DE-ESCALATION TOOLS & TACTICS

The EPN is here to support your Workplace Violence Preparedness needs! De-escalation is a supportive strategy that is effective in preventing potential violence in the workplace. Tap into this tool with these tips:

Train. Completion of comprehensive training will often prevent workplace violence incidents before they start. If you are an employer, provide/if you are an employee complete training in:
- Customer Care
- Bedside Manor
- Peer to Peer communication
- Communicating with people in crisis

Call 911 and/or your jurisdiction's non-emergency number, depending on the situation.
- Do this before an interaction turns violent.
- A call to law enforcement may cause the aggressive party to leave.

Validate. Remember, you cannot de-escalate until you validate. Use validation as a de-escalation tool through phrases such as:
- "I'm so sorry you are going through that."
- "Let me see what I can do to help you."

When you are Face to Face remember these De-escalation Do's and Don'ts:

- Do have a “partner”: Have a coworker close by who can witness the interaction, call for help if needed, and switch with you as the primary contact person with an aggressive individual.
- Do walk away: if the situation continues to escalate and you have used all your tools, walk away. Remove yourself from the situation if you see it becoming violent.

REMINDERS:
- De-escalation STARTS before the interaction even BEGINS!
- REMEMBER - Our goal is to prevent violence and NOT to win the argument.
- If you see something, say something.
- Workplace safety is EVERYONE'S business!

- Don’t “trap” them: Leave people a way out. When cornered, instinct takes over, and a person could become more aggressive.
- Don’t argue: The goal is to diffuse the situation and resolve the problem. You are not trying to win the argument.
- Don’t involve more parties than necessary: Involving others can create confusion and cause a person to feel overwhelmed or attacked. By asking others to politely “stay out of it,” you may help the aggressive person to feel you are “on their side.”
- Don’t show anger: Remember, this is not just your tone of voice. Our body language conveys as much or more than what we say.
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE DEFINITIONS:

**Workplace Violence:** The American Nurses Association defines Workplace Violence as physically and psychologically damaging actions that occur in the workplace or while on duty.

**Assault** is defined under Maryland State Law as *the attempted touching of a person without their consent, including under those circumstances where the person feels fearful that a touching will occur.*

**Battery** is *the actual, offensive touching of another person without his or her consent.*

**Criminal Intent** is defined as *a subjective state of mind (mens rea) that must accompany the acts of certain crimes to constitute a violation. To form Intent, a person must have mental capacity. Individuals in a mental health crisis or those living with dementia may not be capable of forming Intent.*

**Situational Awareness:** The American Psychological Association defines Situational Awareness as conscious knowledge of the immediate environment and the events that are occurring in it.

WORKPLACE SAFETY & SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TIPS:

**VEHICLE**
- **Lock the doors:** as soon as you get in and as soon as you get out.
- **Keep items of value out of sight:** Put them in the trunk or use a cargo cover (SUV).
- **Be careful when using parking garages:** Park in populated, well-lit areas and be aware of your surroundings.
- **Know the areas you serve!** Be aware of the closest police stations, fire stations, and well-populated “safe” places.
- **Are you being followed?** Know where your closest safe places are and have a plan.
- **Plan the safest route to your destination.** Vary your routes and schedule when possible.

**TECH**
- **Use your camera:** Take a photo or video if you see something suspicious.
- **Use your GPS or a Check-in App** to share your location with a trusted party, such as a loved one or friend.

**MOBILE**
- Don’t wear headphones, and stay off your phone. Better to stay focused and aware.
- Don’t overburden yourself by carrying many bags. Keep at least one arm free.
- Have keys in your hand. Be ready to get in the car or the house.
- Check with your local law enforcement if you need an escort. They may be a service they can provide.
- If not, consider sending two people when in a questionable area or any place deemed high risk.

Remember: Be aware of your surroundings, use common sense & good judgment, trust your instincts and have a plan!