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Violence Prevention in the Mental Healthcare Setting:Evaluation of an Intervention based on OSHA Guidelines

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Workplace violence is recognized as a significant occupational hazard in the healthcare and service sectors, in particular in the mental health setting. A 2001 federal survey found that the victimization rate for mental health workers was 68.2 per 1,000 compared to a rate of 12.6 per 1,000 workers across all occupations (Duhart, 2001). The panel will describe the findings from a four-year intervention study assessing the feasibility and impact of a comprehensive violence prevention program based on federal OSHA violence prevention guidelines. Lipscomb will briefly review the violence in healthcare literature and discuss the design of this tripartite (university, labor, management) participatory research project. Rosen will discuss the assault experience of workers in the state mental health system, the role of data in union injury prevention activities, and union-led pilot intervention initiatives at two facilities prior to the intervention project. Foley will discuss the rank and file involvement, and overcoming barriers to involvement. Murrett, an architect, will discuss the process and importance of conducting environmental audits as part of the violence prevention work. Vignola, the project coordinator, will discuss the development and role of the Facility-level Project Advisory Groups in the overall project. McPhaul will discuss the issues surrounding communication of study findings to the workers, unions, and management. Finally, Lipscomb will summarize the baseline and post-intervention staff survey data. The impact of the project will be discussed in terms of assault reductions, employee and management awareness, facility-level impact, and feasibility for other mental health systems.

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss two advantages of management, union, and academic partnerships in occupational health intervention research.
- List the five primary elements of the federal OSHA Violence Prevention Guidelines for Healthcare and Social Services
- Provide one example from the NIOSH/OMH project of each of the five OSHA elements in the violence prevention intervention. Describe the impact of the OSHA/NIOSH violence prevention intervention on the assaults at one year post-intervention.

Keywords: Violence Prevention, Occupational Safety

Presenting author's disclosure statement:

I do not have any significant financial interest/arrangement or affiliation with any organization/institution whose products or services are being discussed in this session.

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