Reduce the Risk of Conflicts in the Workplace

Life can be stressful. That means tense encounters in the workplace can quickly boil over. Help your teams identify situations where tempers are most likely to flare — and offer ways to calm the tension before feelings spin out of control.

This month ask your team:

[✓] What situations or conflicts in your workplace are most likely to lead to heated disagreements — and, potentially, violence?

[✓] What changes can be made to reduce the risks for potentially violent conflicts?

[✓] What are the steps for getting help in resolving tense situations in your department?

Jot down their answers, then share your findings with your unit-based team co-leads. Follow up by working with your team on strategies to reduce the potential for workplace conflicts that could result in possible violence.

TIPS YOU CAN USE:

If you find yourself in an uncomfortably tense workplace situation, remember to:

» Use a calm voice and maintain eye contact

» Empathize: *"I understand you are frustrated."*

» Leave a door open. Maintain a safe distance: *"Can we sit down and talk this over?"*

» Be respectful. Ask instead of tell: *"Please, can you tell me what's wrong?"*

» Give options, not threats: "*Can we take a quick break while I get some information for you?"*

NOTE: If you are feeling threatened or witness a conflict that is escalating, leave the area and contact your supervisor or security. For all emergencies, call 911. Defer to the rules for your department or facility.

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