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### Overview

This unit is about calming a potentially dangerous situation by minimising actions or words that may trigger violent behaviour and showing respect for people, their property and rights. It is about responding to a situation by trying to defuse it and, when appropriate, leaving a threatening situation safely. It is also about reviewing the incident for recording and monitoring purposes. In this unit, 'violence' is manifested as incidents where persons are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health.

This includes: verbal abuse or threat, threatening behaviour, any assault (and any apprehension of unlawful violence), and serious or persistent harassment, for any reason, and extends from what may seem to be minor incidents to serious assault and murder, and threats against the worker and/or their family.

**There are two elements:**

- 1 Help to de-escalate a potentially violent situation
- 2 Review the incident for recording and monitoring purposes

The unit is for people who find themselves in a situation at work where they need to protect themselves from the risk of violence. It is likely to be applicable to many people who work in the justice sector.

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## Protect yourself from the risk of violence at work

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### Performance criteria

#### Help to de-escalate a potentially violent situation

*You must be able to:*

- P1 maintain a calm, reassuring and professional attitude towards those presenting unacceptable behaviour
- P2 maintain a safe distance to avoid physical contact if possible
- P3 communicate with those presenting unacceptable behaviour in a way that:
  - P3.1 shows respect for them, their property and their rights
  - P3.2 is free from discrimination and oppressive behaviour
- P4 keep the situation under review and act appropriately to ensure the immediate safety of
  - P4.1 yourself
  - P4.2 other people in the vicinity
  - P4.3 the individual
- P5 take constructive action to defuse the situation which
  - P5.1 will not make the situation worse
  - P5.2 is consistent with your organisation's policy and procedures and your legal responsibilities
- P6 request assistance promptly when you are unable to calm the situation down and it is appropriate and feasible to do so
- P7 look for opportunities to end contact with the individual and leave the situation if the risk of violence looks set to escalate
- P8 explain clearly to the people involved, if it is appropriate,
  - P8.1 what you will do
  - P8.2 what they should do and
  - P8.3 the likely consequences if the situation continues
- P9 leave the scene of the incident if the threat to your own safety and that of other people is too great, minimising the risk of injury to yourself and other people as you leave

#### Review the incident for recording and monitoring purposes

*You must be able to:*

- P10 review the sequence of events leading up to the incident
- P11 discuss with relevant persons whether organisational procedures helped or hindered the incident
- P12 complete records in accordance with organisational requirements about
  - P12.1 your actions at the time of the incident
  - P12.2 the circumstances and severity of the incident
  - P12.3 the measures taken to protect yourself and other people
  - P12.4 action taken to try to calm the situation down
- P13 look through the organisation's and your own risk assessment relevant to your activities and assess its adequacy for dealing with similar incidents
- P14 make recommendations to reduce the risk of further similar incidents to

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- relevant people which will make you and other people feel safer and identify areas where you would benefit from training
- P15 contribute to good practice by sharing relevant non-confidential information with other people in similar job roles which could help reduce incidents of violence
- P16 make use of available support and advice to help alleviate any incident-related health problems

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### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

#### Help to de-escalate a potentially violent situation

- K1 your legal duties for ensuring your well-being, safety and health in the workplace as explained by relevant legislation pertaining to health and safety at work
- K2 your job role, responsibilities and limitations
- K3 your own capabilities and limitations in terms of protecting yourself in potentially violent situations
- K4 when it is appropriate and possible to maintain a safe distance and avoid physical contact
- K5 the importance of showing respect for people, their property and rights and how to do so
- K6 how to avoid behaviour or language that may indicate you are being discriminatory or oppressive
- K7 how to interpret simple body language and the importance of acknowledging other people's personal space
- K8 the importance of remaining alert to triggers of violent behaviour
- K9 the importance of planning how you will leave a situation if there is a physical risk including identifying where the nearest exit routes are
- K10 the main signs that a situation could escalate to violent behaviour and how to recognise these
- K11 the point at which to leave the scene of the incident, seek help and safe techniques for leaving the situation
- K12 the types of constructive behaviour you can use to calm situations
- K13 your organisation's procedures in regard to dealing with violent behaviour

#### Review the incident for recording and monitoring purposes

*You need to know and understand:*

- K14 your organisation's procedures in regard to dealing with violent behaviour
- K15 your legal duties for ensuring your well-being, safety and health in the workplace as explained by relevant legislation pertaining to health and safety at work
- K16 your organisation's procedures in regard to dealing with violent behaviour
- K17 the importance of having the opportunity to talk to someone about the incident afterwards
- K18 the reports that have to be made and the records that have to be kept about a potential or actual incident of violence

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### Additional Information

#### Glossary

In performance criterion 1, review might include reflection on the individual's mental health status and the interface between certain mental health needs and violence.

In performance criterion 2, the relevant person will be a person named in the organisation's procedures as having responsibility for dealing with reports and incidents of violence at work.

In performance criterion 3, communication includes non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication.

In performance criterion 4, acting appropriately will include the use of physical interventions if this is in line with the organisation's environment and culture and relates to those workers performing roles where "hands on" contact is likely and legitimate. These interventions are commonly either "breakaway techniques" (when defending oneself or another) or "restraint techniques" (when physically restricting a person's movement).

In knowledge statement 8, triggers of violence are factors that might prompt violence occurring. They can be categorised in four different types:

1. temporary personal factors – for example, the individual being uncomfortable from a lack of food, warmth, light, or presenting challenging behaviour whilst under the influence of drink or drugs, or
2. persistent personal factors such as having a difficulty or disability which prevents normal communication, movement or behaviour, or
3. temporary environmental factors such as a hot, noisy, crowded room, poor work dynamics in terms of furniture layout, etc, or
4. persistent environmental factors such as too much being expected of the individual or that the quality of the service consistently does not meet the required standards of the user

#### Links to other NOS

This unit will be relevant to the work described in many of the other units as managing the risk of violence at work will be an important skill for many employees in the justice sector.

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**Relevant occupations** Occupations across the Justice sector

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**Suite** Common Standards Across The Justice Sector

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