

# Cornerstone Behavioral Healthcare

## PM.34 Workplace Violence Prevention

### Internal Threats

Cornerstone Behavioral Healthcare (CBH) will have zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. If you engage in any violence in the workplace or threaten violence in the workplace, your employment will be immediately terminated. No talk of violence or joking about violence will be tolerated.

Violence includes physically harming another, shoving, pushing, harassing, intimidating, coercing, brandishing weapons and threatening or talking of engaging in those activities. It is the intent of this policy to ensure that everyone associated with CBH, including employees and visitors, never feels threatened by any employee's actions or conduct.

In an effort to fulfill this commitment to a safe work environment for employees or visitors, access to CBH property is limited to those with legitimate CBH business. CBH prohibits the possession of weapons while on CBH property, conducting business during work hours, or while conducting business on behalf of CBH. This ban on weapons includes keeping weapons in an automobile on CBH property, and when operating the vehicle while performing your duties as an employee of CBH.

Keeping violent related content in your office will not be tolerated. Therefore, all desks, telephones, and computers, which are the property of CBH, are subject to inspection. CBH reserves the right to enter and inspect your work area including, but not limited to, desks, files, and computer storage devices, with or without notice.

It is everyone's business to prevent violence in the workplace. You can help by reporting what you see or hear in the workplace that could indicate that a co-worker may be in trouble. You may be in a better position than management to know what is happening with those you work with. You are encouraged to report to your supervisor any incident that may involve a violation of any of CBH's policies that are designed to provide a comfortable and safe workplace environment. All reports will be investigated.

Should you, while conducting your duties as a CBH employee, be confronted with the possibility of a violent act, you are encouraged to leave the environment, telephone your supervisor as soon as possible, and discuss the incident. Such incidents could include, but are not limited to, a client under the influence of alcohol or other substances, receiving verbal or physical threats from a client, or, upon scanning the environment, you sense the possibility of a threat to you or your property. Upon reporting such incidents to your supervisor, you, your supervisor, and an appropriate management staff person(s) will develop a clinical response to any client who engages in a safety violation to you or your property.

In the event of a major workplace incident that affects, or has the potential to affect, the mental health of our workforce, we will provide initial counseling and support services to you. As the crisis passes and support systems are put in place for individuals affected by the incident, CBH will make every effort to return to normal business operations. If you have suggestions for ways to improve safety and security at work, please pass them along to your supervisor.

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### External Threats

As your employer, CBH wishes to make every employee aware of the potential of violent threats that may enter the workplace environment from persons not employed by CBH. CBH places employee safety and security on the same level of importance as client safety. It is every employee's responsibility to be observant of this potential and to communicate your concerns, whether intuitive or actual.

Every CBH mental health site should have a written violence prevention plan and make every new employee aware of this plan. Practicing this plan should be as important as practicing fire drills when preparing for a potential fire. Bring any building safety concerns to your supervisor, who will contact Facilities Support for correction. This may include broken door locks and window latches, along with lighting concerns in hallways and parking lots.

As you pass unknown individuals in the building, note any unusual characteristics with safety in mind. Should you have concerns, report them to your supervisor or the nearest manager.

CBH employees may not work alone in an unlocked CBH facility unless assistance is immediately available. Employees are encouraged not to work alone in a CBH facility unless it is unavoidable.

All CBH first aid kits should be checked periodically to assure they are well stocked in case of a physical emergency.

If possible, clients should be escorted to and from waiting rooms and not allowed to wander clinical areas.

Case conference meetings where client information is presented should also be focused on identifying problems that may help predict potentially violent clients and, therefore developing a plan on safe methods of managing these difficult clients.

CBH does appropriate trainings to educate staff in any type of physical or verbal response including de-escalation and self-protection techniques. The emergency telephone numbers of the police or medical personnel should be posted by your phone in case it becomes necessary to contact them. Always know the closest evacuation route from all CBH offices. When meeting with a client for the first time, have a plan prepared to leave your office should it become necessary. Positioning yourself closest to the office door instead of in a far corner of the room is recommended. **Never** be in the same room with a client with the door locked.

For those staff members who make home visits, always be mindful of the route to exit the premises. Always keep your vehicle keys on your person and if possible, park your vehicle facing the street. Your vehicle should be kept in a well-maintained state so a breakdown is less likely, particularly in rural areas. Notify the CBH office if your vehicle breaks down so management knows your location, and can help create a plan of assistance. Leave valuables locked in your trunk, not in the front seat of your vehicle. It is even more preferable to carry only absolutely required identification and money. Leave your valuables and purse at home or in the office. Whenever possible, wear low heeled shoes, which limit

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the risk of injury and promote speedier exits. You should also limit jewelry to discourage theft and strangulation.


If you are faced with an agitated or angry client, do not attempt to argue a point with them. Listen, and speak in a low and soft voice. If the individual is unable to calm down quickly, you may wish to excuse yourself from the environment. Communicate that you want to understand their concerns, but perhaps they need some time to regroup so their concerns may be addressed. Backing away from the situation is the preferred manner of exiting.

Staff should give clear messages to clients that violence is not permitted. CBH will provide pertinent procedural information to staff who wishes to press charges against assaulting clients.

All aggressive acts, with or without injury, including pushing, threatening, etc., are to be reported to the Executive Director/CEO. These include threats from staff to staff, and client to staff. Management will review all documents and determine an appropriate course of action. Follow-up will occur to assess the impact of any plan regarding a potential or actual violent threat or incident.

If there is a police response for a workplace violence event in progress, staff is to promptly follow all police instructions, which might include partial or full evacuation of the office for the safety of staff members, clients, and other visitors. An incident report must be completed without exception within 72 hours by management or designated staff.

All employees' suggestions, concerns, and complaints to management regarding violent acts will be received and addressed without fear of reprisal.

  
Executive Director/CEO *bc*      5-25-2021  
Date