workplace Safety

- ▶ Addressing this growing epidemic of workplace violence is a key success factor in reducing provider burnout and increasing retention.
- ▶ Promoting workplace safety is also critical to ensuring a sufficient mentally and physically healthy workforce.

DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security
Agency (CISA), in partnership with the Oregon
Dept. of Emergency Management and the
Idaho Office of Emergency Management

Monthly Seminar Series

<https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-106720>

RESOURCE

- ▶ *Mass Casualty Impact and Recovery* - which examines how businesses, organizations, and individuals can better prepare for, respond to, and recover from active shooter and other mass casualty events.
- ▶ *When the Crime Tape Comes Down: Providing Immediate Crisis Support* - will address coordinating with law enforcement and other government entities and assisting families through mental health crisis, grief, and reunification. This session will explore how to ensure your people are safe and receiving the follow-up support services they may need.



Workplace Safety: A Healing Environment

- ▶ Preventing workplace violence is also essential in providing a healing environment for clients.
- ▶ Clients witnessing violence in workplace settings, can set back treatment for months, if not years.



Part Of Overall Safety Planning

Planning for victims' and survivors' freedom from violence is a critical component of victim services. Advocates' safety is also a vital part of overall safety planning. Yet advocate safety can be a complex matter.



Safety For All Involved In The Victim Assistance Realm

Training, research, and evaluation often focuses on the safety of the victims and survivors we are privileged to serve.

Without addressing advocate safety, are we missing the true impact of striving to build a deeper and more comprehensively resilient perspective of safety for all involved in the victim assistance realm?



Simple Steps Victim Service Providers Can Use

We have identified some simple steps victim service providers can use in our everyday lives.

These steps are not meant to be all-encompassing.



Be Aware, Be Prepared, Rehearse And Plan

- ▶ When discussing workplace safety, we should consider readiness and response. More specifically, be aware, be prepared, rehearse and plan.
- ▶ Awareness
- ▶ Preparedness
- ▶ Rehearse and Plan



Critical Incidents

- ▶ Contain.
- ▶ Control.
- ▶ Communicate.
- ▶ Call For Assistance.



Natural Disasters

- ▶ Blizzards, dangerous wind chills, tornadoes and even prairie fires are events we are confronted with in our area.
- ▶ Offenders and known abusers among those needing evacuation and assistance
- ▶ Where will they be directed to seek assistance or shelter during that time?



Basic 40 Hour Crisis Response Training

Training Exercises

- ▶ Skills and networking
- ▶ Enhance multidisciplinary team



Non-Violent Communication

**“The most important
skill on the planet”**

De-escalation Skills

- ▶ Online or in person training
 - ▶ Follow-up trainings to ensure skills are current
- Often the people we work with are in some type of crisis and de-escalation is necessary to
- ▶ The
 - understand their needs
 - let them know we hear and support them
 - and that they are in a place to understand us and begin to build trust
 - ▶ Explore de-escalation cross-training



Verbal De-Escalation & Conflict Resolution

Verbal De-Escalation and Conflict Resolution

[August 21](#) | Pine Ridge, SD

[September 20 - 21](#) | Live Online

[October 25 - 26](#) | Live Online

[December 13 - 14](#) | Live Online

Join us to learn how de-escalation techniques and communication skills can potentially defuse tense situations and lead to more successful outcomes.

Avoid potential conflict both professionally and personally by learning to organize your thinking and responding calmly. Consider the approaches you can take to prevent and respond to verbal conflict. Explore the communication process, conflict prevention, and understand why conflicts occur. Instruction will also cover certain circumstances in which verbal de-escalation techniques may not be appropriate, and provide techniques to resolve such conflicts.

The Deflection Conversation Framework— A Community Engagement Tool for First Responders

On-demand training seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective communication strategies for law enforcement and first responder deflection over the course of three interactive educational modules. These modules will examine the science of addiction, treatment, and recovery and offer practical approaches for building strong community partnerships and effectively engaging individuals struggling with substance use disorders. By implementing deflection initiatives, first responders can serve as a referral source to allow individuals to get the services they want and/or need and improve public health and public safety in our communities.

VIEW THE TRAINING: [DEFLECTION TRAINING \(COSSAPRESOURCES.ORG\)](https://COSSAPRESOURCES.ORG)

?? Cyber Safety ??

- ICAC'S LAW ENFORCEMENT GUIDE AND VICTIM RESOURCE SHEET - FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS, CHILD ADVOCACY PRACTITIONERS, AND PARENTS TO ASSIST YOUTH VICTIMS OF SEXTORTION.
- NCMEC'S FREE TAKE IT DOWN - ONLINE TOOL TO HELP VICTIMS REMOVE ONLINE SEXUALLY EXPLICIT PHOTOS AND VIDEOS TAKEN OF THEM WHILE UNDER 18 YEARS OLD

?? Cyber Safety ??

RESOURCES:

- NCMEC'S WEBSITE OFFERS ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ABOUT DIGITAL SAFETY FOR YOUTH, PARENTS, COMMUNITIES, AND EDUCATORS.
- VISIT NCMEC'S SEXTORTION PREVENTION WEBPAGE.
- FOLLOW OJJDP ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK.



Situational Awareness: Organizations

- ▶ Knowing where you are
- ▶ What is going on around you
- ▶ For organizations, this includes
 - ▶ awareness about personnel location and assigned duties,
 - ▶ the environment, and
 - ▶ any potential risks.

**When was the last time you thought
about updating your agency security?**

Using **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to
screen clients, staff, and visitors.

**CREATE A SAFE SPACE AT YOUR AGENCY TODAY-
FROM CONCEALED WEAPONS, PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS
AND INTRUDERS**



ILLICIT “ZOMBIE DRUGS” LACED WITH A FLESH-ROTTING ANIMAL TRANQUILIZER

Xylazine

in recent years has increasingly become a go-to cutting agent dope dealers are using in fentanyl, meth, cocaine and heroin.



Active Shooters

Threat Assessment Teams

AS THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE SHOOTINGS CONTINUE TO RISE
NATIONWIDE, THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS HAVE BECOME AN
INDISPENSABLE TOOL IN HELPING TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL THREATS
AND INTERVENE BEFORE TRAGEDY OCCURS. THE GOAL OF THESE
TEAMS IS NOT ONLY TO PREVENT SHOOTING INCIDENTS, BUT ALSO
TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING ISSUES THAT CAN LEAD TO VIOLENT
BEHAVIOR.

Active Shooters

Threat Assessment Teams

- How threat assessment teams can identify early warning signs of potential threats and effective interventions to prevent school violence
- The importance of adhering to a threat continuum and how to properly train threat assessment teams
- New strategies and solutions to prevent and mitigate active shooters throughout all stages
- How to identify and address mental health concerns and provide recommendations for resources and support, as well as de-escalation techniques
- **How to make safety part of the agency culture**



Situational Awareness: Victim Service Providers

- ▶ Knowing where you are
- ▶ What is going on around you
- ▶ For victim service providers this includes
 - ▶ awareness about the victim
 - ▶ and the offender, both.
- ▶ Does the area pose a threat?
- ▶ Is there a potential for bad weather?
- ▶ Is there adequate cell phone coverage?
- ▶ Is there a known potential for intimidation of the advocate or the victim?



Workplace Wellness

- ▶ a broad term used to describe activities, programs, and policies designed to support healthy behavior.
 - ▶ stress reduction
 - ▶ exercise programs
 - ▶ nutrition education
 - ▶ trauma informed, victim centered trainings
 - ▶ other professional development
 - ▶ team building
 - ▶ health screens



Personal Wellness:

Victim Assistance Providers

Components of personal health and wellness

- ▶ 1) Physical
- ▶ 2) Emotional
- ▶ 3) Social
- ▶ 4) Spiritual
- ▶ 5) Intellectual

The AI/AN culture is rich with many choices...

Traditional healer
 Purification
 Sundance
 Ceremonies rituals
 Beading Circles
 Nature
 Medicine Man
 Medicine Wheel
 singing Fasting
 Herbs
 Sharing stories & culture while stitching- Creating memorial quilts for display
 Acquiring and planting trees or a memorial garden
 elders Sacred Circle Drums

...to turn to for cultural and spiritual healing



Workplace Wellness

- ▶ Physical safety
- ▶ Mental health



Self Defense

It is unfortunate that we must deal with the possibility of workplace violence.

Data indicates:

- ▶ Law enforcement may not arrive in time to help you
- ▶ You may have to defend yourself and others to survive an incident.
- ▶ It helps if you are aware, prepared, and have rehearsed.



Self Defense: Preventing An Incident

- ▶ Self defense is a lifelong skill, like learning about first aid. The skills learned are helpful in preventing an incident by using creative thinking and problem solving.
- ▶ Self defense classes can build confidence, increase feelings of safety and decrease feelings of stress.



Do some of us live in a
“Dog eat Dog World”?

COMPETITIVE FUNDING ENVIRONMENT



Debriefs

- ▶ Debriefing for victim service providers addresses secondary traumatic stress in those who work to assist victims.
- ▶ Debriefing provides practical strategies for ourselves.
- ▶ Debriefing is also useful to assess and assist our co-workers that we are privileged to work with in our communities.



Teaming with Local Law Enforcement

- Not only can you help local law enforcement in several ways to make their jobs easier and their cases stronger
 - (stronger victims = stronger witnesses = stronger cases)
- but they can also help keep you informed on
 - current drug trends,
 - concealment techniques,
 - cyber safety, and
 - other safety awareness issues.



Debriefs

There are various types of debriefing.

- ▶ Group debriefing.
- ▶ Individual.
- ▶ Tribal talking circles.
- ▶ Cultural activity specific to the tribe.

Debriefing should be done after a major event, however; routine debriefs built into team meetings or schedules are recommended and most beneficial.



OUR GOAL:
to support you to have
a safe vocation that is
uniquely and deeply
satisfying

In Conclusion

► Our goal has been to provide some education and inspiration by offering some ideas and practices that first responders, to include victim service providers, can use in everyday life. This information is not meant to be all-encompassing; but it should be thought provoking and help promote conversation surrounding safety in the workplace.



► Gayle Thom thomhome@hills.net

► Tanya Krietlow tanya@sdnafvsa.com

Research:

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