



Conflict Dangers

Everyone disagrees, especially in the workplace, where you spend more awake time than anywhere else. It is natural. Conflict is an escalation of a disagreement. The danger to unresolved conflict can be enormous. Allowing bottled up feelings and unresolved conflict can escalate into a verbal or even physical response. By not stepping in and finding a resolution, you are ignoring a very important trigger, and possibly inviting a much larger incident.

Triggers

A trigger is an event that causes another event. For example, the trigger for the 9/11 attacks was terrorism. The triggers to conflict can occur anywhere, not necessarily at the location where the violence may occur. Being aware of the different triggers that may escalate into further bad behavior, will allow you to be able to report the behavior to HR or the appropriate manager.

A trigger could be:

- Mistake pointed out by the manager
- Customer that did not acknowledge the person's presence.
- These could all trigger aggressive behavior in some people.

The trigger may not even be work related, possibly personal issues at home, but a trigger none the less, to more hostile behavior.

Action Point

The action point is considered the point in the timeline where you recognize that violence is a probable outcome and you must respond.



When investigators have analyzed past workplace violence episodes, they have found that there are many times there were action points leading up to the incident.

Identifying the event is probably going to occur and being the first to move, gives you the advantage. An example is how everyone moves away from an argument, when it looks like punches are going to start to fly. Identify that a trigger has occurred and an incident is probably going to happen. Notify the proper managers or departments. In most companies, security needs to be informed of the issues. After this proceed with your company's outlined procedures.

Flashpoint

The flashpoint of an event is the point in the timeline, where the violence actually occurs. In a robbery, it is at the cash register, in a disagreement it is when the first punch is thrown, etc. This is the point of no return for the perpetrator. Your responsibility is to act, and act as quickly as possible, in accordance with the company policies and procedures.

The location of a flashpoint can vary. The flashpoint is not always at the trigger point. The trigger can push the perpetrator over the edge, but he/she may not act until at another location. Do not hesitate to think that the abuser may be triggered by a home event, and come to the victim's workplace and carry out an attack. Being prepared and aware for the worst-case scenario will help you respond during the event.

Identify

The first mistake most people make is the lack of awareness of their surroundings.



Be knowledgeable to the behaviors and triggers that can escalate into a crisis, always. Your first line of defense is your ability to identify the situation, and properly respond, and as quickly as possible.

Another mistake is people are unsure of the seriousness of the situation. Do not discount what your eyes may see. You would much rather be safe than sorry. If you sense something, or witness something, say something. Report it to your supervisor, to the security department, anyone, but do not ignore the situation in hopes it will go away.

Case Study

Tonya and Gina are watching a training video including a simulation of a robbery. They need to answer the questions that are asked as the video progresses. The first scene shows a man getting fired and being sent home. Gina states that this is a trigger to many emotions, including anger with the manager. The video continues and shows the same man returning to the workplace that afternoon. Tonya points out that the action point is when the secretary sees him in the parking lot, parking his car. That is when she knows that something is going to happen, and she calls security.

The video continues to show the terminated employee entering in the office with a loaded shotgun. The video ends. Tonya says that this could be the flashpoint, but the man could still be negotiated. If he shoots someone, that is the flashpoint. The video points out how well the secretary responded to the situation and identified the threat, quickly and responsibly.



Review Questions

1. What is a trigger?
 - a. An event that causes another event
 - b. A feeling
 - c. A detail
 - d. A recognition

2. A trigger happens:
 - a. Where the crisis occurs
 - b. After the crisis occurs
 - c. Before the crisis occurs
 - d. None of the above

3. What is the action point of the situation?
 - a. The straw that broke the camel's back
 - b. The point that you realize that a situation is about to occur
 - c. The point of no return
 - d. The documentation of an event

4. Why should you know the action point?
 - a. For documentation
 - b. For faster response
 - c. To gain the advantage
 - d. All of the above



5. The flash point of a crisis is the:
 - a. The trigger
 - b. The action point
 - c. The police action
 - d. The point of no return

6. The flash point refers to the actions of the:
 - a. Witness
 - b. Police
 - c. HR
 - d. The perpetrator

7. Identifying the situation correctly is important:
 - a. To the journalists
 - b. To the stakeholders
 - c. To responding quickly
 - d. To planning a statement

8. If you see something:
 - a. Report it
 - b. Ignore it
 - c. Document it
 - d. Remember it



9. Tonya and Gina are:
- a. Having lunch
 - b. Responding to a crisis
 - c. Training for a crisis
 - d. Documenting a crisis
10. What did the secretary in the video do?
- a. Went to lunch
 - b. Called security
 - c. Called her manager
 - d. Nothing