Achieving an actionable corporate workplace violence prevention programme

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Received: 28th June, 2018

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ABSTRACT

The US Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration identifies recommendations within the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) General Duty Clause for establishing a safe and healthful workplace for all workers covered by the act. Employers that do not take reasonable steps to prevent or abate a recognised violence hazard in the workplace can be cited. While failure to implement various recommendations and guidelines provided by OSHA is not in itself a violation of the General Duty Clause, organisations that implement a workplace violence programme are providing defensible risk mitigation operations while enhancing the overall safety of their employees. Successful implementation of a workplace violence programme requires finesse and enhanced partnerships with multiple functional groups within the organisation. This paper provides proven steps to establish and operate a value-added corporate workplace violence programme that promotes identification and reporting of potential internal and external threats, ongoing evaluation and monitoring of threats, swift action to mitigate threats to the workplace, and actionable awareness, training and exercising components to provide employees with the necessary skills to detect, deter, respond to and recover from an actual workplace violence incident.

Keywords: workplace violence, violence prevention, workplace violence risk mitigation, threat assessment team, types of workplace violence, active shooter, bullying, workplace manslaughter

INTRODUCTION: REALITIES OF THE RISK

According to statistics from the US Bureau of Labor, over 2 million workers each year fall victim to workplace violence — ranging from verbal bullying to homicide — with the vast majority of incidents being unreported either out of embarrassment, fear of retaliation, or simply because the employees do not know to report an incident.[1]

According to the World Health Organization, 60 per cent of countries do not have usable data on rates of violence or homicide from civil or vital registration sources.[2] For many countries, violence statistics in general and occupation violence statistics do not exist, or they often lack important details, such as the gender and age of the victim, the relationship of victim to perpetrator, the nature of the work environment and other information that would be needed to design and monitor workplace violence prevention efforts.

Many regulatory requirements and guidelines confirm workplace violence is a foreseeable risk that cannot be ignored. While typically referred to as 'workplace violence' in the USA, Canada and many other Western countries, in a number of jurisdictions, including England and Wales and Hong Kong, instances of workplace violence resulting in a death constitute a specific crime known as 'corporate manslaughter'.

Notable legislation pertaining to workplace violence includes the following:

- The US Occupational Safety and Health Act 1970 (OSHA) mandates that, in addition to compliance with hazard-specific standards, all employers have a 'general duty' to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognised hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.[3]

- The American National Standard for Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention states that all organisations ultimately carry a responsibility, both for humanitarian and legal reasons, to protect employees and others who interact with the workplace to the fullest practical extent.[4]

- On 7th June, 2006, New York State enacted legislation creating a new section 27-b of State Labor Law, requiring public employers to perform a workplace evaluation or risk evaluation at each worksite and to develop and implement programmes to prevent and minimise workplace violence caused by assaults and homicides.[5]

- The UK Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 imposes criminal liability on corporations where there is a gross breach of the duty of care resulting in a death of a person, such as an employee, person on a work site, a mobile worker or traveller.[6]

- In Canada, most jurisdictions have a 'general duty provision' in their occupational health & safety legislation, which requires employers to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of employees. This provision includes protecting employees from a known risk of workplace violence.[7]

- The International Labour Organization is a specialised United Nations agency focused on establishing international standards for the reduction of violence in the workplace. The agency's draft banning workplace behaviour that causes physical, mental and economic harm in all workplaces is pending adoption in 2019.[8]

A formal workplace violence (WPV) pre-vention programme provides evidence that 'duty of care' requirements are being met.

THE PROBLEM: RUN/HIDE/FIGHT IS NOT THE SOLUTION

Given the potential seriousness of an active shooter incident, it is understandable that many organisations have focused their attention on the minutes of terror between 'shot fired' and 'shooter down'. Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that 69 per cent of active shooter situations are over within five minutes.[9] Knowing how to survive an active assailant situation is certainly an essential compo-nent to a viable WPV programme. Also imperative to a successful active assailant response is 'stop the bleed' training; again as an aid to save lives following an attack. Unfortunately, for some organisations,

such training is the extent of their WPV programme. However, active shooter response training should not be confused with a workplace violence prevention and intervention programme.

Furthermore, getting to this point in the 'life cycle' of WPV is the end for far too many individuals across the USA.

While actionable response training is critical, the focus of this paper will guide readers toward a more positive and ideally less deadly outcome.

THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE LIFE CYCLE

Mass shooting incidents are, in most cases, instances of predatory violence involving a significant period of planning and prepara-tion. The prevailing model, referred to as the 'pathway to violence' (Figure 1), was first articulated by Weston and Calhoun in
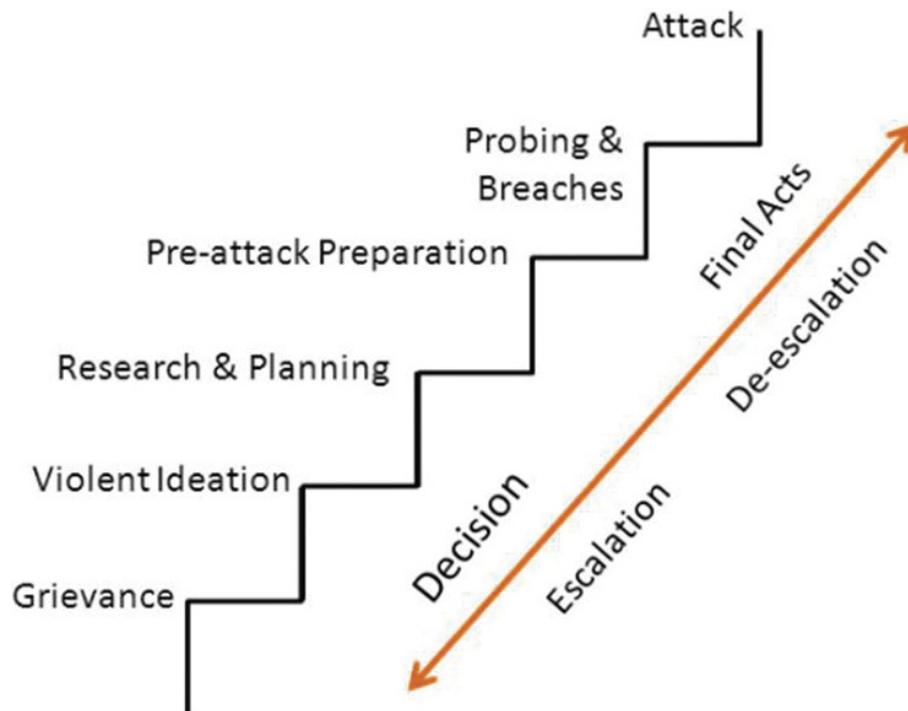

Figure 1   The pathway to violence

Source: Calhoun, F. and Weston, S. (2009) 'Threat Assessment and Management Strategies: Identifying the Howlers and the Hunters', CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. Reproduced with permission.

2009, and identifies a step–wise progression towards violence.[10]

While the time associated with progression along the pathway varies from incident to incident, it is recognised that it is not limited. Acts of intentional, predatory violence often have extended incubation periods. For example, in courtroom testimony, Anders Breivik, who detonated a car bomb in the government district of Oslo, Norway, killing eight before moving on to Utøya Island where he shot and killed 69 adolescents, claimed that he had planned the attack for nearly seven years.[11]

It is also important to recognise that workplace violence encompasses a wider continuum of behaviours (Figure 2), not simply active shooter incidents. Mass shooting incidents are the least likely, but most devastating form of workplace violence, and as such, employers must prepare for the full range of violent acts. OSHA defines workplace violence as, 'Any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behaviour that occurs at the work site. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors'.[12]

The impact of a violent incident in the workplace can also linger for months, years and decades after an attack. Recognising the long tail of workplace violence, the American National Standard in Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention states that:

'All organizations ultimately carry a responsibility, both for humanitarian and legal reasons, to protect employees and others who interact with the workplace to the fullest practical extent … by taking measures to detect threats at the earliest possible moment, engage in effective intervention through careful incident management, and mitigate consequences should violence erupt'.[13]

To address the challenges associated with the entire life cycle of workplace violence incidents, it is helpful to adopt a comprehensive approach that envisions pre–incident, incident and post–incident concerns.

THE SOLUTION: A COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION PROGRAMME

A comprehensive WPV prevention programme is intended to reduce and possibly eliminate WPV incidents. This paper will provide a framework to identify, assess and respond to pending threats before they end in violence.
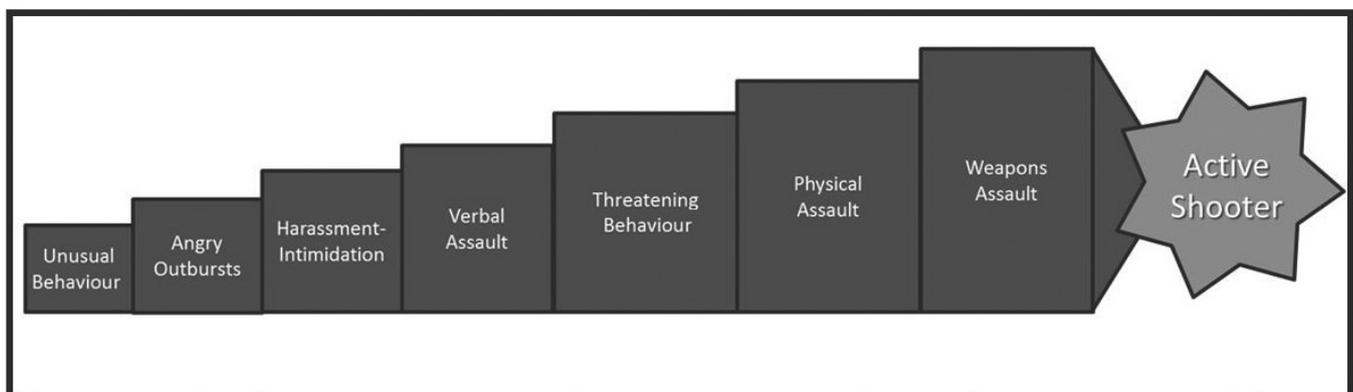

Figure 2   The continuum of workplace violence

A successful workplace violence prevention programme requires (1) executive buy-in; (2) corporate policy; (3) programme operations management; and finally, (4) response training and exercising.

EXECUTIVE BUY-IN

To achieve a successful actionable WPV prevention programme, organisational tone must be set at the top to: (1) establish the programme as an organisational priority; (2) approve a prevention policy; (3) appoint appropriate personnel to develop, implement and monitor the programme; (4) provide sufficient resources and authorisations to maintain the programme; and finally, (5) respond to an incident, if necessary.

Because many executives believe that response training *is* a WPV prevention programme, executive education is critical to initiating corporate awareness of the problem. In addition to citing regulatory requirements and recent WPV incident statistics, consider promoting a corporate value of caring for the safety and wellbeing of employees, and highlighting programme values including reducing or mitigating the impacts of WPV, such as lost wages, lost revenue, litigation and reputational impact. Most importantly, educate executives on how workplace violence can manifest in the organisation.

THE FIVE TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

While OSHA has historically recognised four types of workplace violence, the current threat environment suggests an expansion of that model to include at fifth type: ideological violence. Type V workplace violence includes those attacks directed at an organisation, its employees and/or properties for religious, ideological or political reasons. In such instances, the actor or actors have targeted the organisation because of what they do or what they represent. In Type V violence, the perpetrators are 'true believers' who feel their radical belief system justifies the use of violence. In addition to acts of violence inspired or directed by international terrorist groups, domestic terrorism from extremist anti-government, environmental or animal rights groups also fall into this category. In each of the above categories, employees have been attacked by extremists in their place of work.

Executives must expand their understanding of the potential risks to their organisations by understanding the five types of workplace violence:

- *criminal intent*: opportunistic violence typically performed by a stranger to the organisation (eg fast food store robbery);
- *customer/client*: the perpetrator is known to the organisation or utilises its services (eg patient to healthcare worker);
- *worker-to-worker*: two or more individuals who work together (eg employee to supervisor, employee to employee, supervisor to employee);
- *domestic violence*: when a domestic partner, most typically a male, follows the female employee to the work setting with intent to do harm;
- *ideological violence*: violence committed against an organisation or its employees as a result of its business or services (eg bombing of a Planned Parenthood facility by a pro-life advocate).

With attacks at military recruitment offices in Chattanooga, the Charlie Hebdo headquarters in Paris, and a Department of Public Health event in San Bernardino in mind, it is increasingly clear that there is an important intersection between workplace

violence and terrorism. Between 1970 and 2012, businesses were the most commonly attacked target category in the USA.[14] Clearly, terrorism is a potential source of violence in the workplace and one not typically included in standard models of workplace violence awareness prevention and training.

ESTABLISH A CORPORATE POLICY

A corporate policy sets corporate leadership and employee expectations. It introduces the concept of a WPV prevention programme and the organisation's commitment and expectations to enable the programme's success. It describes the process for prevention of, response to, and recovery from violent events. Most importantly, it establishes both corporate leadership and employee responsibilities for reporting threats and acts of violence in a non-retaliatory manner. The corporate policy is an organisation's defence that it is protecting its employees to the fullest extent practical.

The workplace policy statement should, at a minimum: (1) define workplace violence; (2) set corporate tolerance levels (zero tolerance is recommended); (3) define training commitments and requirements; and (4) define mechanisms for reporting and issue escalation. It should also include risk evaluation and hazard controls, as well as reference the organisation's record-keeping system and programme evaluation process. Any policies regarding violence prevention should have a clear connection to related policies, such as a general code of conduct, harassment, safety, security and health-related policies, and not be free-standing. The corporate policy declares to the workforce and shareholders that this threat is taken seriously; the organisation is poised to respond, and a defensible plan to protect the organisation is in place.

OPERATIONALISE THE POLICY: ESTABLISH A THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

Ideally, a WPV prevention programme should take a cross-organisational view into account. The programme is not just about implementing or enhancing physical security. Successful adoption of any corporate-wide initiative is accomplished through cross-departmental collaboration and should include representation from:

- *legal*: policy development and approval;
- *compliance*: alignment to ethics programme;
- *human resources*: training development and delivery;
- *communications*: programme awareness;
- *facilities management*: physical security; and
- *business resilience*: overall programme management.

The advantage of a multidisciplinary threat assessment team (TAT) is a shared, collaborative review of the threat and analysis and assessment from multiple vantage points. Every case of any import presents all at once, security, legal, human resource, ethics and communication issues. In many organisations, business resilience is the group that understands risk management and the impact any type of incident has on the organisation. This group is well positioned to lead a comprehensive programme.

Cases and context can vary as to which department or discipline may be of greater or lesser importance in risk mitigation activities. Differing perspectives and experience enrich the team's deliberations and decision-making. Team members are advised to share a common 'theory' of violence risk factors and threat case dynamics, as well as a common taxonomy, in order to evaluate the situation in a non-biased manner. It is important to assess the

situation, not (necessarily) the people. If necessary, engage a forensic psychologist to aid the team in assessing the criticality of the threat in order to help determine how far along the pathway to violence an individual may be. The TAT should utilise a structured rating mechanism to determine whether a perceived threat is low, medium, high or imminent (Figure 3) and act accordingly.

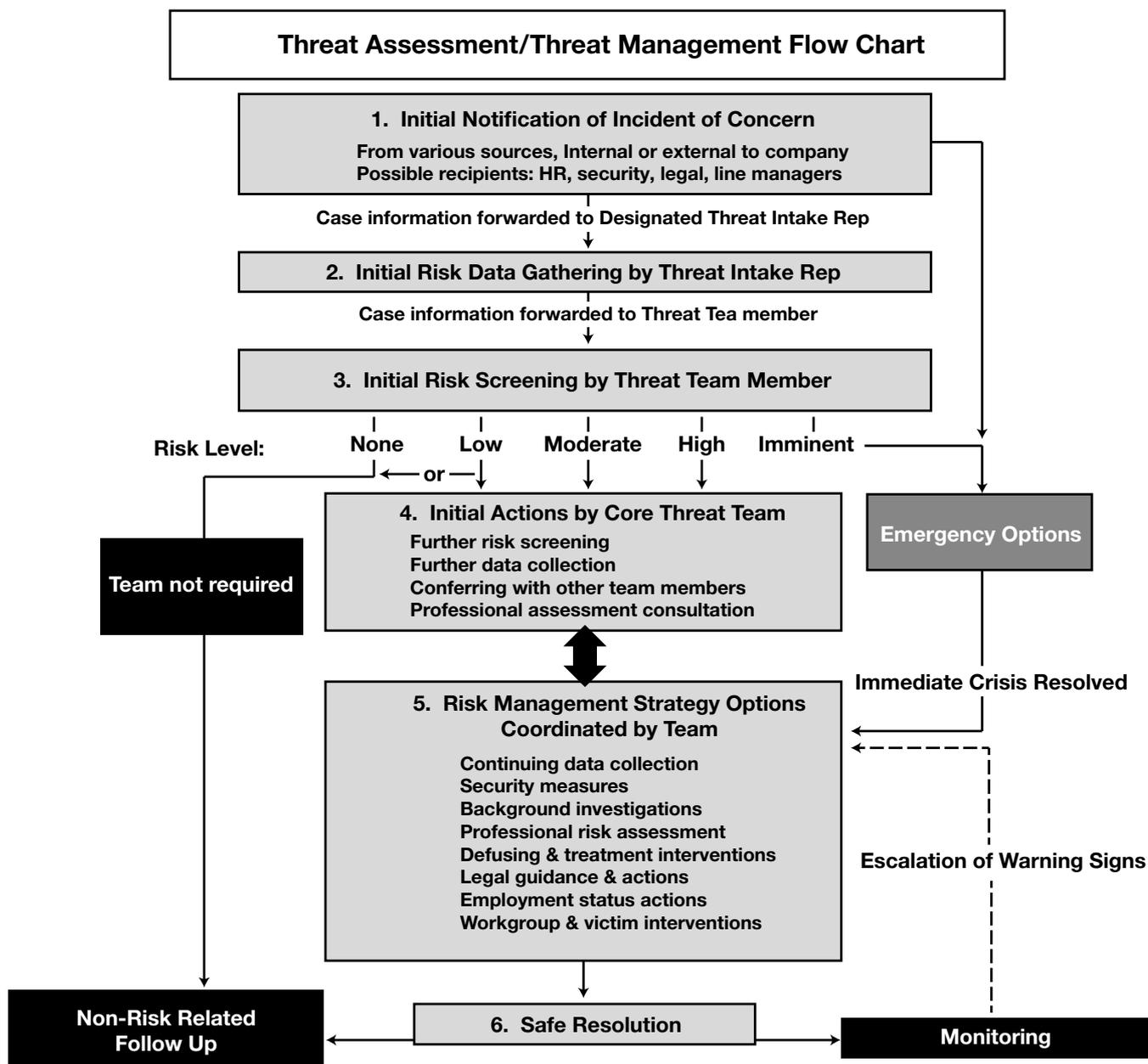Assessing and monitoring potential threats is one of the most important

Threat Assessment/Threat Management Flow Chart

1. Initial Notification of Incident of Concern

From various sources, Internal or external to company
Possible recipients: HR, security, legal, line managers

Case information forwarded to Designated Threat Intake Rep

2. Initial Risk Data Gathering by Threat Intake Rep

Case information forwarded to Threat Tea member

3. Initial Risk Screening by Threat Team Member

Risk Level: **None** **Low** **Moderate** **High** **Imminent**

— or —

Team not required

4. Initial Actions by Core Threat Team

Further risk screening
Further data collection
Conferring with other team members
Professional assessment consultation

Emergency Options

Immediate Crisis Resolved

5. Risk Management Strategy Options Coordinated by Team

Continuing data collection
Security measures
Background investigations
Professional risk assessment
Defusing & treatment interventions
Legal guidance & actions
Employment status actions
Workgroup & victim interventions

Escalation of Warning Signs

Non-Risk Related Follow Up

6. Safe Resolution

Monitoring

Figure 3   The threat assessment/threat management flowchart

Source: American National Standard in Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention (ASIS/SHRM WPVI.1-2011), p. 26. Developed by Stephen G. White, PhD and Work Trauma Services, Inc. (2010). Reproduced with permission.

aspects of a WPV prevention programme. The primary goal of the TAT is to proactively assess the conditions, practices and procedures of the organisation in order to prevent or reduce the chances that a potentially violent situation will occur, and to escalate to external authorities when warranted. On a daily tactical basis, the purpose of this team is to assess potential threats, monitor threats and develop threat mitigation plans specific to the threat.

The TAT's responsibilities include:

- ensuring that security is provided immediately to all affected parties;
- acquiring the consultation and resources necessary for a comprehensive investigation;
- investigating and assessing the risk posed by the circumstance;
- planning and implementing a threat management plan;
- determining the appropriate interventions for both the subject and the target(s);
- overseeing post-vention;
- documenting; and
- contributing to the ongoing safety of the organisation.

TRAINING, AWARENESS, EXERCISING

Executive buy-in and employee engagement are the keys to a successful workplace violence prevention programme.

Training, awareness and exercising are the cornerstones to ensure TAT, leadership, management and employees are engaged and understand their individual roles toward WPV prevention and response.

Effective corporate training programmes are customised to reach and add value to the intended audience. Determine what the training requirements are and what training medium works best for your employees. Consider whether different groups should

have more advanced training, such as the TAT, and determine what training frequency works best for the organisation.

Awareness-level training typically introduces an operational definition of workplace violence, the various types and sources of violence, the precipitants of violent behaviour, warning signs and pre-incident risk indicators, how to report concerns about potential violence, and how to respond to an incident of violence, including an active-shooter incident. Discussion of immediate post-incident concerns is also often included. Awareness-level training is often best received and most useful when it is tiered to the various levels of employment. Managers and supervisors are often in a unique position to recognise and intervene in potential risk situations, and executive leaders have additional concerns regarding the regulatory climate, litigation, brand and reputation, and other issues.

TAT training focuses on improving skills rather than awareness as there is already an expectation that team members will be able to execute a specific task when called upon. The nature of this type of training is more 'hands on', involving not only theory, but practice in determining the level of risk in threat cases, as well as developing effective and defensible threat management responses.

Similarly, one should consider which kinds of drills and exercises are best suited to the organisation. Recommend incorporating workplace violence training into annual mandatory compliance training with a goal of changing the mindset of employees from being potential victims to prevention advocates. Educating and empowering employees to recognise the signs, symptoms, precursory actions, etc of the aggressive deadly behaviour life cycle gives the programme the added depth of awareness that is so important for threat mitigation.

Remember that employees are a company's greatest asset. Employees may be

the first to recognise that something is not quite right with a co-worker. Recent events and studies have proven there are 'tells' that can indicate someone is on a pathway to violence.[15,16]

REPORTING

The WPV policy should include both employer and employee expectations, to include an obligation for the employer to enable a safe, non-retaliatory environment for employees to readily and rapidly report any issue of workplace violence. The policy should also indicate the employer's obligation to investigate threats of violence and determine appropriate action. In addition, the policy should document an obligation for employees to report any threats they have witnessed, received or have been told that another person has witnessed or received, or behaviour that could be construed as a safety risk to the organisation.

One recommendation is to establish a confidential hotline that could include anonymous reporting; however, providing options for reporting to a manager or supervisor, human resources, security, legal, ethics and/or compliance should also be considered viable options.

When reporting an incident, it is important to communicate as many of the facts as accurately and thoroughly possible, most notably:

- where and when the issue occurred;
- who witnessed the issue;
- what was said or done; and
- how the issue occurred (verbal, physical, written, etc).

Every incident report should be reviewed in a timely manner by, at the very least, one member of the TAT, with those of significant concern requiring action being reviewed by the full TAT.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS

In addition to a TAT, there are various other tools and processes that should be considered part of a viable WPV prevention programme.

Align the programme with existing organisational operational elements including employee onboarding and off-boarding. Ensure that pre-employment background checks are substantial so that the organisation really knows its employees. In addition, make sure that vendors perform adequate background checks for any contingent work staff. Train human resource personnel to evaluate risks associated with employee performance improvement coaching and ensure that employee terminations, be they voluntary or involuntary, are reviewed with a critical eye toward amicable departure. Consider an alliance with the ethics and compliance investigative team to review potential cases that may advance toward a threatening or volatile condition. Ensure there are clear social media guidelines and a mechanism to monitor the activity of any suspect (employee or non-employee) behaviour.

In addition, it is recommended to assess each work facility from a 'red team/ perpetrator' perspective to gain a perspective on potential external threats of violence. This can be performed in collaboration with the business continuity annual hazard vulnerability assessment and should pay close attention to external conditions that could raise the overall threat level of the facility, making it a direct or residual target of workplace violence (eg positioned near desirable targets such as universities, government buildings, key infrastructure points, etc), as well as internal considerations including floor layout, alarms, cameras, monitors, structural components, environmental conditions and security staffing. This is

also a good time to audit whether the facility's inhabitants understand the WPV policy, have completed training, and have exercised their knowledge of the pro–gramme. Such detailed understanding of the risk environments at each facility is valuable when implementing specific threat risk mitigation plans or when acti–vating a response protocol.

IDENTIFY, COMMUNICATE, ASSESS, MITIGATE: THE ICAM FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

A successful WPV prevention programme can be summarised into a simple frame–work as outlined in Figure 4 and the following sections.

Identification

Identification is all about education. It is important for employees at every level of the organisation to clearly understand the various types and sources of workplace violence, the behavioural predictors, and the best ways to respond to violence in their settings. Train employees on how to identify who may be on a pathway toward violence. There is no specific profile and people do not just 'snap'. However, there are recognisable behaviours that could be precursors to WPV. For example:

- *Organisational triggers of violence*:
  - layoffs;
  - termination;
  - disciplinary action;

- Educate on Types and Sources of Violence, Predictors and Response Actions
  - Managers
  - Supervisors
  - All Employees

- Provide non-retaliatory mechanisms to report suspicious activity
  - Internal
  - External

Identification

Communication

Mitigation

Assessment

- Report to Authorities
  - Psychological Intervention
  - Law Enforcement Intervention
- Activate Safety Protocols
- Exercise Response Protocols

- Perform Various Types of Assessments:
  - Background Checks
  - Mental Health History
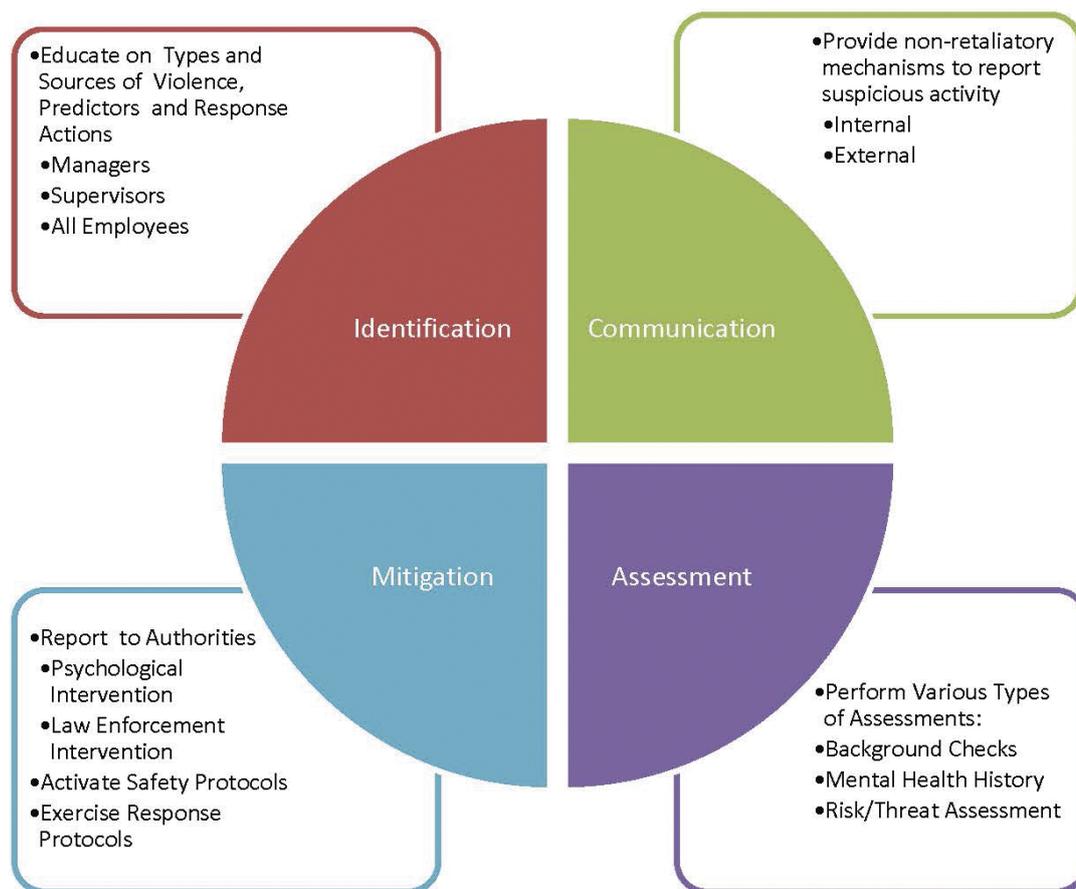 - Risk/Threat Assessment

Figure 4   The workplace violence prevention ICAM framework

- passed over for promotion;
- reassignment;
- office closing or relocating;
- investigation/accusation;
- perceived slights.
- *Personal precipitants*:
  - relationship problems such as divorce
  - financial and/or legal problems;
  - perceived or pending job suspension or termination;
  - loss of a loved one;
  - onset of a serious health problem;
  - alcohol or drug relapse;
  - discontinuation of medication or medication not working;
  - discontinuation of mental health services.
- *Societal factors*:
  - current levels of economic stress and uncertainty;
  - levels of violence in the surrounding community or culture;
  - local news coverage of violent events;
  - activity of violent groups;
  - levels of violence on television, in movies, etc.

Awareness of the behaviours and communications that correlate with the risk of violence can help employees identify fellow workmates who may be having issues that could lead to more serious issues, up to and including violence.

Communication
Provide a non-retaliatory means to enable communication regarding suspicious behaviour. Encourage employees to speak up. Encourage the 'if you see something, say something' mentality. Provide multiple avenues for employees to feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Those who receive complaints or concerns must have specific training on how to handle and escalate reports once received.

How many times have post-incident reports identified obvious signals that were never reported? A series of recent high-profile school shootings in the USA illustrates the potential pitfalls in communication, especially when different individuals and agencies each have different pieces of the puzzle but fail to communicate and connect those pieces, which would have revealed the picture of a person well along the pathway to violence.

Assessment
Assessing a situation typically involves a confidential investigation in order to obtain as much information as possible from those who have either been named in the case or who may be familiar with the individuals involved. As outlined previously, the TAT can be incorporated into corporate and non-corporate organisations to lead situational assessments. Engage the correct level of authority to assess the situation. Not every member of the TAT needs to be immediately involved with these detailed information-gathering sessions. Consider having the human resource TAT member take a lead in these discussions. Then bring the details to the full TAT for review and assessment. In some cases, it may be worth bringing in a subject matter expert, such as a forensic psychologist, to assist with evaluating behaviours and determining the volatility of a situation. Utilise a standard approach to rank probability and impact (such as the previously referenced threat assessment/threat management flow-chart) of a potential threat in order to determine what, if any, risk mitigation activities should be implemented.

If the situation is an immediate high-risk concern (which would include a specific threat, specific target, and/or specific time frame), engage local authorities and external subject matter experts to assist.

Mitigation

In some situations, such as with domestic violence, it is possible to invoke both personal and organisational safety plans that can help the individual targeted, as well as the organisation, be less vulnerable. These may include 'target hardening' actions, such as adding additional security staff, changing work routines, providing a buddy system/escorts, etc. For involuntary terminations, residual impact may be minimised by creating a 'soft landing' through expansion of benefits and employee assistance programmes following termination.

Risk mitigation can also be enhanced through developing relationships with external authorities and notifying them of any threats received. In many cases, they will offer insight on their jurisdictions and alternative measures for risk mitigation.

RESPONSE: ACTIVE ASSAILANT PROTOCOL

The term 'active shooter' implies an assailant wielding a firearm, and is the term utilised by most law enforcement agencies; the term 'active assailant', meanwhile, is intended to be more inclusive of other means of violence as not all acts of violence involve firearms. This being said, employees should all be familiar with an accepted model of response, such as the 'Run, Hide, Fight' protocol.[17] While presented in a 'linear' progression, choosing the best option for the situation should be the first decision point when considering viable options if ever confronted by an active shooter, or any assailant with intent to harm.

Making a plan is everyone's individual responsibility. Make sure you know what you would do if confronted by an active assailant. Running entails putting time and distance between yourself and the threat. It is important to know not just how to run from danger, but how to run to safety. If escape is not possible, the best option may be to hide. Hiding involves cover and concealment. Concealment means getting out of the assailant's view, staying quiet and silencing cell phones. Cover refers to putting something solid and heavy between yourself and the threat. For example, if a shooting occurred in a parking lot, hiding behind the engine compartment of a vehicle would provide ballistic cover as the engine block would likely stop a bullet, whereas hiding behind the passenger compartment doors or trunk would not. When hiding indoors, lock/block doors, close blinds and turn off lights. Based upon the totality of the situation, fighting the assailant may be the best option. Fighting means attacking the assailant as aggressively as possible. Be prepared to distract and disarm the assailant or cause severe or lethal injury to the assailant. Use improvised weapons available in the workplace, and act as a team if there are others with you. If you or a colleague is injured and it is safe to do so, apply direct pressure on wounded areas and use tourniquets to stop bleeding. 'Stop the bleed' training is now regularly added to employee response training to help save lives, and the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have developed an effective training programme and national campaign known as 'Until Help Arrives' to encourage individuals, organisations and communities to learn the basics of bleeding control.[18]

It is also important to train employees how to react safely to the law enforcement response to an active assailant situation. In the initial response, the police are likely to be forceful and focused on finding and stopping the attacker. As the police arrive, keep your hands up, empty and open, and follow all law enforcement instructions.

Corporations should incorporate regular exercises that include not only swift facility evacuations, but also facility lockdown and shelter–in–place manoeuvres. Ideal safe rooms should have no windows and a lockable door. Most modern workspaces are built to promote 'open door' policies and transparency rather than protection from potential intruders. Even if ideal safe rooms are available and identified, they may be in the direct line of the assailant and hence not the best choice. Employees therefore need to learn how to improvise safe rooms by choosing a room with as few windows as possible, that provides the best concealment, and where the door can be barricaded.

There is some controversy around how realistic active assailant exercises should be and whether or not specific dates and times should be communicated to employees in advance. Every organisation needs to determine the appropriate level of realism that best suits its organisational culture and level of crisis management maturity. While there is much value from both corporate and public authority exercise involvement, consideration should be given to the unintended trauma that could result from staging a full–scale exercise involving active assailant actors and external response units. To minimise a negative experience, the organisation should consider all–employee advisory communications regarding this type of exercise in advance. A safer approach would be to engage smaller groups of employees in a tabletop exercise where a scenario is discussed, breaking down not only employee responses, but also 'special team' responses. These 'special teams' could include communications focusing on how to handle media following an incident; business continuity focusing on how to continue business operations following an incident with the likelihood the facility is an active crime scene investigation and may be closed for several hours or days; human resources focusing on bringing in employee assistance programme resources for trauma counselling; etc.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMME: ADDED VALUE

Employees are the organisation's greatest asset. The WPV prevention programme validates this corporate value by examining human risk management and providing a structured, collaborative approach to recognise, assess, mitigate and respond to potential threats within the workplace.

This includes enabling collaboration between existing corporate elements, human resources, ethics, security/facility management, legal, communications and business resilience, to raise an awareness of and immediate response protocol toward potential threats within the organisation.

Most importantly, the WPV prevention programme empowers the employee to have a voice and ownership in workplace safety and, ideally, reduce the likelihood of being a victim of workplace violence.

THE BROADER VIEW: TAKING THE ICAM MODEL TO COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT

The USA is witnessing a national, if not global, problem affecting communities, places of work, schools, houses of worship, arenas, shopping malls and people's daily sense of safety. A violent act in the workplace creates 'trickle-down trauma' in the very communities where employees and their families live. A violent event in the community will have direct impact on one's workforce. Violent incidents, like other crises, are moments of truth for organisations. How
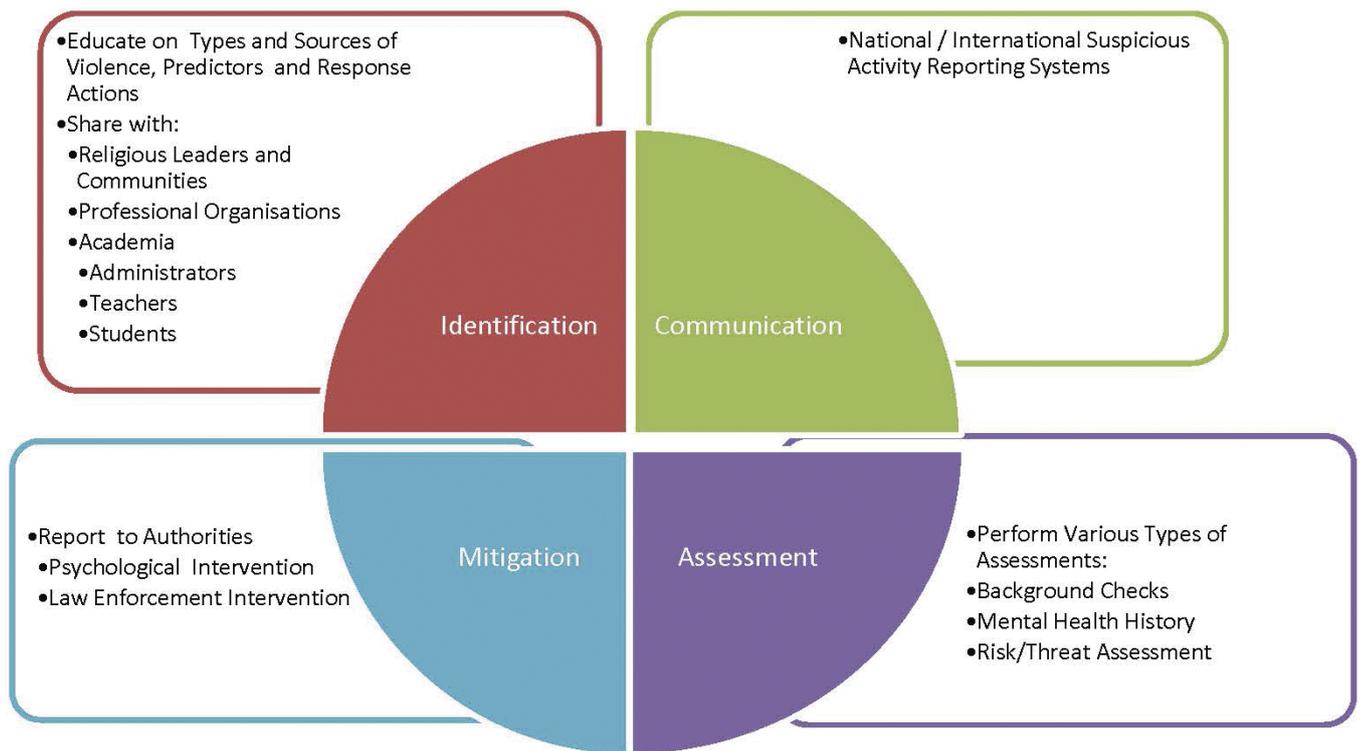
Figure 5 *The workplace violence prevention model applied to communities*

the organisation responds to the challenges associated with a violent event are likely to be remembered long after the last shot is fired. How an organisation acts before a violence event can also make a lasting impression and may help prepare not only its workforce, but the entire community for the possibility of a violent event. As corporate citizens, it is important that organisations recognise their role in the community. Business continuity and emergency management professionals have expertise in the fundamentals of risk management, as well as disciplines that can be harnessed to help establish a protocol of safety throughout professional and personal communities. Consider sharing these methods (Figure 5) with family and community members and resources to broaden awareness to prevent violence from occurring, fostering a safer global community.

AUTHORS' NOTE

Any advertisements attached to the YouTube video referenced herein do not reflect any endorsement by the authors of this paper.

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