Creating a Safe and Caring Work Environment

Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA®)
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Health care providers, educators, care workers, and other service professionals face a variety of workplace challenges. And regardless of specific job function, there is a profound responsibility—a duty of care—that is embraced by all who commit to this meaningful work.

Providing that duty of care with confidence, consistency, and professionalism requires the ability to recognise and safely respond to disruptive and assaultive behaviour before a crisis incident occurs. In addition, if behaviour does escalate to violence, having the critical skills to maintain the safety of everyone involved is essential.

This premise is at the core of CPI’s MAPA® training programme and is reflected in the course philosophy of providing the best possible Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security℠ to staff and those in their care.

- **Care**
  Respect, dignity and empathy; non-judgemental and person-centred.

- **Welfare**
  Emotional and physical support; promoting independence, choice and well-being.

- **Safety**
  Protecting rights, safeguarding vulnerable people and minimising harm.

- **Security**
  Safe, effective and harmonious relationships.
Structuring a framework for proactive solutions begins with the management and/or administration of an organisation. A true commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and caring workplace culture is contagious throughout the organisation.

- **Your policies and procedures, which clearly outline staff expectations, are crucial for creating a framework for involving all staff members.**
- **A staff development plan, which includes training that provides the skills to meet expectations, prepares everyone for a role in prevention and productive problem solving.**
  - The risk of violent incidents . . . *can be reduced.*
  - The impact of violent incidents . . . *can be minimised.*
  - The prevention of violent incidents . . . *requires a commitment . . . and a plan.*
CPI has been involved with staff training at thousands of service organisations worldwide. The philosophy, principles, and strategies of MAPA® training have been widely embraced for their realistic approach to decision making and problem solving in promoting a safer environment for staff, visitors, and those in their care.

- **CPI has been actively training professionals to safely manage disruptive and assaultive behaviour for over 30 years.**

- **CPI has learnt**—through research, training, consultation, and resource development—**the essential elements for maintaining a safe and caring work environment.**

- **CPI is dedicated to raising awareness, stimulating action, promoting long-term solutions, and supporting meaningful staff training in every work environment.**

**Tips at Work: Promoting Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security℠**

CPI offers the following **Tips at Work: Promoting Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security℠** to raise awareness and facilitate communication. Not intended as an “answer book” or as a replacement for a well-developed staff training course, it is intended to help administration, management, and staff members revisit the risks and realities of potentially dangerous situations escalating to violent incidents.
Tip #1

*Encourage and Promote Courteous Interactions*

As a service professional, you interact with a variety of people each day. Whether you are interacting from a position of authority or not, make it a priority to do so with courtesy. Even if your polite behaviour is not immediately reciprocated, this will help foster an environment that values mutual respect amongst all individuals. Communicate values throughout your organisation to:

- Be certain staff at all levels understand expectations relating to courtesy.
- Encourage leadership to model respectful attitudes and behaviour.
- Embrace and value the diversity of your staff and those in your charge.
- Respect everyone’s privacy.
- Expect the best from every staff member—and from yourself.
- Develop staff resources for dealing with personal problems that may interfere with job performance.
- Utilise respectful supervisory practices in dealing with staff discipline.
- Recognise that staff attitudes and behaviours impact the behaviour of others.
- Handle grievances thoroughly and promptly.
- Provide staff with information and development opportunities to improve understanding of their roles in promoting polite and courteous interactions.
Tip #2

Pay Attention to Behavioural Warning Signs

Behavioural signals can provide awareness regarding someone’s intentions. Pay attention to cues that may indicate distress or discontent. Some behavioural signals to consider and explore in preventive efforts may include:

- **Significant changes in someone’s normal behaviour or routines.**
- **Sudden changes in expression, physical activity, or posture.**
- **Dramatic increase or change in voice, volume, or tone.**
- **Expressions that communicate extreme anger or distress.**
- **Communications of despair and hopelessness.**
- **Body posture that is intimidating or threatening.**
- **Verbal or physical threats.**

Be aware that changes in people’s behaviour may be directly as a result of an underlying medical problem, a cognitive or intellectual impairment, or lack of capacity.
Tip #3

**Consider Objects That Could Be Used as Weapons**

Be aware of objects in your immediate work area that could be used as weapons if someone becomes angry and/or violent. Be prepared to remove or secure any objects that may be thrown or used as weapons if a disruptive situation begins to escalate. For example:

- Office supplies (pens/pencils, scissors, staplers, etc.)
- Medical supplies (thermometers, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs, etc.)
- Cleaning supplies (brooms, mops, buckets, etc.)
- Computers and other work-related equipment
- Nametags or identification cards with pins/lanyards/pull cords
- Books or manuals
- Patient charts or clipboards
- Trolleys
- Food trays
- Cups, glasses, plates, utensils
- Telephones
- Electrical cords
- Other objects or equipment specific to your work environment
Tip #4

Practise and Promote a Team Approach

Efforts that are successful in minimising danger are rarely solo acts. Attempting to manage a dangerous situation alone may increase danger. It is important to be aware of procedures for obtaining assistance from other staff members. In the absence of emergency alert systems, consider where other staff members may be and how to make them aware of the situation as soon as you can safely do so. Your options may include:

- Shouting for help.
- Using whatever is available to create loud noise or call attention to an area.
- Initiating a predetermined signal.
- Activating your local emergency medical services system if necessary.
Tip #5

Assess Your Work Environment

The physical work environment impacts staff health, safety, and well-being. It is important to thoroughly assess your work environment for safety-related risk factors. This includes car parks, entrances, reception areas, workstations, patient or resident rooms and/or classrooms, and offices. The specific type of assessment will vary in each environment, but every environmental assessment will benefit from considering the following questions:

- Are there convenient, accessible emergency escape routes?
- Do staff members know what to do in the event of an emergency?
- Are first-aid kits readily available?
- Is there a method to summon assistance that is reviewed and understood by all staff members?
- Is lighting adequate in all areas?
- Where could staff become isolated or be most vulnerable?
- Are procedures in place to report and resolve workplace safety concerns?
- Are all staff members well trained in these procedures?
- Are all staff members encouraged and supported in discussing ways to create a safer environment whenever possible?
Tip #6

Trust Your Instincts

Be aware of—and trust—your own internal warning system. Your body may send signals when it senses danger. If you become concerned and sense impending danger, talk to someone about it, follow procedures, and respond accordingly. Some instinctual signals may include:

- An increase in breathing rate.
- An increase in pulse.
- A sensation of pressure on your chest.
- An increase in perspiration.
- A sinking feeling in your stomach.
- An increase in sensory acuity.

Please note: One or more of these signals may also indicate a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention. It may be necessary to activate your local emergency medical services system.
Tip #7

Educate Staff About Relevant Response Protocol

Information and familiar procedures can reduce unproductive responses to instincts that trigger fear. The type of information that should be available to all staff members includes:

- A clear definition of a critical and/or violent incident.
- A protocol for reporting circumstances of concern or unusual incidents.
- Roles and responsibilities in emergency situations.
- Appropriate procedures in the event of a violent situation.
- Ways to summon internal security personnel or response teams.
- How to activate alert systems including local emergency medical services.
- Preventive measures.
- Ways to maximise safety and minimise risks in emergency situations.
CPI’s MAPA® training can be an important step on a journey toward creating a safe and caring work environment. The programme’s proven techniques give staff the skills to:

- Identify and safely respond to behaviours that could lead to a crisis.
- Use verbal and nonverbal techniques to defuse hostile behaviour.
- Cope with their own fear and anxiety.
- Assess the level of risk associated with behaviours and make appropriate decisions related to managing the risk.
- Appropriately intervene when physical intervention is deemed necessary.
- Use CPI’s Principles of Disengagement to avoid injury if behaviour becomes physical.
- Maintain rapport with the server user.

MAPA® training is offered as a Two-Day Foundation programme and a Five-Day Instructor Certification programme. Advanced options are available and the training can be delivered on site or at a number of locations throughout the UK and Ireland.
For More Information

- To discuss your training needs with a MAPA® Training Specialist, ring 0161 929 9777 (from the UK) or 052 38851 (from Ireland) or send an email to enquiries@crisisprevention.com.

- To learn more about all our programmes, visit crisisprevention.com.