

The Effect of Violence on a Client Moving Task

Violence in the workplace is a reality. Workers may need to deal with clients whose medical condition(s) or personal situation(s) are displayed through some level of violent behavior. Workers could be yelled at, kicked, scratched, punched, bitten or have items thrown at them.

Have a copy of your incident report form for this portion of the Safety Talk. Explain the process in place in your facility/area for reporting/documenting these types of incidents.

Violent incidents you encounter must be reported, whether or not you were injured, and even if it is verbal abuse. The effects of repetitive verbal abuse accumulate and may cause unnecessary additional stress for workers. We won't be able to address issues that have not been documented or relayed to the Occupational Health Committee.

You might want to ask: What types of violent behavior do you encounter? Have you reported violence, documented it?

You should always consider the risk of abusive or violent behavior from any client you work with. If signs of violence or aggression are present, consider delaying the task for a period of time; return a little bit later and re-assess the situation. Sometimes we want to stick to our "schedule" so that we get everything done - that might not always work for the client.

Be aware of the environment. If the client has a tendency to pinch, give them a hand towel or facecloth to hold. If the client has a tendency to throw objects, move those objects out of the client's reach. Don't forget that a cane is not only a walking aide; it could be used to hit you.

Sometimes clients can "pick up" on anxiety too...if you're rushing and anxious to complete all tasks you have to do in a short period of time, this could be sensed by the client. They could then become anxious, nervous or even afraid.

Sometimes it could be that the client prefers another caregiver - someone they are more familiar with, who reminds them of someone else - don't take this personal. By observing and knowing the client may assist with determining the most appropriate worker to complete the tasks.

Consider the needs of the client and refer to the chart/care plan. Also consider that some clients might need to have their glasses on in order for them to "hear" properly; they may need their dentures in place in order for them to communicate. Identify who you are, what you will be doing. Ask the client if it's OK to be moved or repositioned before you automatically do the task. Clear communication and the appropriate approach may help to achieve an incident-free task.

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!