

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING HANDOUT

PLEASE NOTE:

This handout is intended to complement the SDRMA Workplace Violence Prevention Training [video](#).

Simply reviewing the handout does not comply with the Senate Bill [553](#) training requirements.


Please talk to your manager or supervisor if you have any questions.



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DISCLAIMER

All employees should be trained on District-specific hazards and control measures in place. This information does not ensure compliance with state or local regulations. SDRMA assumes no liability for any use of this information.

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BACKGROUND

As part of California's Workplace Violence Prevention standard mandated by SB 553, Cal/OSHA requires covered employers to develop a workplace violence prevention plan, so staff are informed on recognition, reporting, and response protocols.

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WHAT IS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Any act of violence *or threat* of violence that occurs in a place of employment including but not limited to:

- The *threat* or use of physical force against an employee that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, psychological trauma, or stress, *regardless of whether the employee sustains an injury.*
- “*Threat of violence*” means any verbal or written statement, including, but not limited to, texts, electronic messages, social media messages, or other online posts, or any behavioral or physical conduct, that conveys an intent, or that is reasonably perceived to convey an intent, *to cause physical harm or to place someone in fear of physical harm, and that serves no legitimate purpose.*
- An incident involving a threat or use of a firearm or other dangerous weapon, including the use of common objects as weapons, regardless of whether the employee sustains an injury.
- The four types of workplace violence defined in Labor Code section 6401.9.

Note: "Workplace violence" does not include lawful acts of self-defense or defense of others.



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TYPES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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Type 1 Violence

Committed by a person who has no legitimate business at the worksite and includes violent acts by anyone who enters the workplace or approaches employees.

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Type 2 Violence

Workplace violence directed at employees by customers, clients, patients, contractors, volunteers, delivery personnel, or visitors.

3

Type 3 Violence

Workplace violence against an employee by a present or former employee, supervisor, or manager.

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Type 4 Violence

Workplace violence committed by a person who does not work there but has or is known to have had a personal relationship with an employee.

* Workplace violence does not include lawful acts of self-defense or defense of others.

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EXEMPTIONS TO THIS PLAN

- Those who are required to comply with [CCR 3342](#), Violence Prevention in Healthcare. This includes firefighters and other emergency responders when providing emergency medical services and medical transport.
- POST participating law enforcement agencies and the Department of Corrections
- Employers with less than 10 employees *and* no public access
- Employees teleworking from a location of the employee's choice, which is not under the control of the employer



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CURRENT WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Hazard Assessment of Risk Factors
- Conduct inspections initially, annually, after an incident occurs, or when new or previously unidentified hazards are recognized
- Timely correction of hazards
- Communicating what to do during and after an incident
- Conducting a post incident investigation
- Provide training initially, when newly hired, annually, or when a new or previously unrecognized hazard has been identified.
- Employee (& designated representatives) access to written plan and violence incident log within 15 days



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WE NEED YOUR HELP

- Employees are encouraged to participate in the development of this policy by identifying hazards and discussing tasks or situations that could result in workplace violence
- Report all workplace violence incidents to your immediate supervisor or plan Administrator including but not limited to: Physical Assault, Threatening Behavior or Verbal abuse

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FACILITY DESIGN, LIGHTING, AND SECURITY

- Adequate lighting in parking lots, hallways, and stairwells is a widely recognized crime deterrent. Report dead light bulbs so they can be quickly replaced
- Do not obstruct lines of sight to doors or hallways accessible to the public with furniture or decor
- Keep doors/gates locked; do not share passcodes with anyone (if applicable)
- If your site affords escorts by security personnel, save their dispatch number to your phone for quick access.



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OBSERVE AND RECOGNIZE

Signs of Imminent Danger

- Intensity in appearance with heightened senses
- Flushed, tightened jaw, clenched fists, shaking, flaring nostrils
- Rapid breathing, raised voice, nervous laughter
- Poised to strike or lunge
- Standing in a position to attack or defend
- Personal space violation
- An unauthorized person trying to enter a restricted area
- Someone impersonating an authorized person
- Someone trying to avoid security systems or personnel
- Someone abandoning an object or package and then leaving the area

Early Warning Signs

- Changes in a co-worker's baseline behavior
- Pacing, ruminating, agitated
- gestures, or uncontrolled and
- disorganized behaviors
- Staring through you
- Blocking other's movement
- Finger pointing
- Change in mood
- Distractions from work or an inability to focus

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LOOK FOR

- Oversized or loose-fitting clothes
- Clothes not appropriate for an event or the weather
- Keeping hands in pockets or concealing hands
- Repositioning a weapon (confirmation touch)
- Small bulges near waist or hip
- Oversized torso or bulky jackets/vest
- Favoring one side (strong side)
- Blading (turning body to protect or conceal a weapon)
- Nervousness, muttering
- Tunnel vision or 1000-mile stare
- Trouble communicating
- Repeated entries and exits to an area



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ACCESS THE SITUATION

- 
- Start by trusting your instincts; if the situation is beyond your abilities to engage, seek help
 - De-escalate yourself first – remain calm or act calm if you aren't
 - Control your breathing
 - Relax your body and avoid gestures or postures that could be interpreted as aggressive or defensive
 - Reassure yourself with positive self-talk – "You can do this" or "I can handle this"
 - Project confidence and remain centered and self-assured
 - Does the person appear to be legitimately patronizing the business or service?
 - Is the person's clothing consistent with the weather or the situation?
 - Is the person avoiding security?
 - Is the person asking questions about business functions or employee information? (e.g., "Who is closing?" or "How many people work here?" etc.)
 - Is the person's behavior making you feel threatened?
 - How is the person reacting to you or others when approached?
 - Ask yourself "Is this normal for the context?"

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DE-ESCALATION

- The use of verbal and nonverbal *communication* to stabilize, slow, or reduce the intensity of a potentially physical or emotional act of violence
- Know your limits and seek help – Some individuals may be more adept in applying de-escalation technique, although anyone can improve with practice. If you feel the individual or situation is escalation beyond your control, seek help immediately



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GENERAL DE-ESCALATION TIPS

- Breathe slowly to remain calm
- Check room for makeshift weapons that could be used
- Use non-threatening body postures
- Position yourself between person and door (or exit route)
- Respect personal space – maintain a safe distance and avoid touching the other person
- Listen: give your full attention, nod, ask questions, be curious, and avoid changing the subject or interrupting
- Allow the agitated person to keep talking as long as they are being respectful. The more the person talks the more likely they will feel heard and validated
- Empathize: present genuine concern, and a willingness to understand without judging.
- Use "I" statements



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BODY LANGUAGE

Instead Of:

Standing rigidly directly in front of the person

Pointing your finger

Excessive gesturing or pacing

Faking a smile

Try...

Keeping a relaxed and alert stance off to the side of the person

Keeping your hands down, open, and visible at all times

Using slow, deliberate movements

Maintaining a neutral and attentive facial expression

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VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Tone + Volume + Rate of speech + Inflection of voice = Verbal De-Escalation

Tone: Speak calmly to demonstrate empathy.

Volume: Monitor your volume and avoid raising your voice.

Rate of Speech: Slower can be more soothing.

Inflection: Be aware of emphasizing words or syllables as that can negatively affect the situation.

Instead Of:

“Calm down.”

“I can’t help you.”

“I know how you feel.”

“Come with me.”

Say...

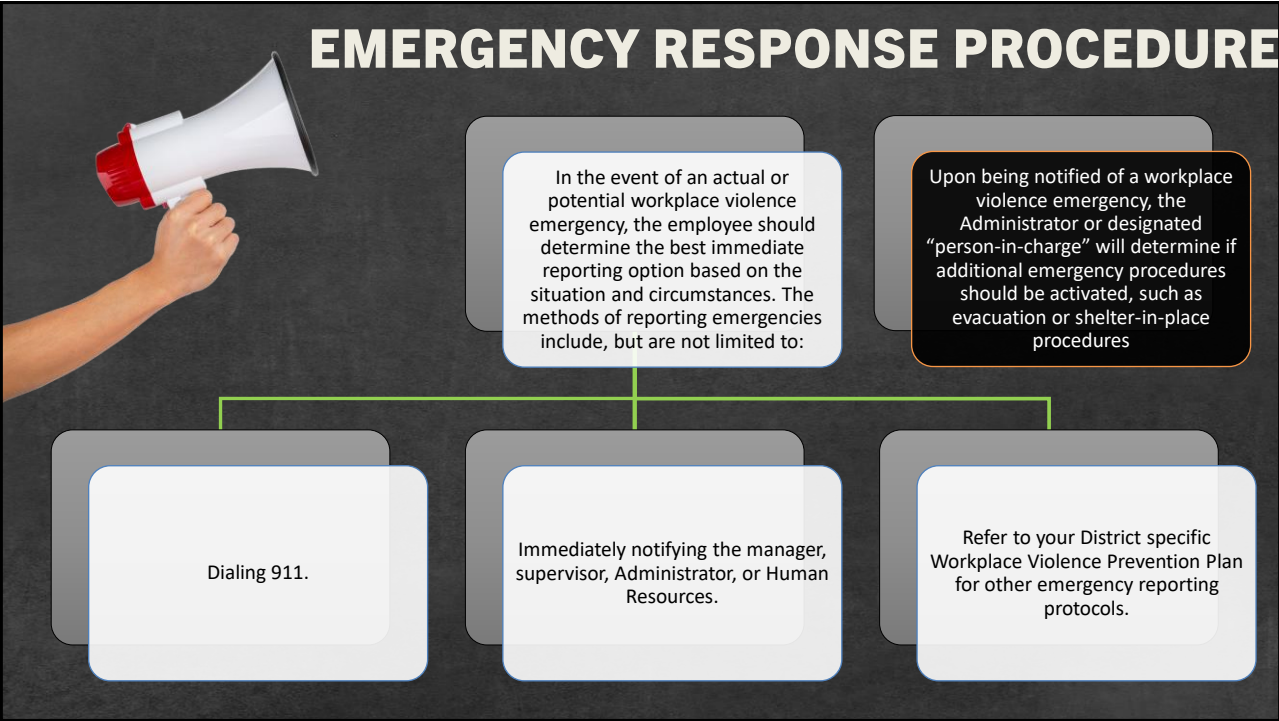
“I can see that you are upset...”

“I want to help, what can I do?”

“I understand that you feel...”

“May I speak with you?”

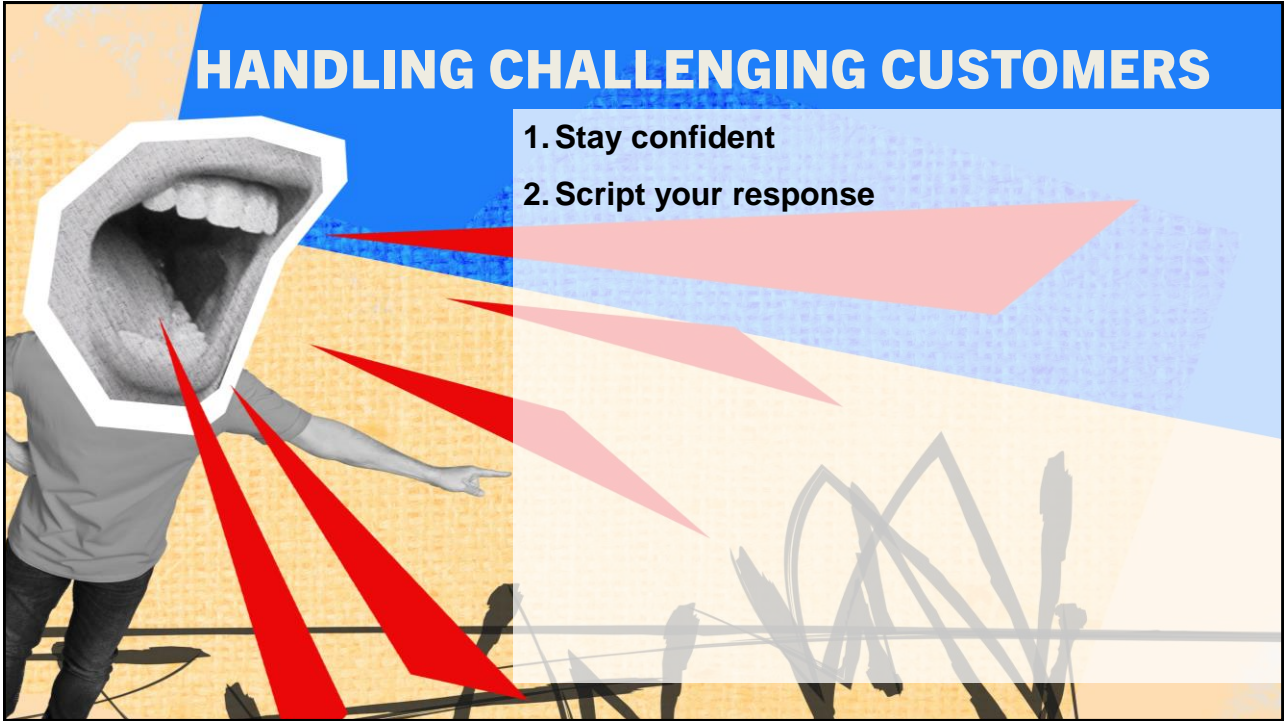
EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURE





**SPECIFIC EXPOSURES TO POTENTIAL
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND PREVENTION
STRATEGIES**

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HANDLING CHALLENGING CUSTOMERS

- 1. Stay confident**
- 2. Script your response**

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Listening Phrases	Acknowledging phrases	Ending/transition phrases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me more • I understand • Please continue • I'm here to listen • Would you say more about that? • I would like to understand more about what's happening • Tell me why this is important to you • Is there anything else you would like me to know? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is what I've heard you say so far. • What I'm hearing is . . . • I can see your point on that. • I'd be upset, too. • I can see how much this has upset you. • I can't ever know exactly what that was like, but I can see how much it has affected you. • That's a difficult situation to be in. • That's upsetting to hear. • I'm very sorry you're upset by what's happened. • I'm very sorry that this has been your experience. • I'm sorry you're going through this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm very sorry to interrupt, but I want to make sure I understand everything before it's time to go. • I will do everything I can to help you, but finding a resolution may take some time. • I don't think we are going to resolve this today. I will do my best to help you, but I cannot guarantee a specific outcome. • I'm grateful for your feedback. But it may take some time to resolve your situation. Can I get back to you? • I've never thought about it that way. Let me talk to my [colleagues/my office manager/the medical director] and see what [he/she/they] thinks. • I may not be the best person to address your concerns. But I can find out who is.

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HANDLING CHALLENGING CUSTOMERS

1. Stay confident
2. Script your response
3. Listen actively
4. Mirror their complaint
5. Stay calm
6. Break the problem down
7. Offer sympathy
8. Be realistic
9. Ask for help if confrontation escalates or if you feel you are in danger

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SETTING BOUNDARIES

- "I'm sorry. I can't help while listening to that language. If it stops, I can help."
- "I'm trying to help you, but the language (or loudness) is getting in the way."
- "I'm trying to help you, but if you continue to yell (or swear/interrupt me), I will ask you to call back again."
- "I am happy to help you, but I ask that you speak respectfully to me."

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UNHOUSED PERSON ON-SITE




- Make eye contact, say "hello", and treat everyone with respect regardless of their appearance
- If an unhoused person is in your establishment for legitimate business purposes, you should treat them like any other customer
- Establish an amicable relationship and ask their name
- If someone is being disruptive, unhoused or not, try to de-escalate the situation if you are comfortable doing so
- Politely ask unwanted persons to leave or deflect to on-site security
- If anyone is interfering with your ability to do business and will not leave, call the non-emergency number of the Police Department to request assistance
- If someone is threatening harm to themselves or others, acting violent or reckless, or appearing to be experiencing a crisis, politely ask them to leave and call 911
- If you feel calling the police may agitate the person further, call 911 and pretend you are talking to a friend or coworker while trying to help the dispatcher understand the problem and your exact location



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ACTIVE SHOOTER



RUN	HIDE	FIGHT
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify the location(s) of the threat ▶ Quickly escape from the threat (via windows, stairs, doors, etc.) ▶ Leave belongings behind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Block entry to hiding place and lock doors ▶ Hide in area out of the shooter's view ▶ Silence mobile communication devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commit to decisive and aggressive action ▶ Your goal is to incapacitate the shooter ▶ Fight until the threat is neutralized

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BOMB THREATS

PHONE THREAT

- Remain calm.
- Immediately use the Bomb Threat Checklist for guidance and to document the call.
- After the caller has ended the call, notify the Administrator.
- If the threat was left on your voicemail, do not erase and immediately notify the Administrator.

WRITTEN THREAT

- Handle the document as little as possible and immediately notify the Administrator.
- If the threat should come via e-mail, save the information.

POSSIBLE EVACUATION

- The Administrator will call law enforcement and follow their instructions.
- The decision to evacuate is handled on a case-by-case basis on instructions given by law enforcement.

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BOMB THREAT CHECKLIST

REMAIN CALM			
Time call received:	Time call ended:		
Document any information from the phone display window:			
Engage caller as long as possible and document their words:			
Attempt to obtain information about the device:			
When will the device detonate or activate?			
Where is the device located?			
What kind of device is it?			
What does the device look like?			
Voice Description			
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Young	<input type="checkbox"/> Calm	Accent? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult	<input type="checkbox"/> Nervous	Describe:
	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior		
Did you recognize the voice? Who?			
Did caller have knowledge of building?			
Unusual phrases:			
Any background noise or distinctive sounds?			
Name of person received call			

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CIVIL UNREST

Shelter-In-Place

- If there is a need to shelter-in-place, the Administrator or person-in-charge will advise employees and guests of the emergency. The person in-charge will collect the names of everyone in the shelter area.
 - If possible, the business voicemail recording will be updated to indicate the building is closed due to the emergency.
 - If the civil unrest includes hazardous chemicals, the HVAC systems may be shut off.
 - If in danger of broken glass, window shades will be closed.
- Emergency supplies will be moved to the shelter area.

The District will listen/read available mediums (radio, internet) for further instructions until we are told all is safe or to evacuate.

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SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

Characteristics to Look For

- Restricted endorsements such as "personal" or "private." This is important when the addressee does not normally receive personal mail at the office.
- The addressee's name and/ title might be inaccurate.
- Distorted handwriting, or the name and address might be prepared with homemade labels or cut-and-paste lettering.
- Protruding wires, aluminum foil or oil stains visible.
- Emit a peculiar odor.
- Envelope might feel rigid or appear uneven or lopsided.
- Unprofessionally wrapped with several combinations of tape. Might be endorsed "Fragile-Handle With Care" or "Rush-Do Not Delay."
- Making a buzzing or ticking noise or sloshing sound.



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SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE

If you suspect a suspicious package or letter

- Do not take a chance. Immediately call 911
- Do not move, alter, open, examine, or disturb the article
- Do not put the package in water or a confined space such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet
- Isolate the area from people and clear the immediate vicinity until law enforcement arrives



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For specific workplace violence hazards unique to your worksite(s), refer to your District's workplace violence prevention plan or talk to your District's plan Administrator.

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POST INCIDENT INVESTIGATION


After a workplace incident, the Administrator or their designee will implement the following post-incident procedures:

- Visit the scene of an incident as soon as it is safe and practicable
- Interview involved parties, such as employees, witnesses, law enforcement, and/or security personnel
- Review security footage of existing security cameras if applicable
- Examine the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any previous reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator
- Determine the cause of the incident
- Take corrective action to prevent similar incidents from occurring
- Complete the Violent Incident log for every workplace violence incident and ensure corrective actions are taken
- Obtain any reports completed by law enforcement



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SUMMARY



Observe and Recognize the potential warning signs of workplace violence.

Assess the situation starting with yourself and then the environment.

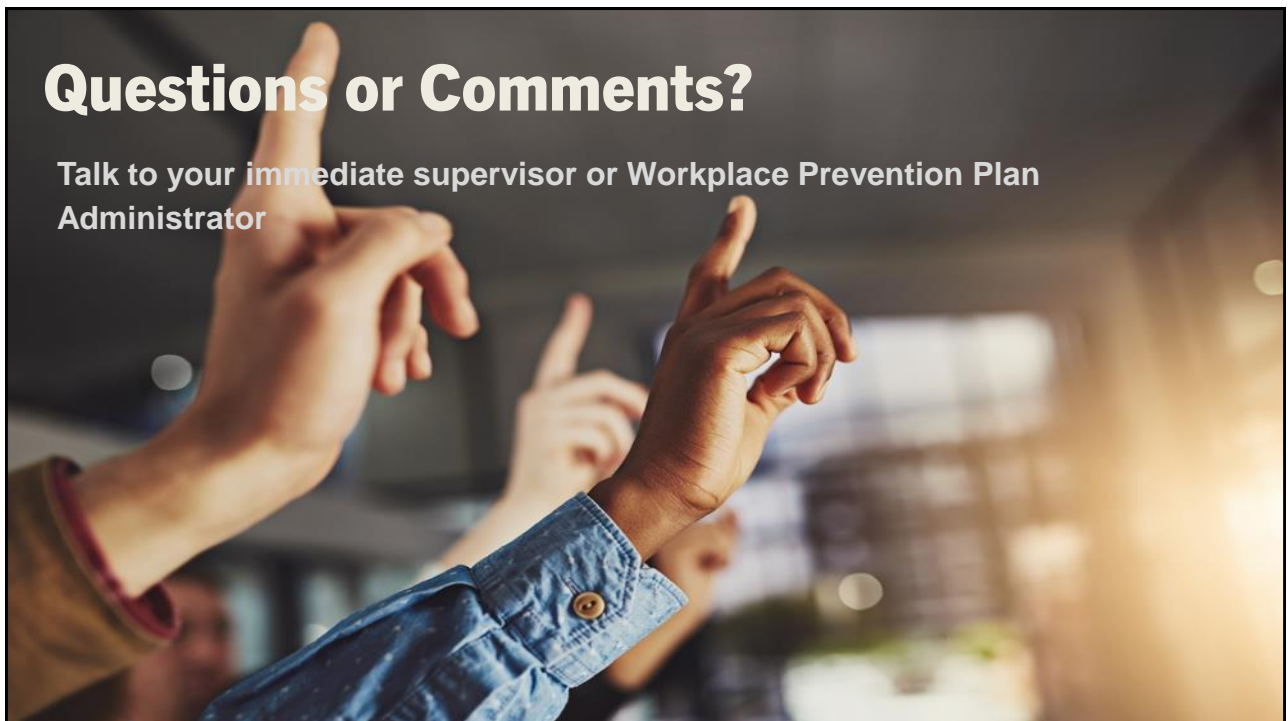
De-Escalate. Use purposeful verbal and nonverbal communication to stabilize, slow, or reduce the intensity of a potentially physical or emotional act of violence.

Report. Determine the best immediate reporting option based on the situation and circumstances.

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Questions or Comments?

Talk to your immediate supervisor or Workplace Prevention Plan Administrator



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