



PERSONAL CONDUCT TO MINIMIZE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE



Follow these suggestions in your daily interactions with people to de-escalate potentially violent situations. If at any time a person’s behavior starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone remove yourself from the situation and call 911 or signal someone to make the call for you. (Suggestion: Have red folder or card on the desk that can be picked up to notify a co-worker to call 911.)

DO

- Project calmness: move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently.
- Be an empathetic listener: encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.
- Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.
- Maintain a relaxed yet attentive posture and position yourself at a right angle rather than directly in front of the other person.
- Acknowledge the person’s feelings. Indicate that you can see he or she is upset.
- Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.
- Establish ground rules if unreasonable behavior persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behavior.
- Use delaying tactics which will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water (in a disposable cup).
- Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.
- Accept criticism in a positive way. If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.
- Ask for his recommendations. Repeat back to him what you feel he is requesting of you.
- Arrange yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit.
- Avoid any physical contact, finger-pointing or long periods of fixed eye contact.

DO NOT

- Use styles of communication which generate hostility such as apathy, brush off, coldness, condescension, robotism, going strictly by the rules or giving the run-around.
- Reject all of a person’s demands from the start.
- Pose in challenging stances such as standing directly opposite someone, hands on hips or crossing your arms.
- Make sudden movements which can be seen as threatening.
- Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual. Never belittle the person or make him/her feel foolish.
- Criticize or act impatiently toward the agitated individual.
- Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.
- Try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.
- Make false statements or promises you cannot keep.
- Try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high.
- Take sides or agree with distortions.
- Invade the individual’s personal space. Make sure there is a space of 3 ft. to 6 ft. between you and the person.