



**TITLE: PREVENTING WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**  
**Policy 3.45**  
**Rev. July 2015**

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A. SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

The safety of Kokua's employees, clients, volunteers and visitors is an important concern to the organization. Disruptive behavior, threats, threatening behavior or acts of violence against employees, clients, volunteers, visitors or others while on Kokua's property or the property of Kokua's clients won't be tolerated. Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary action, possible dismissal, and criminal prosecution as appropriate.

**Definitions:**

**Disruptive behavior** includes, but is not limited to, yelling, using profanity, waving arms or fists, verbally abusing others, and refusing reasonable requests.

**Threatening behavior** includes, but is not limited to, physical actions short of actual contact or injury (moving aggressively into another's personal space), general oral or written threats to people or property ("You better watch your back." "I'll get you."), and implied threats ("You'll be sorry." "This isn't over.").

**Violent behavior** includes, but is not limited to, any physical assault, with or without weapons; behavior that a reasonable person would interpret as being potentially violent (throwing things, pounding one's fist on a desk or door, or destroying property), or specific threats to inflict physical harm. Threats include, but are not limited to, threatening statements made in person, in writing, through a third party or through social media.

**Warning indicators of potential workplace violence:**

- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other inappropriate and aggressive behavior.
- Numerous conflicts with clients, co-workers, or supervisors.
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace, making inappropriate references to guns, or making idle threats about using a weapon to harm someone.
- Statements showing fascination with incidents of workplace violence, statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem, or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides.
- Statements indicating desperation (over family, financial, and other personal problems) to the point of contemplating suicide.
- Direct or veiled threats of harm.
- Substance abuse.
- Extreme changes in normal behaviors.

B. WEAPON-FREE WORKPLACE

Weapons of any kind are prohibited on Kokua property. Employees, visitors and volunteers are prohibited from bringing weapons to the clients' homes. Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, clubs, spears, swords or nunchaku.

C. REPORTING SITUATIONS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OR THREATS

All employees, interns and volunteers of Kokua are responsible to report disruptive, threatening or potentially threatening behavior to the Administrator, the Intensive Support Program Coordinator, the Independent Living program Coordinator, the Human Resources Coordinator or a member of the Service Coordination Team immediately. If the incident occurs after business hours, the Kokua On-Call system will be used. It is not the responsibility of direct care staff to assess the degree of risk presented by a particular situation. Never ignore or minimize an incident. Employees will always report disruptive or threatening behavior to supervisory staff. Supervisory staff will ensure that the individual is banned from the workplace pending an internal investigation.

D. KEEPING THE WORKPLACE SECURE

In a situation where an employee will be working alone in the Kokua office, all outer doors must remain locked. A single employee will not allow entry to an unknown person while working alone. In a situation where an employee will be working alone in a client's home, all outer doors will remain locked for safety purposes. Individuals unknown to the employee will not be allowed to enter a client's home without providing proper identification.

E. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Kokua has an Employee Assistance Program that provides free confidential counseling for employees who are experiencing depression, stress, trauma or threats to personal safety. Employees may contact the Employee Assistance program by calling 1-866-750-1327.

F. RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

As soon as any employee or volunteer encounters a situation where there is an immediate threat to personal safety or the safety of clients, the following measures should be taken:

- a. The employee or volunteer should attempt to put a physical barrier between themselves and the individual presenting the threat. For example: leave the premises, seek shelter with a neighbor, lock themselves in a bathroom, etc.
- b. As soon as possible, call 911.
- c. Alert the Kokua On-Call System.