

Workplace violence

Workplace violence is a spectrum of behaviors, including overt acts of violence, threats and other conduct that generates a reasonable concern for safety from violence, where a nexus exists between the behavior and the physical safety of employees and others (such as customers, clients and business associates), on-site or off-site when related to the organization.

Workplaces can experience different types of violence:

- **Affective violence**, often referred to as *impulsive* or *reactive* violence, involves hostility or retaliation without forethought. It is often an emotional response to a perceived threat or insult.
- **Targeted violence**, also called *predatory* violence, is goal-directed violence in which a person has taken time to plan and prepare to commit the violent attack.

In addition to securing workplaces through physical security measures, workplaces can help prevent violence by encouraging bystander define identification and reporting of concerning behavior.

The FBI BAU's Behavioral Threat Assessment Center (BTAC) is the U.S. Government's multi-agency, multidisciplinary task force focused on the prevention of terrorism and targeted violence. Studies cited in this guide are available free online at www.fbi.gov



Lessons learned

Studies conducted by the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit have identified key lessons from prior active shooting incidents involving **targeted violence**:

MASS SHOOTERS DON'T JUST SNAP. They consider, plan and prepare.

THE "ANGRY LONER" IS A MYTH. Mass shooters have significant in person and online social interactions.

One-third of adult mass shooters targeted their workplace or former workplace. **Almost half** of mass shooters had work performance issues.

Coworkers noticed concerning behavior in the person in **half** of cases.

Half of the studied mass shooters had an identifiable grievance related to adverse interpersonal or employment action.

COMMON MOTIVES for attack include revenge, a desire for control, to attempt to right a wrong, and/or a hope for being seen as important or famous.



For more information, visit our website
www.fbi.gov/prevent



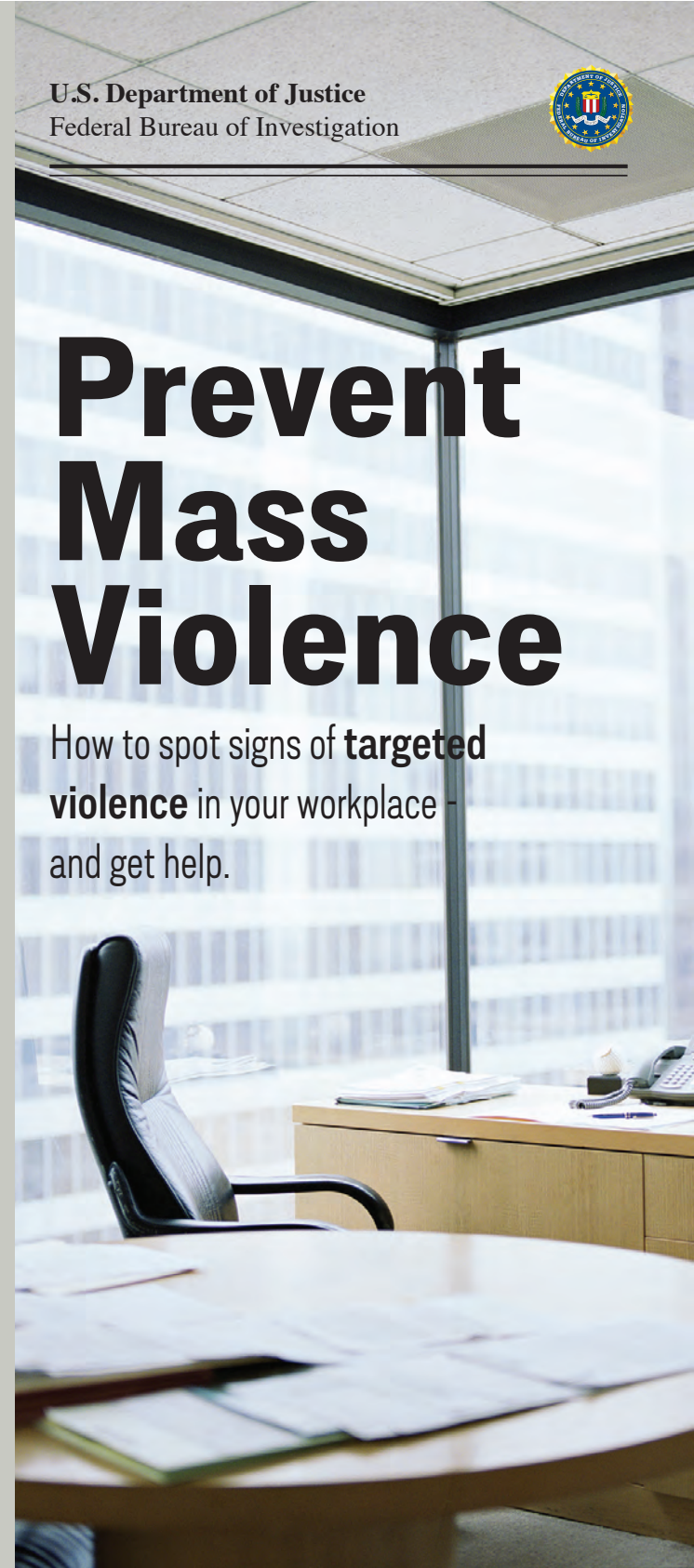
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Prevent Mass Violence

How to spot signs of **targeted violence** in your workplace - and get help.



Common themes

Suicidal thinking

Active shooters think of killing themselves more than the average population does. Many of those who commit mass violence consider killing or harming themselves before their attack. Thoughts about suicide are often accompanied by feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, or like there is no other option. Any statement or indication that someone wants to hurt themselves or others should be taken seriously.

Unintentional Communications

Many people unintentionally communicate their plans for violence, including their thoughts about harming themselves or others. Often, these communications are discounted as jokes or fantasy, but they are key to understanding a person's obsessive violent thoughts and plans.

Behavioral Threat Assessment research found most juvenile active shooters and many adults made statements (verbal, written or online) about committing violence prior to their attack. These statements were **not necessarily** direct threats of violence.

What to See

No one behavior is concerning on its own, rather concern stems from a number of observed factors. Concerning behaviors that may be observed in the workplace include:

Significant loss, setback, or humiliating event (whether real or perceived).

Significantly reduced ability to cope with stress or setbacks. Seeing violence as the only solution to their problems.

Testing boundaries or security at a possible target. This could include developing a new habit at work to see if someone notices.

Disclosure of violent plans (verbal, written, or online).

Increased isolation, depression, withdrawal.

Behavior that makes other people worried that the individual may become violent.

Reduced interest in hobbies and other activities; worsening performance at work.

Obsessive or troubling interest in prior attackers or attacks.

Obsessive or troubling interest in obtaining firearms, other weapons, tactical gear, clothing, and/or military paraphernalia.

Increasingly troublesome or concerning interactions with others.

Angry outbursts or physical aggression.

What to Do

If you are concerned, **talk about your concerns with someone you respect**. Share what you know and discuss your options. Your workplace may have specific channels for reporting these concerns.

Effective programs:

EDUCATE

The best violence prevention programs provide company-wide education on what types of behaviors employees should be aware of and report. These programs encourage employees to focus on their concerns and the observed behaviors rather than on whether they believe their coworker has the "capability" to carry out a violent act.

BREAK DOWN BARRIERS

Violence prevention programs should ensure all employees know how to report concerns. The best programs provide employees with multiple channels to report concerns. In healthy, trusting workplace environments, employees are able to report concerning behavior without fearing "blowback" for what might be otherwise seen as bad news.

ENHANCE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

Programs should establish standard procedures for responding to reported concerns. Programs should build a multidisciplinary team trained to assess and respond to threats, or identify external resources who can assist.