SUBJECT: Workplace Violence Prevention Program
SCOPE: EH East-wide
SECTION: Safety
PRIMARY AUTHOR: Manager, Security

POLICY: S1605
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APPROVING COMMITTEE AND DATE:
EH East Environment of Care Committee _9/11

REVIEWED BY:
  EH East Environmental Safety Officer

PURPOSE:
To provide for a safe environment by establishing the EH East Workplace Violence Prevention Program.

POLICY:
I.   Essentia Health is committed to providing a violence-free work environment.
II. Essentia Health has "zero tolerance" for any type of violent or threatening behavior by anyone.
III. This policy applies to staff, patients, visitors, medical staff, students, volunteers, vendors and contract employees.
IV. Employees must report any threatening behavior or violent incident and they will not face retaliatory actions for reporting.

DEFINITIONS:
I.   Definitions.
  A. Workplace: Includes any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work-related duty. This includes, but is not limited to, buildings and surrounding perimeters, including parking lots, field locations, clients' homes, and traveling to and from work assignments.
  B. Workplace Violence: May include any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse that occurs (e.g., bullying, intimidation, harassment, fear, assault, use of physical force, such as beating, stabbing, shootings and sexual assaults).

PROCEDURE:
I.   Program Responsibilities.
  A. Administration provides support and resources necessary to design, implement and maintain the Workplace Violence Prevention Program.
  B. Environmental Safety Officer monitors and evaluates policies, procedures and resources to assess compliance with the Workplace Violence Prevention Program. After coordinating with Security, may also initiate or conduct investigations of reported violations.
  C. Human Resources / Employee Health coordinate follow-up/treatment for individuals who experience or observe workplace violence (as needed).
  D. Risk Management/Patient Relations coordinates and follows up on any required legal or patient relation actions.
  E. Security manages and implements the Workplace Violence Prevention Program; acts on reports and coordinates post-incident response and evaluation; conducts necessary follow-up investigations; and maintains a database of all reported incidents.
  F. Administrators, Managers, Supervisors:
    1. Provides and promotes a safe and secure work environment for assigned staff.
    2. Conducts department-specific education on risks, safeguards and preventing assaults.
    3. Encourages staff to report conditions that compromise safety and security.
    4. Ensures staff know, and are familiar with, the operation of their department emergency devices.
    5. Offers conflict and crisis intervention to include de-escalation technique training to staff working in areas prone to violence, such as in the following departments: Emergency, Behavioral Health, Intensive Care Units, Registration and Security (available from EH East Organizational Learning & Development).

6. Ensures employees who work in cashier, retail and similar type operations are trained on proper responses during robberies, thefts or other criminal acts.
7. Prevents persons from working alone in remote areas.
8. Coordinates risk assessments with Security, Environmental Safety Officer and other departments (as necessary).

G. Employees:
1. Immediately report any violent, threatening or harassing behavior regardless of injury or severity. Complete a Security Violence Incident Report (http://securityincident/WPViolence.aspx) for all situations and forward it to Security.
2. Inform Security of any situation where there is a potential for violence as a result of domestic abuse, custodial disputes, order for protections or restraining orders, and other threats posed by non-employees.
3. Minimize wearing of jewelry, necklaces, and carrying other items that could be used as a weapon or cause strangulation or other injury during confrontational situations.
4. Use a buddy system when personal safety may be jeopardized. Avoid threatening situations and use extra care in elevators, stairwells, parking areas and unfamiliar residences.
5. Understand the concept of "Universal Precautions for Violence." Violence should be expected, but may be avoided or mitigated through preparation.

II. Administrative and physical controls in place that provide protection and response to workplace violence include:
A. Physical controls:
1. Panic and duress alarms, emergency telephones, and other communication systems.
2. Electronic access control system.
3. Security Operations Center is open 24 hours to receive alarms and/or emergency response calls.
4. Closed circuit television and surveillance cameras in selected areas.
5. Metal detectors and other security devices based on the hazards present.
B. Administrative and work practice controls include:
1. Emergency response code for combative, violent and out of control behavior.
2. Incident reporting.
3. Trained security officers to deal with aggressive behavior.
4. Employee photo Identification Badges.
5. Use of buddy system and/or Security escorts to parking and other areas.
6. Staff training to avoid or respond appropriately to threatening situations.
7. Identification and appropriate management of potentially violent patients.
8. Refer to EH East Safety Policy S1606, Weapons, Guns, Pistols and Firearms.
9. Refer to EH East HR Policy HR0007, Discrimination and Harassment.
10. "Caution Alert System" where individuals who have a previous history of violent or threatening behavior are identified in the patient registration system.

III. Response to Violent and Threatening Behavior.
A. Staff must be alert to the warning signs and be prepared to act quickly and appropriately at the first sign of trouble.
1. Violence is usually preceded by warning signs that appear just before the incident or buildup of precipitating factors over time.
2. Use judgment and take reasonable measures to keep a potentially violent situation from escalating.
B. Unusual activities must be promptly reported to Security, Facility Administrator, or the local police department.
C. Security, administrative rep, nursing supervisors, and facility administrators have the authority to take immediate steps to quell or subdue immediate threats when the safety of people is at risk.
D. Non-patients who engage in threatening behavior or violent acts will be removed from the premises as quickly as possible and remain barred from the premises pending an evaluation or investigation of the incident. Risk Management/Patient relations will determine any actions to be taken regarding patients.

E. For assaults, the employee (victim) is given the opportunity to decide whether or not to call the local police department for filing of criminal charges. EH East will support the employee in making this decision by providing the following resources:
1. Offering the services of Chaplaincy or the confidential Employee Assistance Program.
2. Offering an informational meeting with EH East legal counsel to discuss the legal process related to filing of criminal charges.
3. Assistance in filing of criminal charges and preparing for court testimony.

V. Reporting and Post-incident Response.
A. Reporting:
1. Employees will immediately report all violent, threatening, and potential dangerous situations, as well as all security-related incidents, including theft, damage to property and disorderly conduct.
2. For urgent and emergency situations, employees will dial the emergency telephone number for their facility or sound the alarm with their panic alarm or other devices.
3. Complete the Security Violence Incident Report and send it to Security, Duluth campus (http://securityincident/WPViolence.aspx).
4. Security Operations Center at (218) 786-2727 (786-ASAP) is the central 24-hour reporting checkpoint for all Security Violence Incident Reports.
5. Employees can also report the incident to their supervisor or manager, Human Resources, Environmental Safety Officer, or Risk Management/Patient Relations.
6. Under no circumstance will an employee be subjected to retaliation or be criticized for reporting workplace violence and security incidents.
B. Post-incident response:
1. A team consisting of representatives from Security, Environmental Safety Officer, Human Resources, Risk Management/Patient Relations and the affected department meets when a workplace violence incident occurs where serious injuries are sustained, where an action or patient care plan needs to be implemented to mitigate potential threats from an ongoing matter and appropriate to assure the safety and protection of staff and patients. This will occur as soon as practical to review the incident for any necessary follow-up action and will include:
   a. Treatment for employees (victims), and any employee who may be traumatized by witnessing the incident is also considered.
   b. When applicable, victims of workplace violence are within their legal right to prosecute perpetrators.
2. Incidents are reported to the EH East Environment of Care Committee as needed, who will review incidents for improvements needed in workplace practices, policies and education.
C. Recordkeeping: To determine overall effectiveness, identify deficiencies, provide training and conduct follow-up support:
1. Medical reports are kept on staff work-related injuries. Supervisor follows up on each recorded assault.
2. Employee Workers' Compensation maintains an injury and illness database.
3. Security collects Violence Incident Reports from employees (victims) and prepares security incidents report describing all circumstances in detail. Reports are forwarded to department manager, Environmental Safety Officer, Risk Management/Patient Relations, Human Resources and other involved agencies for further action (as needed).

VI. Workplace violence training and education is addressed at the new Employee General Orientation and in the annual Safety and Accident Prevention (SAP).

Key Words: Violence, Workplace, Harassment, Assault

References:
1. EH East Safety Policy S 1606, Weapons, Guns, Pistols and Firearms
2. EH East Policy HR0007, Discrimination and Harassment