

## Be alert:

- Evaluate each situation for potential violence when you enter a room or begin to relate to a patient visitor.
- Be vigilant throughout the encounter.
- Don't isolate yourself with a potentially violent person
- Always keep an open path for exiting – don't let the potentially violent person stand between you and the door.

## Take these steps if you can't defuse the situation quickly:

- Remove yourself from the situation.
- Call University Police for help at extension 4-4000
- Call the Patient Safety Hotline at 4-SAFE (4-7233)
- Know you can contact the Safety Committee and University Police with your security concerns.

## Need Additional Help or Follow-up?

Contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Office during normal business hours at 4-5760. After normal business hours, please leave a message and someone will return your call the next business day.



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# Workplace Violence



SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

## What is Workplace Violence?

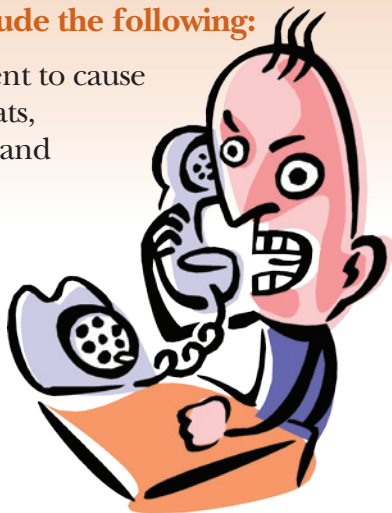
Workplace violence ranges from offensive or threatening language to homicide. NIOSH defines workplace violence as *violent acts (including physical assaults and threats of assaults) directed toward persons at work or on duty.*

### Examples of violence include the following:

**Threats:** Expressions of intent to cause harm, including verbal threats, threatening body language, and written threats.

**Physical assaults:** Attacks ranging from slapping and beating to rape, homicide, and the use of weapons such as firearms, bombs, or knives.

**Muggings:** Aggravated assaults, usually conducted by surprise and with intent to rob.



## Who is at Risk?

Although anyone working in a hospital may become a victim of violence, nurses and aides who have the most direct contact with patients are at higher risk. Other hospital personnel at increased risk of violence include emergency response personnel, hospital security officers, and all health care providers.

## Where May Violence Occur?

Violence may occur anywhere in the hospital, but it is most frequent in the following areas:

- Psychiatric units
- Emergency rooms
- Waiting rooms
- Units with geriatric or head injured patients

## What are the Risk Factors for Violence?

The risk factors for violence vary from hospital to hospital depending on location, size, and type of care. Common risk factors for hospital violence include the following:

- Working directly with volatile people, especially if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or have a history of violence or certain psychotic diagnoses
- Transporting patients
- Long waits for service
- Overcrowded, uncomfortable waiting rooms
- Working alone
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Poorly lit corridors, rooms, parking lots, and other areas

## Safety Tips for Hospital Workers

### Watch for signals that may be associated with impending violence:

- Verbally expressed anger and frustration
- Body language such as threatening gestures
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
- Presence of a weapon

### Maintain behavior that helps diffuse anger:

- Present a calm, caring attitude
- Don't match the threats
- Don't give orders
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (for example, "I know you are frustrated").
- Avoid any behavior that may be interpreted as aggressive (for example, moving rapidly, getting too close, touching, or speaking loudly)

