



Friday, January 4, 2002

Workplace violence topic of seminar

By *Jennifer Charney*, OU Staff Writer

Violence is emerging as an important issue in today's workplace: Almost 1,000 workers are murdered and 1.5 million are assaulted in the workplace each year, according to the **Occupational Safety & Health Administration** of the U.S. Department of Labor.

A nationally recognized lecturer on the topic is offering a seminar at Oakland University on four Saturdays starting Jan. 19. Judy L. Jacobs, RN, MA, will cover aspects including warning signs for workplace violence, intervention techniques and the impact of violence on organizations.

Although no serious incidents of workplace violence have occurred at Oakland University, according to OU Police Lieutenant Mel Gilroy, several occurrences have hit close to home. Perhaps the most notable incidents include the 1991 Royal Oak post office slayings of four postal workers by a fired colleague; four 1996 shootings by a man looking for his ex-girlfriend at the Ford Motor Company plant in Wixom; and the 1999 shootings in Southfield by a patient who killed his psychiatrist and wounded four others before killing himself.

Workplace violence may come in the form of harassment, sabotage or spillover from domestic violence, Jacobs says.

"No business is immune from the effects of workplace violence," she says. "Loss of life, low productivity and financial costs incurred by the company and its employees can be devastating."

Warning signs in a potentially violent worker, Jacobs says, include refusing to cooperate with an immediate supervisor, spreading rumors to harm others within the organization and consistently arguing with co-workers.

"Conducting a thorough investigation of the person you are thinking of hiring can often prevent problems," she says.

Jacobs recommends checking all the applicant's references, criminal history, credit history, driving history, school records, medical exams, drug tests, professional licenses and whether there have been any reprimand processes taken against the licensee.

Jacobs has more than 25 years of experience in employee education, risk management and instructional design. She has presented many classes on workplace violence in various industries. Jacobs is co-author of a book, **Workplace Violence in Healthcare Toolkit**, published by McGraw-Hill.

Jacobs developed the first crisis response team in Michigan used with law enforcement agencies. She has been a national trainer for the National Victim Advocacy Center in Fort Worth, Texas, and for the National Organization for Victim Assistance in Washington, D.C. Jacobs is certified in Critical Incident Stress Debriefing.

The seminar is from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the following Saturdays: Jan. 19 and 26 and Feb. 2 and 9. Participants may take the course for two undergraduate or graduate credits or as a non-credit continuing education course.

The fees are:

- CNS 560 (2 graduate credits) \$728
- HRD 467 (2 undergraduate credits) \$500.50
- Continuing Education Units (2.8 CEUs) \$295

The registration deadline is Monday, Jan. 7. To enroll, contact the **Department of Professional Development and Education Outreach** at (248) 370-3033 or e-mail pro-development@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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