IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU:
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND EMS
Defining Workplace Violence

**Workplace violence** is any *act or threat* of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site.

*Occupational Safety & Health Administration*
Workplace Violence in EMS

• The risk of non-fatal assault for EMS workers in the U.S. is 30 times higher than the national average.
• The risk of fatal assaults for EMS workers is 3 times higher than the national average.
• In a survey of 1,789 front line EMS workers, 69% reported experiencing violence within the last 12 months of the survey.
• There are approximately 700,000 assaults on EMS providers annually.
There is a Cost

Lost time from WPV incidents is **FOUR** times greater in healthcare than any other industry. OSHA, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Injury Type</th>
<th>Direct Cost</th>
<th>Indirect Costs</th>
<th>Total Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contusion</td>
<td>$27,511</td>
<td>$30,262</td>
<td>$57,773</td>
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<td>Laceration</td>
<td>$19,713</td>
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<td>Mental Stress</td>
<td>$30,947</td>
<td>$34,041</td>
<td>$64,988</td>
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Emotional Trauma – The Human Cost

• According to research conducted for the Epidemiological Research International; exposure to abusive Behavior is one of the top stressors for EMS personnel (2015).

• The Emergency Nursing Association (ENA) reports that higher-than-average violence is a key reason for emergency nurse burnout and turnover (2016).
Why?

- Volatility of the scene.
- Insufficient Scene Safety/ Police Support.
- Volatility of the patient:
  - Physiological Disorders
  - Substance Abuse
  - Criminality
Why?

• In six studies, 52% of EMS personnel stated there was no specific protocol for WPV within their organizations.
• 72% of articles review reported a lack of formal training programs in EMS and RN training.
• 54% of respondents to a recent survey of rural EMS practitioners reported they had not received any employer-sponsored training on dealing with potentially violent situations, although 25% said they had been physically assaulted while performing their duties.

Organizationally and as an Industry we are failing to address WPV.
Constructing a Organizational Workplace Violence Prevention Program

- Collaborative Management Oversight
- Employee Training & Engagement
- Incident Investigation & Debriefing
Employee Training and Engagement

- **Staff Training** and **Staff Engagement** lay the foundation for any workplace violence prevention program.

- Organizations should adopt a standard curriculum and deliver it regularly to all employees.

- EMS Organizations and EMS professionals should be pushing for formal education processes at our academic institutions.
Employee Training and Engagement

• Selecting a WPV Training Program
  – Key Training elements
    • Identification of Behavioral Escalation Warning Signs
    • Identify Root Causes of Escalation
    • Preventative Protective Measures
    • Defensive Tactics
    • How to Differentiate Between a Patient and an Assailant
    • What Resources are Available
Employee Training and Engagement

• Common Well Respected Programs
  – DT4EMS: Defensive Tactics 4 Escaping Mitigating Surviving
    • EVE: Escaping Violent Encounters
  – Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)
    • Nonviolent crisis intervention
  – Build your own – tailor it to your environment
    • Occupational Safety & Health Administration
    • National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
    • Emergency Nursing Association
Incident Investigation & Debriefing

- Part of how you engage staff and train staff is premised on how you follow up to incidents and near misses.
- Clear Polices and Incident Definitions
- Consistent Follow Up
  - Incident Debriefing
  - Incident Investigation
- Proactive Record Keeping
Incident Investigation & Debriefing

Clear Policies and Incident Definitions

• OSHA defines four types:
  – Type I: Criminal Intent
  – Type II: Customer/Client
  – Type III: Worker-on-worker
  – Type IV: Personal Relationships

• Consider a *Near-Miss* Process
Incident Investigation & Debriefing

Consistent Follow Up

• One Designee or One Team
  – Debrief Every Incident
  – Investigation in Three Phases
    • Gather Information and Preserve Evidence
    • Determine Root Cause
    • Implement Change
      – Corrective Actions
      – Preventative Planning
      – Training
Incident Investigation & Debriefing

Proactive Record Keeping

- Promote Situational Awareness
  - Create a Confidential Database of Offenders
  - Create Proactive Plans for Repeat Offenders
  - Train Your Staff and Dispatchers
  - Publish Alerts
Collaborative Management Oversight

- Adaptation to real time incidents and the reality of your environments.
- Management engagement is critical to organizational adaptation.
- **Employee** and **Management** Collaboration strengthens the organizational response.
- Develop a **Workplace Violence Oversight Committee**
  - Key Organizational Leaders
  - Representative Frontline Staff
Collaborative Management Oversight

- Workplace Violence Oversight Committee
  *(In Regular Meetings)*

Collaborative Management Review
- Review Incidents and Analytics
- Conduct Trend Analysis
- Conduct Barrier Analysis
- Conduct Root Cause Analysis

Collaborative Management Actions
- Recommend/Implement Training
  Process Changes
- Recommend/Implement Policy Changes
- Recommend/Implement Process/Procedure Changes
- Recommend/Implement Reporting Changes
Orient the Program Toward Continuous Learning

Collaborative Management Oversight

Employee Training & Engagement

Incident Investigation & Debriefing
Questions

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