Workplace Violence Prevention & Education Guide

Information for Faculty & Staff
This guide provides you ready access to UA resources available to you in the event you encounter an emergency situation with a distressed colleague or student. The UA-WPV Prevention & Education Guide is provided to you courtesy of the Division of Human Resources, committed to the safety and well-being of the campus community.

**What is workplace violence?**

Although some people believe workplace violence is limited to extreme cases of violence, such as murder, workplace violence actually encompasses a broad spectrum of unacceptable behavior. Co-workers, supervisors, or visitors can commit workplace violence. There are different types of workplace violence. A worker can be verbally abused or harassed. Or, a worker can be physically assaulted or killed. You should know what behaviors might lead to violence. You should also know what to do if it occurs. And you should know that violence is not acceptable.

What does it look like? Some examples of behavior that is covered by the University’s Workplace Violence Policy include:

- Deliberately hitting, pushing, or kicking someone, or threatening to do so.
- Using abusive or obscene language, or raising the voice in an intimidating manner.
- Following someone in a manner that suggests stalking.
- Acting in a way that suggests potential harm or danger.
- Making someone feel that he or she is in danger of being hurt.
- Acting in a way that puts others in danger. For example, driving in a manner that threatens pedestrians.
- Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, or sending harassing or threatening letters, e-mails, or other forms of written or electronic communications.
- Making intimidating statements with the intent to threaten, like: “You know what happened at the Post Office,” “I’ll get even,” “I know where you live,” or “You haven’t heard the last from me.”

**IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL 9-1-1**
Recent events have demonstrated the importance of early reporting of concerns. If we don’t know, we can’t help. Sometimes people are reluctant to report behavior that frightens or intimidates them because they fear retaliation. Other times, people are concerned about getting a colleague or student “into trouble.” But the best way to ensure everyone’s safety is to report your concerns and observations to Human Resources when you experience or witness threatening, bullying or intimidating behavior. If the person you are concerned about is a student, contact the Dean of Students Office. If you are threatened by someone’s conduct to the point of reasonable fear of immediate harm to self or others, leave the area immediately, and call the police by dialing 9-1-1.

Report to Human Resources 626-2600 or 621-3662
Report to Dean of Students Office 621-7057

Preventing violence on campus depends on our community members to identify and communicate behaviors of concern. Early identification of concerns allows UA administrators to provide resources to individuals to help reduce stress in their lives and minimize harm to self or others. This process is intended to be supportive, not punitive. Noticing the behaviors of those around you is one element of campus safety. There are ways to recognize people who may pose a danger to themselves or to others. Behaviors of concern may include:

- Unexplained increases in absenteeism
- Disgruntled employee or ex-employee who is excessively bitter
- Resistance to change or reasonable limits
- Evidence of alcohol or drug abuse
- Over-reaction to changes in policies/procedures
- Extreme or sudden changes in behaviors
- Numerous conflicts with others
- Displays paranoia or distrust
- Alienates others or isolates self from others
- Makes statements indicating approval of use of violence to resolve a problem

These examples are meant to help you identify potential concerns during our daily interactions with others. These examples are not all-inclusive and this information is not intended to be used as a checklist.
RESPONDING TO THREATENING BEHAVIOR

Everyone has his or her own, unique response to the behavior of others. Please take very seriously interactions that cause you to feel afraid for your safety. If you feel you are in imminent danger, leave the area and call 9-1-1. Harassment, threatening phone calls or e-mails, stalking, or direct or implied threats of violence should be reported immediately to your supervisor, Human Resources, and the University of Arizona Police Department.

It’s helpful to have a plan for what you will do should you find yourself confronted by an angry, hostile and/or threatening individual.

1. A code word or phrase, to be used within your department, serves as a signal to others to call for help. For example, “Can you call Monica and let her know that I’ll be late for lunch.”
2. End any conversation immediately if you feel something is wrong and the person’s behavior concerns you.
3. Arrange your workspace furniture so that visitors do not stand between you and the exit.
4. Avoid “challenging” body language, such as standing up if the other person is seated, putting your hands on your hips, using aggressive facial expressions, or fist your hands.
5. Speak slowly and lower the volume to reduce tension.
6. Ask to consult your supervisor or the department head to help satisfy the person’s need to be heard.
7. Do not make promises you may be unable to keep.
8. Listen carefully; let the person know you’ll help to the extent of your ability and within reason.
9. Ask questions to help understand the situation.
10. Do not argue, avoid defensiveness.
11. If a colleague is angry, confrontational and threatening ... walk away.
What is Threat Assessment?
Threat Assessment is a process to identify students, employees, or other members of and visitors to our campus who may pose a danger to themselves or others, or who may be in need of assistance and resources. At the University of Arizona, threats and behaviors are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team that includes members of Human Resources, UAPD, the Dean of Students Office, the Office of the General Counsel, Life & Work Connections, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Risk Management and Safety. The team responds to reported behaviors of concern by students, employees and visitors before a serious incident occurs and to prevent serious incidents from occurring. The purpose of the team is to ensure the safety of all members of our UA community. The Threat Assessment and Management Team, or TAM Team, works to provide education on our campus about campus violence, and consultation and incident response services to all members of the campus community for the purpose of violence prevention.

If you are concerned about a person or situation and are apprehensive about safety, please notify your supervisor, Human Resources (Main Campus 621-3662 or AHSC 626-2600), the Dean of Students Office (621-7057) or UAPD (621-8273).

5 Key Principles of Violence Prevention

1. **PREVENTION IS POSSIBLE**
   Assessment is about identifying people who may need assistance and intervening effectively, preventing greater safety concerns.

2. **THREAT ASSESSMENT IS ABOUT BEHAVIOR, NOT PROFILES**
   How a person acts is more important than how he/she looks or dresses.

3. **EARLY INTERVENTION AND IDENTIFICATION HELPS EVERYONE**
   When behaviors are identified before they become serious, many non-punitive options can be offered to assist the person. Report concerns early!

4. **KEEP VICTIMS IN MIND**
   The team works to help victims manage the situation.

5. **SAFETY IS A PRIMARY FOCUS**
   The focus of a case is on what can be done for the situation, not to the subject.

*Virginia Polytechnic and State University*
SAFETY AT WORK

Encourage and Promote Civility and Courtesy
Your job may require you to interact with diverse types of people every day. Make it a point to conduct your interactions politely and with civility, regardless of the behavior of the person with whom you’re interacting. Engage in behavior that fosters a workplace that demonstrates the value of mutual respect.

- Employees at all levels should understand expectations regarding courtesy and civility.
- Leadership should model respectful behavior.
- Expect the best from your colleagues – and from yourself.
- Know the University of Arizona’s resources for dealing with behavioral problems that may interfere with safety and/or job performance.
- If you are a supervisor, be respectful in managing employee performance problems.
- Handle complaints and grievances respectfully and promptly.
- Identify opportunities for you and your colleagues to understand your roles in promoting polite and courteous interactions.

Recognize and Assist Distressed Individuals
You may be in a position to spot a colleague or student who may be emotionally distressed. If you notice someone acting in a way that is inconsistent with your normal experience with that person, you may be a resource to them. A simple expression of interest and concern, and a referral to appropriate University resources, may be of great assistance to that person. Some possible signs of distress include:

- Marked changes in performance or behavior
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Disruptive behavior or undue aggressiveness
- Exaggerated emotional response inappropriate to the situation
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Expressed feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- References to suicide, homicide, or harmful behavior
- Isolation
Assess Your Workplace
Your work environment influences your health, safety and well-being. Assess your workplace for safety-related risk factors. Consider parking lots, entryways, reception areas, workstations, classrooms and offices. Consider questions such as:

- Are there convenient, accessible exits or “escape” routes?
- Do you and your colleagues know what to do in the event of an emergency?
- Is there a first-aid kit in your work area?
- Is there a method to summon assistance that is known, understood and drilled by all employees?
- Where are employees isolated or most vulnerable?
- Are you and your colleagues trained in and encouraged to use procedures to report and resolve workplace safety concerns?

Educate Yourself
Knowing and familiarizing yourself with response procedures can ensure a productive response “in the moment” when you are anxious or fearful. Work units should drill on their response procedures periodically so that in the event an emergency occurs, all employees are prepared to respond appropriately. Information work units should develop includes:

- An internal protocol for reporting behaviors of concern or unusual incidents.
- Everyone’s roles and responsibilities in a variety of emergency situations.
- Appropriate response procedures in the event of a violent or potentially violent situation.
- How to summon UAPD.
- Internal alert systems and how to active them.
- Ways to increase safety and reduce risk in emergency situations.
RESOURCES

Main Campus Human Resources  621-3662
AHSC Human Resources        626-2600
UAPD (non-emergency)         621-8273
Dean of Students Office      621-7057
Life and Work Connections    621-2493
Counseling and Psychological Services  621-3334
Campus Health                621-6490
Disability Resource Center   621-9423
National Suicide Prevention Hotline  1-800-273-TALK

Rev. 04/13