

Workplace Violence

Your actions may help calm a potentially violent situation, or they may escalate the problem. Behave in a manner that helps calm a situation.

- Stay calm and don't be in a hurry.
- Be empathetic. Show you are concerned.
- Try to have the person and you sit down; sitting is a less aggressive position.
- Try to be helpful, for example, schedule an appointment for a later time.
- Give positive outcome statements, such as, "We can get this straightened out."
- Give positive feedback for continued talking, such as, "I'm glad you're telling me how you feel."
- Stay out of arms' reach.
- Have limited eye contact.
- Take notes.

Avoid exacerbating behaviors:

- Do not patronize.
- Do not yell or argue.
- Do not joke or be sarcastic.
- Do not touch the person

If someone becomes agitated:

- Leave the scene immediately, if possible. Call the Cornell Police from a safe place.
- Or, call a co-worker, using an agreed-upon code word to indicate trouble.

Practice preventive measures:

- Avoid scheduling appointments for times when no one else is in the area.
- Remove sharp and blunt objects from desks.
- Try to avoid working alone after hours.
- If you have to work late, advise a friend or family member.
- When working after office hours, keep doors locked and do not open the door unless you are expecting someone.
- Do not leave money or valuable belongings lying around. Purses should be locked in a desk or cabinet.
- Lock your office and/or lab doors when they are not in use, even when you are leaving for “just a moment.”
- Always walk in well-lit areas and know your surroundings.
- If you think you are being followed, do not go home; go where there are other people. Call the Cornell Police at 911(or 255-1111 from a cell phone) as soon as you are in a safe place.
- Report any strange or unusual activities immediately to your supervisor and the police.
- Report any locks, windows or lights that are in need of repair to your building coordinator.