

# Your EAP | Here4TN! for leaders

MARCH 2016

**PARTNERS  
FOR HEALTH**  
EMPLOYEE  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

## Understand the signs of workplace violence

*Jerry noticed that one of his team members has been displaying unusual behavior and he can't seem to figure out what is causing this type of behavior. Jerry is increasingly frustrated, short tempered, and is overall disrespectful to others.*

It's every leader's responsibility to maintain as safe an environment as possible for the workforce. While incidents of workplace violence are rare, they can happen at any time—and they are the most destructive events that impact the workplace. By recognizing the warning signs of potential violence, and knowing what to do if you observe them, you'll have a better chance of helping your employee and keeping your team members safe from harm.

A first step is to understand what workplace violence entails. It is not only acts of physical violence, but also threats, harassment and disruptive behavior. It's crucial to not tolerate any form of violence in the workplace and to take steps to prevent it from advancing to the next level.

The threat of violence often escalates through a specific pattern. Beyond observable behavioral signs that employees may display (see the "red flags" on page 2), certain external factors can be catalysts for employee violence:

- Layoffs, job termination or demotions
- Prolonged disputes among colleagues or with supervisors
- Domestic violence in an employee's life
- Recent loss of a relationship or social status
- Deteriorating financial situation.

*Jerry called the ParTNers EAP and spoke with a Workplace Support professional who advised him how to approach this employee and, work together with the employee to develop a plan to address the current situation.*

## Tips for handling violence

- Don't confront a violent or potentially violent employee alone. Involve security staff or another manager.
- Tell the employee that the behavior violates your organization's anti-violence policy. If the employee's response suggests further risk, remove the employee from the worksite. Document the incident in detail.
- If a violent incident has occurred, protect the physical safety of employees by following your organization's emergency response procedures.
- In a life-threatening situation, contact local law enforcement by calling 911.

Using your workplace support program through ParTNers EAP has never been easier. **To speak with a Workplace Support Consultant simply call 1-855-HERE4TN (737-3489) and select option 4.**

You can learn more about how Workplace Support Services can help managers by visiting the Leaders Corner on the [www.HERE4TN.com](http://www.HERE4TN.com) website. Go online today to learn more.



# Red flags of workplace violence

There is no absolute indicator for predicting violent behavior. However, the presence of several of the behaviors listed below may indicate that an individual could become violent.

## A potentially violent employee:

- Exhibits verbally insulting, threatening behavior
- Has ongoing conflicts with supervisors or co-workers and is often upset by everything
- Expresses a fascination with weapons and their ability to do harm
- Exhibits intimidating, bullying or other types of aggressive behavior
- Has an over-reaction to workplace change
- Repeatedly violates workplace policies
- Expresses approval of violent incidents by others
- Has a prior history of violent behavior
- Does not take responsibility for mistakes or actions—always finds others at fault
- Displays “loner” behavior, i.e., is socially self-isolating
- Shows signs of increased emotional mood swings, behavior, appearance and speech
- Seems severely depressed or paranoid, e.g., fears conspiracies
- Abuses substances within or outside of the workplace
- Makes ominous statements such as, “I can't take it anymore,” “I think I'm going to explode,” or “Soon I'll have my say.”

**While you aren't expected to be an expert at diagnosing or understanding threatening human behavior, you can help avert a dangerous situation by recognizing the warning signs of workplace violence.**

## Referring an employee for assistance

### *Act if there's a risk*

An alert and supportive supervisor can make a difference. By recognizing warning signs, emphasizing the no-tolerance policy for violence, and assisting the employee with getting help at the right time, you can reduce risks to the workplace.

### *Consult with Workplace Support*

Call 855.437.3486, select option 4 to speak with a Magellan Workplace Support consultant about signs of violence that you've observed within your work environment. Our licensed consultants are experts in dealing with such situations. They can offer suggestions and help develop an action plan to resolve problems in the early stages.

### *Refer the employee*

Remember that your program offers immediate resources to assist a troubled employee. Tell the employee that you are referring him or her to the employee assistance program; emphasize that the program can help and is strictly confidential. Check with your human resource professional to see if your organization has a policy in place that supports formal management EAP referrals. If such a policy is in place, contact your Workplace Support consultant by calling 855.437.3486 and selecting option 4 to make an employee referral.



**Webinar**—Join us March 30, 2016 for a webinar on how Workplace Support Services can help you handle challenging employee issues. Register [here](#).