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Mitigate workplace violence in the healthcare system

by Kelly M. Willenberg, DBA, RN, CCRP, CHRC, CHC

There are many social media posts and articles today about workplace violence (WPV) in healthcare. By including a check of the evaluation procedures, training, and a review of incident logs in your risk assessment annually, you can build a strong culture outlining accountability to help mitigate violence.

In 2022, two Texas dentists were killed by an angry patient in their dental practice. According to the staff, the patient had always been difficult while bullying them.^[1] In August 2023, a nurse committed suicide in Ohio and directed her suicide letter to her “abuser:” the healthcare system, where she felt she did not have support.^[2] Compliance officers need to be aware of the controls and available resources for employees with an understanding of what leads to WPV from a cultural perspective. Building a culture around safety is necessary for healthcare workers as they are five times as likely to experience WPV than other workers, according to government data.^[3]

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