

Cornerstone Behavioral Healthcare

PM.34 Workplace Violence Prevention

INTERNAL THREATS

Cornerstone Behavioral Healthcare (CBH) will have zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. If an employee engages in or threatens any violence in the workplace, their 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.

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 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 duties as an employee of CBH.

Keeping content in offices related to violence 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 work areas, including, but not limited to, desks, files, and computer storage devices, with or without notice.

It is everyone's responsibility to prevent violence in the workplace. Employees can help by reporting what they see or hear in the workplace that could indicate that a co-worker may be in trouble. They may be in a better position than management to know what is happening with co-workers. Employees are encouraged to report to their 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.

If an employee is confronted with the possibility of a violent act while working, they are encouraged to leave the environment, contact their 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
- sensing the possibility of a threat to self or property upon scanning the environment.

The supervisor will report the incident to an appropriate management staff, who, if necessary, will develop a clinical response to any client who engages in violence or the threat thereof.

In the event of a major workplace incident that affects, or has the potential to affect, the mental health of our workforce, CBH will provide initial counseling and support services to employees. As the crisis passes and support systems are established for individuals affected by the incident, CBH will make every effort to return to normal business operations. Suggestions for ways to improve safety and security at work are welcome, and should be passed along to supervisors.

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EXTERNAL THREATS

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 their concerns, whether intuitive or actual.

Every CBH mental health site will have a written violence prevention plan and make every new employee aware of this plan. Practicing this plan is as important as fire drills. Employees may take any building safety concerns to their 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.

While moving about the building, employees should stay aware of their surroundings and report any concerns to their supervisor or 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 will be checked periodically to ensure they are well stocked in case of a physical emergency.

Clients should be escorted to and from waiting rooms and not allowed to wander clinical areas.

CBH offers appropriate training to educate staff in any type of physical or verbal response, including de-escalation and self-protection techniques. Employees should know the closest evacuation route from any CBH office, and should always be prepared to call 911 if necessary. When meeting with a client for the first time, employees should have a plan to leave their office quickly if it becomes necessary, including positioning themselves close to the office door instead of in a far corner, and never locking the door when in a room with a client.

Home Visits:

Employees who make home visits must always be mindful of their exit route. Vehicle keys should be kept on one's person, and vehicles should be parked facing the street if possible. Vehicles should be well-maintained to reduce the likelihood of a breakdown, especially in rural areas. If an employee's vehicle breaks down, they should contact CBH management to communicate their location and get assistance. Valuables should be locked in the trunk, or left at home or office. Carrying only required identification and money is preferred. Low-heeled shoes are the safest option, reducing injury and promoting a speedy exit if needed, and limited jewelry reduces the risk of theft. When a wellness check is deemed necessary, employees should go as a pair.

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DEALING WITH AGITATED CLIENTS

When faced with an agitated or angry client, one must do the following:

- Avoid arguing
- Actively listen
- Speak in a low, soft voice
- Communicate an understanding of their concerns, offering some time to regroup so their concerns may be addressed
- Give clear messages to the client that violence is not permitted.
- Remove themselves from the environment if the client is unable to calm down quickly, backing away if possible

CBH will provide pertinent procedural information to staff who wish to press charges against a client who assaults them.

Employees are to report all aggressive acts, with or without injury, including pushing, threatening, etc., to their supervisor, or an available supervisor, who will document them. Employee's supervisor will store the documentation and submit a copy to the CEO or designee. These include threats from staff to staff and from 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 to a workplace violence event in progress, staff are 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.

Frank Willard

CEO

07/01/2025

Date