

# It's Dangerous Out There!

**Building a safety program to protect  
your APS workers**

# Topics for today

- Background information
- Executive leadership
- Survey details and findings
- Building a case
- Action steps
- Safety coordinator tasks
- Lessons learned
- Conclusion



# Background information

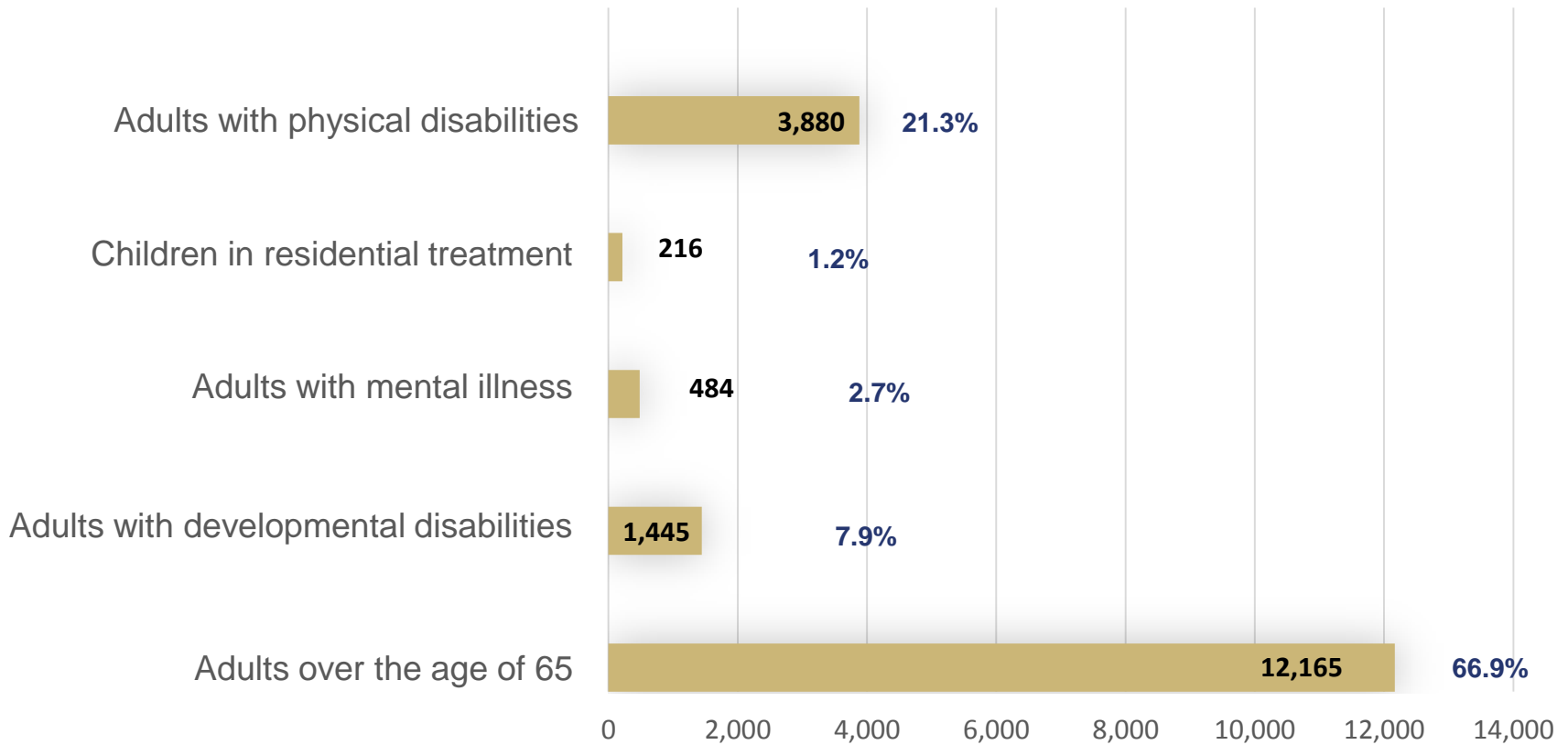
**OAAPI's mission:** Partnering to achieve service equity by preventing abuse, protecting people in need, engaging our communities, valuing those who do the work and committing to quality in all we do.

## **OAAPI's primary responsibilities:**

- Responding to health and safety needs
- Developing and implementing policies, rules, legislative concepts and programs
- Developing and implementing abuse prevention strategies
- Engaging partners and stakeholders
- Providing data analysis and research

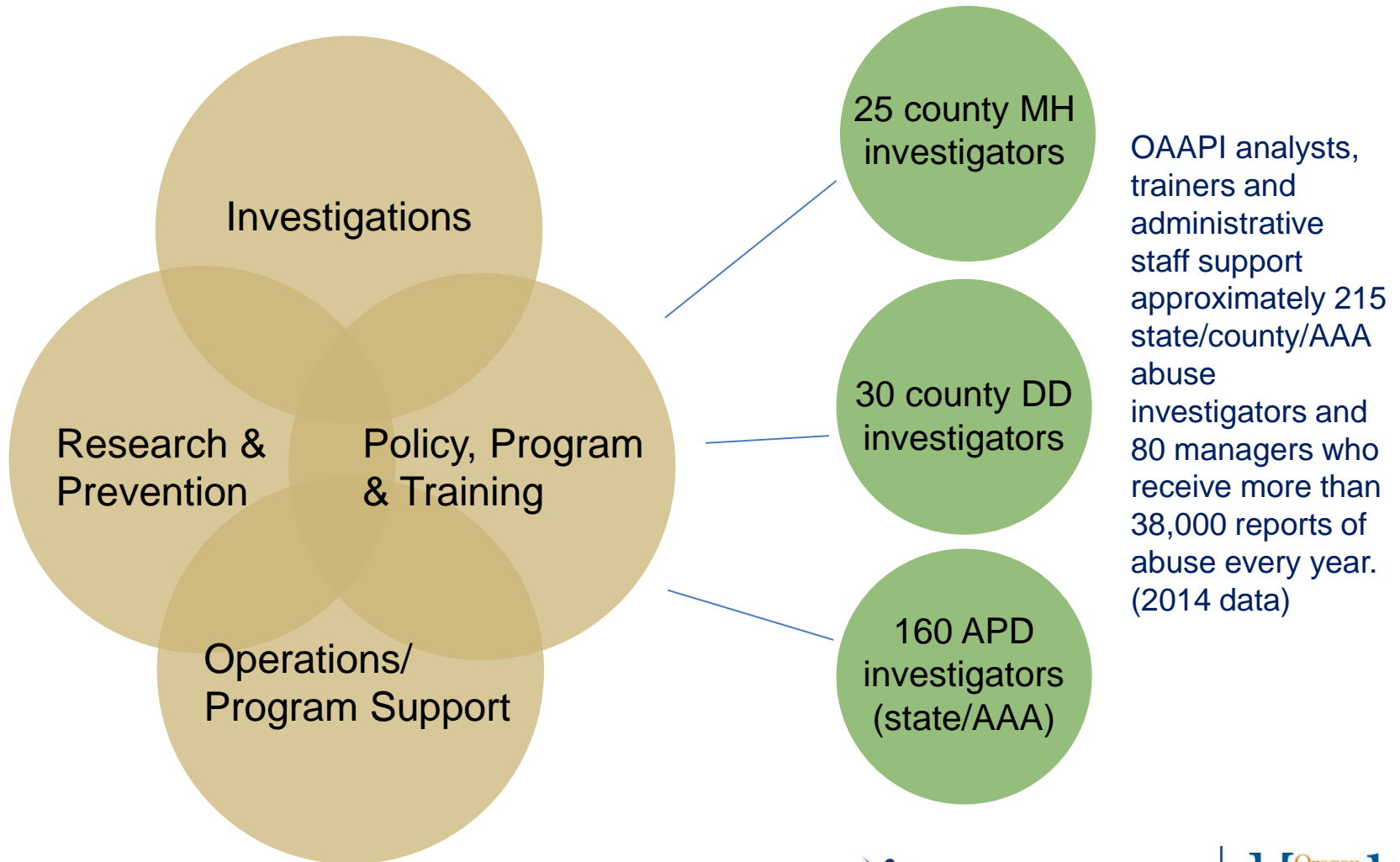
# Who we serve

Number of allegations\*



*\*Numbers are based on 2014 investigations and involve allegations of financial exploitation, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, wrongful restraint, verbal/emotional abuse, involuntary seclusion, abandonment and self-neglect.*

# Who we support



*I think it is important for people to know the dangers we face — but it's also important they see the good we do as well. How about the positive impact we make: the change we bring about in our communities, the people we help, how we help improve the lives of a population that is underserved.*

— APS worker

Meeting the need

## Executive Leadership

# Process

- “Know your why”
- Safety survey
- Building a case
- Action steps
- Position description
- Hiring process
- Agency coordination



# “Know your why”

“On a ‘routine’ call, I faced a woman pouring gasoline over her head and attempting to set herself on fire, while a perpetrator jumped off the porch to assault me. Before police arrived, I had to physically prevent the perpetrators from pushing the elderly victim to the ground. Unknown to me, Child Welfare had just been to the home and removed children. In other words, I walked without warning into a powder keg.”





# “Know your why”

A report is received regarding a 99 year old woman who is missing from her home. Information available leads law enforcement to believe the woman is buried in her back yard and the son is living off of her retirement income. There are also concerns of weapons on the property. Law enforcement requests APS to do further investigation.



# Why a survey

- One of the top challenges noted on our Workforce Strategy Plan was “keeping our protective services and investigations staff safe.”
- A survey would identify current and area-specific safety issues and concerns of field workers and investigators.
- The results from the survey will help with recruitment of the right person with the right skills to address the identified safety concerns and needs of those working in the field.

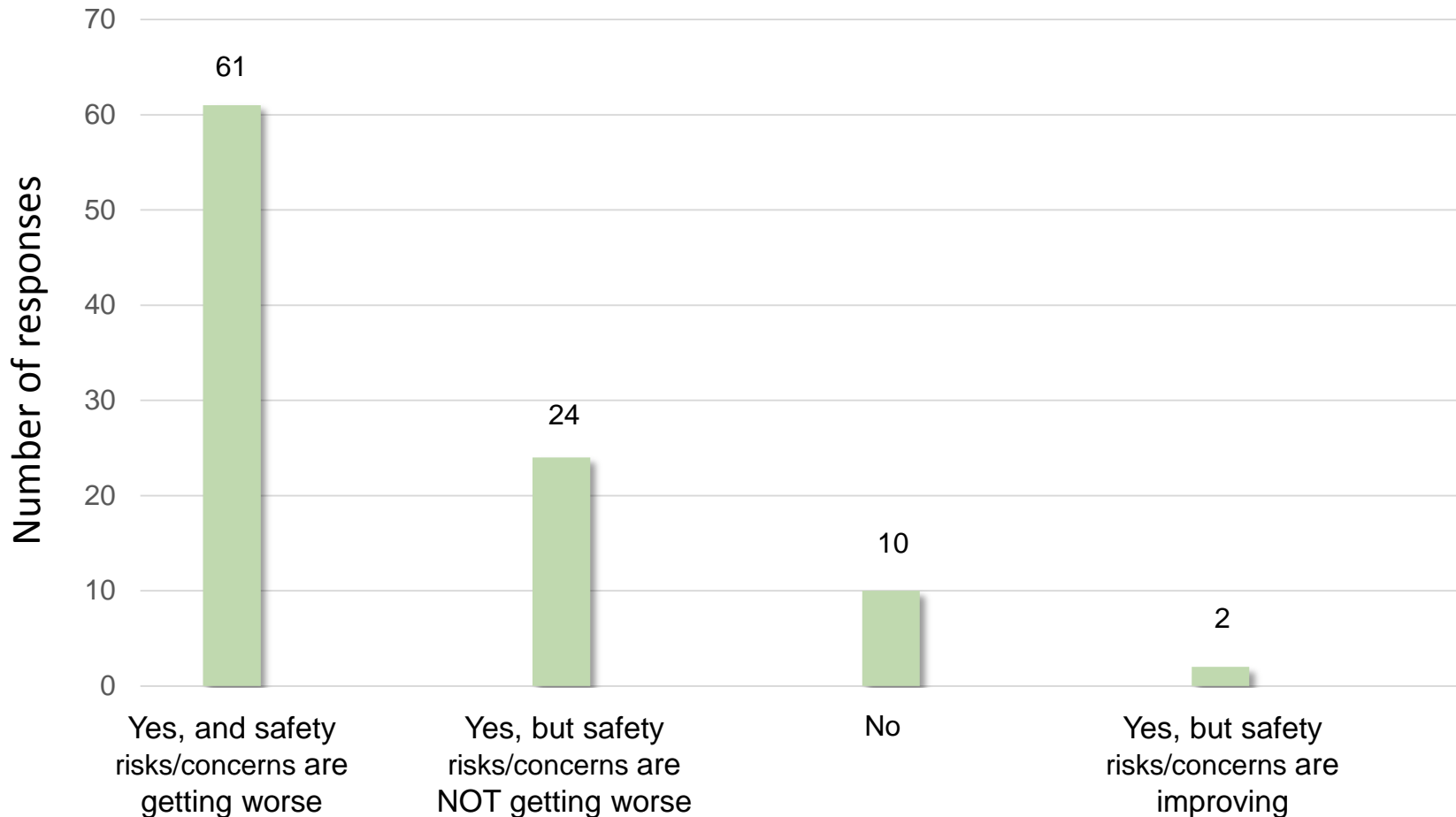


# Survey details

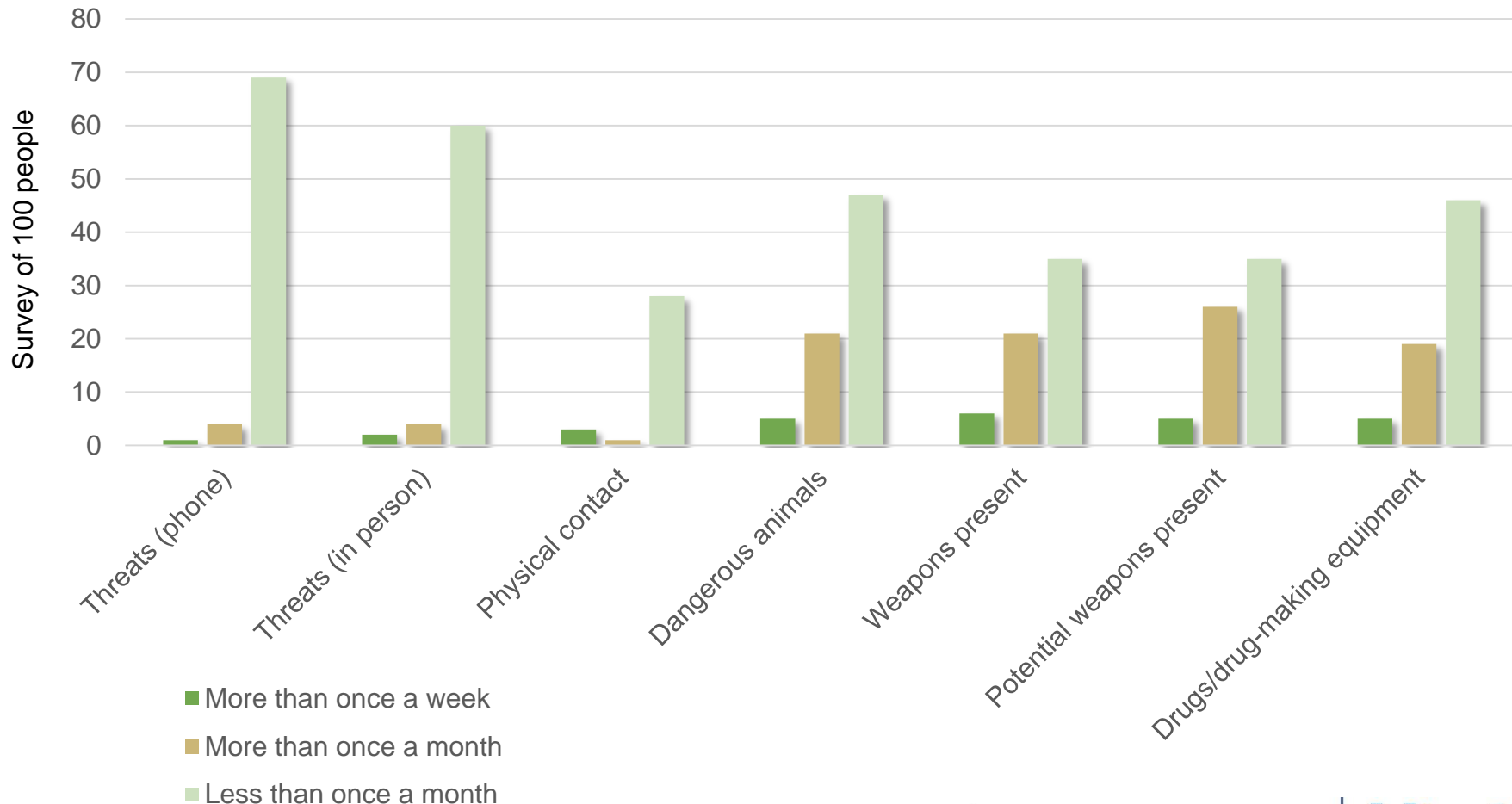
- Survey was administered January 2014 to receive feedback regarding safety needs of field workers in Oregon.
- Solicited responses from field workers in all counties in Oregon and OAAPI investigators.
- Respondents were primarily from APD/APS, OAAPI, CDDP and CMHP.



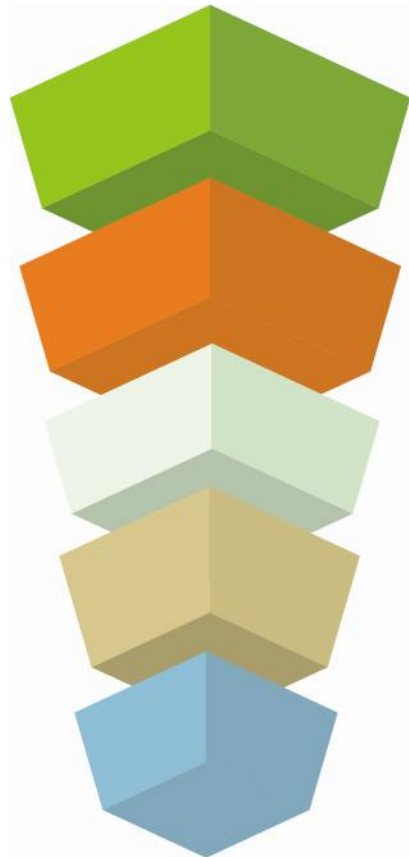
## Do you have concerns regarding your safety as it relates to the protection of vulnerable people or investigations?



# How often do you encounter or experience each of the following as part of your work?



**This is a suggested list of possible formats that the safety coordinator could use to provide assistance.  
Which would be of value to you?**



**Training**

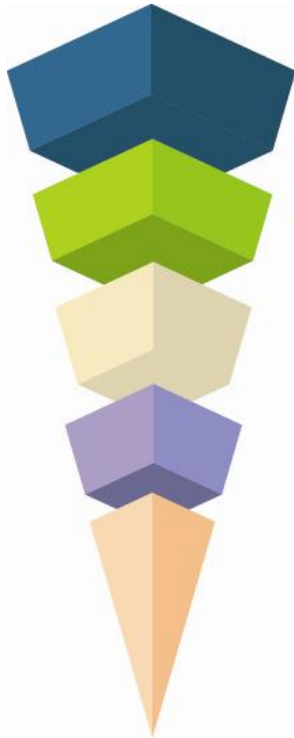
**Clarify DHS policies regarding expectations and worker's rights in assaultive situations**

**Liaison between law enforcement and Adult Protective Services**

**Networking with law enforcement and other agencies to line up resources**

**Research national "best practices"**

**This is a suggested list of possible formats that the safety coordinator could use to provide assistance.  
Which would be of value to you?**



**Critical incident debriefing**

**Develop screening questions to ask  
when called out to investigate**

**Develop guidelines for sharing incident**

**Trauma response/peer support**

**Develop action plans**

# What do you feel are the most important aspects of safety the coordinator should prioritize first?

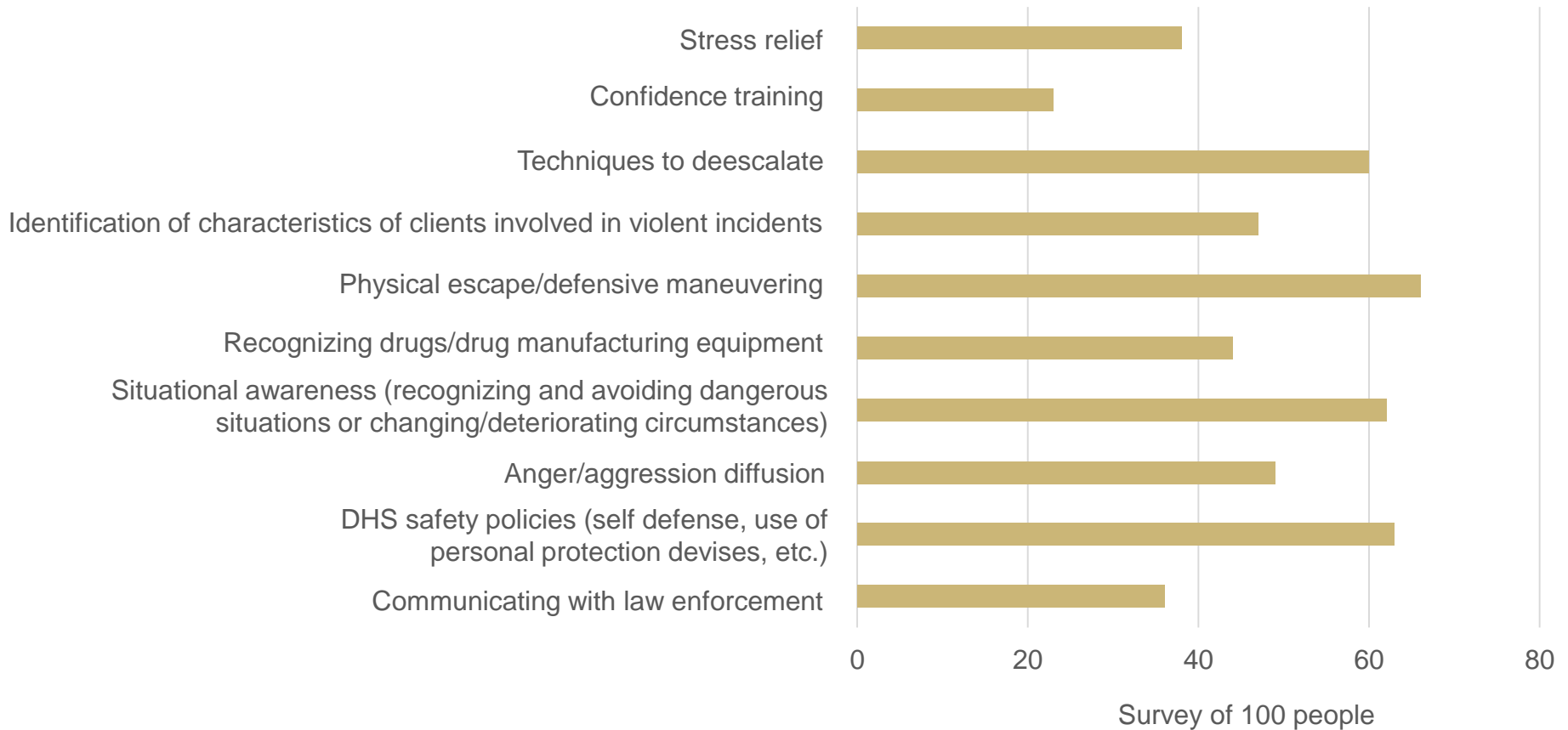
- 1 Training
- 2 Ensure worker safety
- 3 Policy clarification
- 4 LEA partnership
- 5 Research best practices



# What do you feel are the most important aspects of safety the coordinator should prioritize first?



# On which of the following topics would you be interested in receiving training or resources?



# Building a case

Recruit for an OAAPI safety coordinator position to develop the key aspects of safety identified by staff in the survey, such as training, trauma debriefing, screening, etc., in partnership with programs we support.



## Action steps

- Engage with executive leadership
  - Field visits
  - Sample reports
  - Investment in staff
- Cost of doing nothing
  - Trauma
  - Retention
  - Morale



“  
*I have been frequently sexually harassed in the field.*  
”  
— APS worker

Making the shift

## Safety Coordinator

# Initial tasks

- Research
  - Current data
  - Information gathering
- Learning the system
- Training
  - Basic safety training
- Field visits
- Risk assessment



# Field visits

- 36 counties in Oregon = 215+ investigators
- Preliminary data collection
- Safety trends
- Past safety experiences

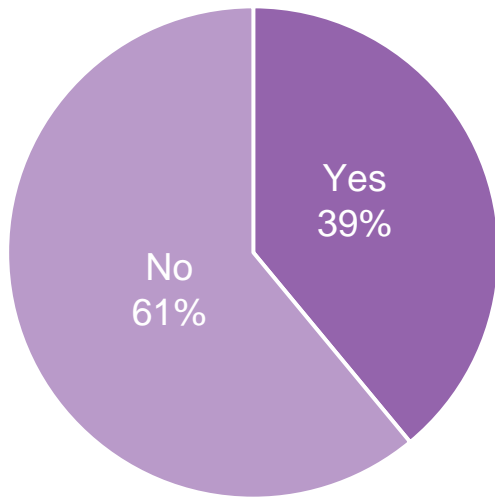
25 county MH  
investigators

30 county DD  
investigators

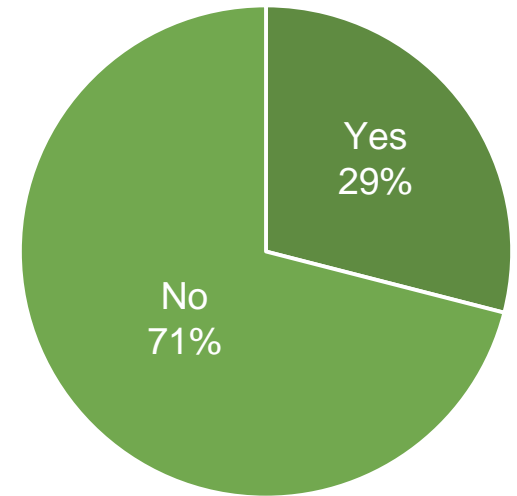
160 APD  
investigators  
(state/AAA)

# Personal protective equipment

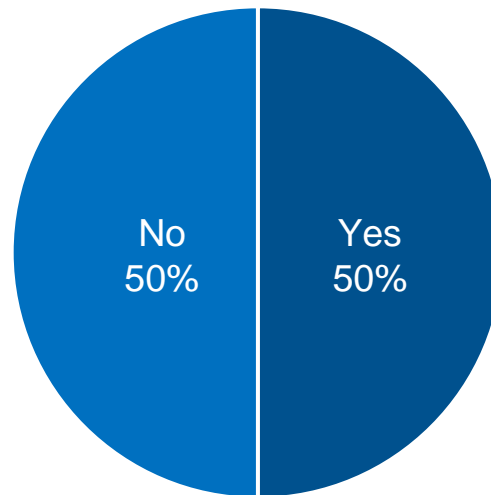
MH - PPE available?



DD - PPE available?

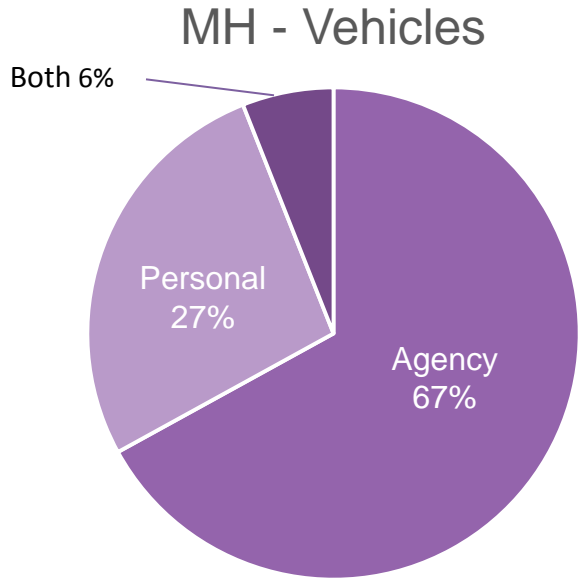


APS - PPE available?





# Vehicle use

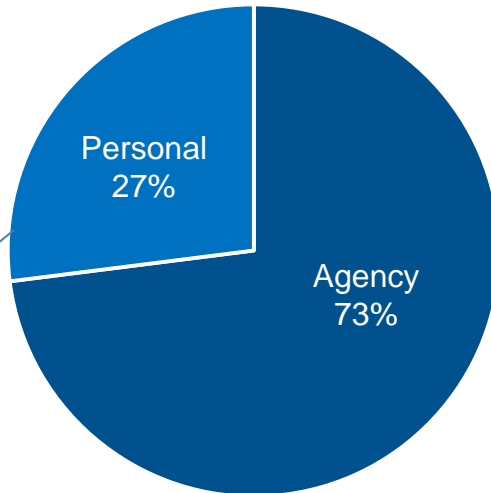


Both 6%

Personal  
27%

Agency  
67%

### APS - Vehicles

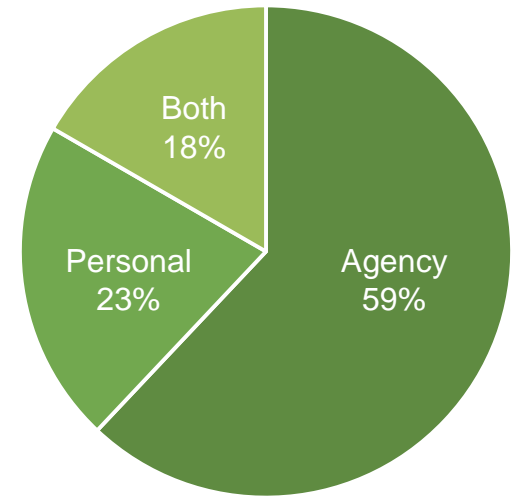


Personal  
27%

Agency  
73%

Non-DHS offices

### DD - Vehicles



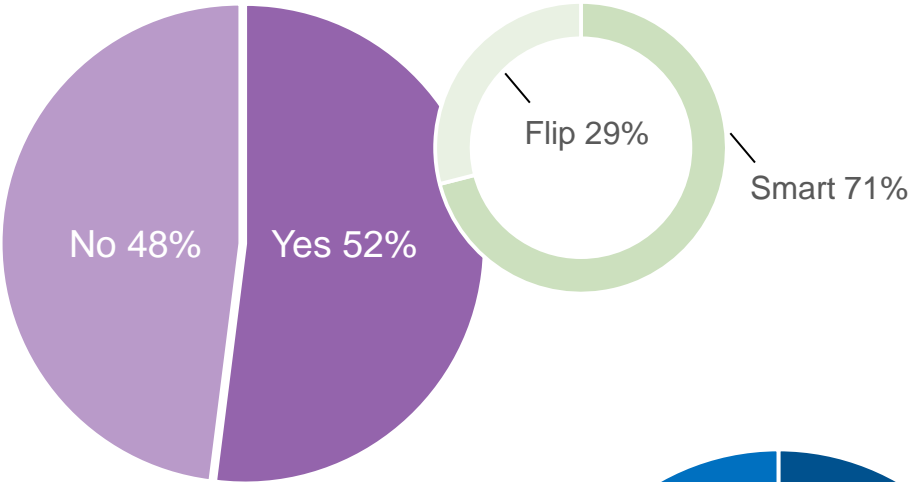
Both  
18%

Personal  
23%

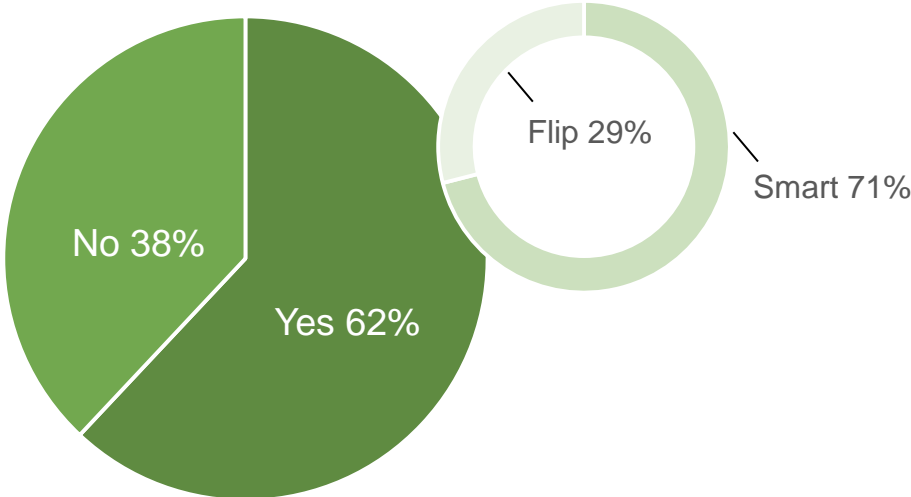
Agency  
59%

# Cell phones

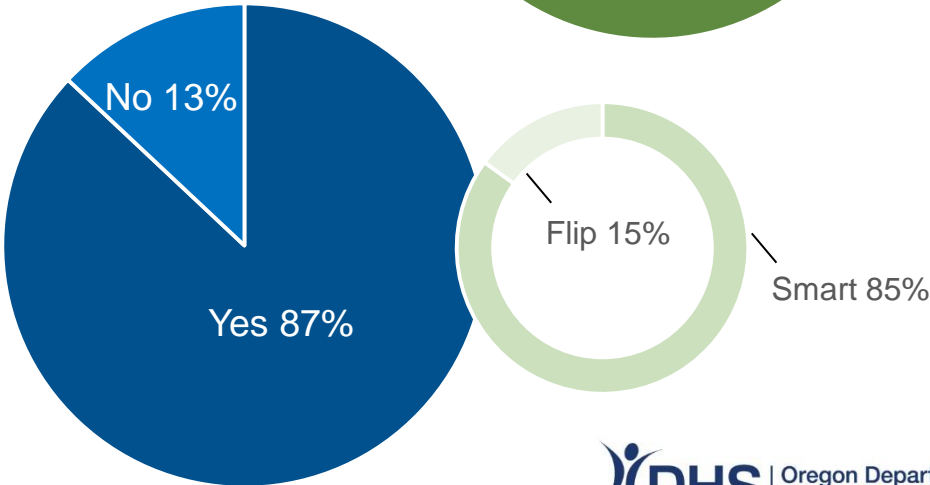
MH - cell phones



DD - cell phones

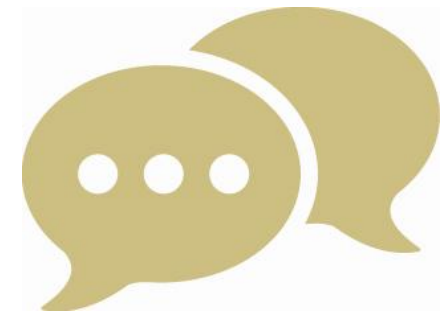


APS - cell phones



# Paradigm shift

- How do we change the culture of safety?
  - Multi-level systemic approach
    - Legislation
    - DHS and OHA
    - Local offices
      - APS experiences are normalized
        - “It is part of the job”
        - “Why would I report a threat?”
        - “People with guns... business as usual!”
        - “Drugs?... Oh that is normal!”
  - Going from **good** to **great**
  - How do you think about prevention?



# Culture of safety

$$Q \times A = E$$

**Q = Quality of the safety system**

**A = Acceptance of the safety system**

**E = Effectiveness in prevention**

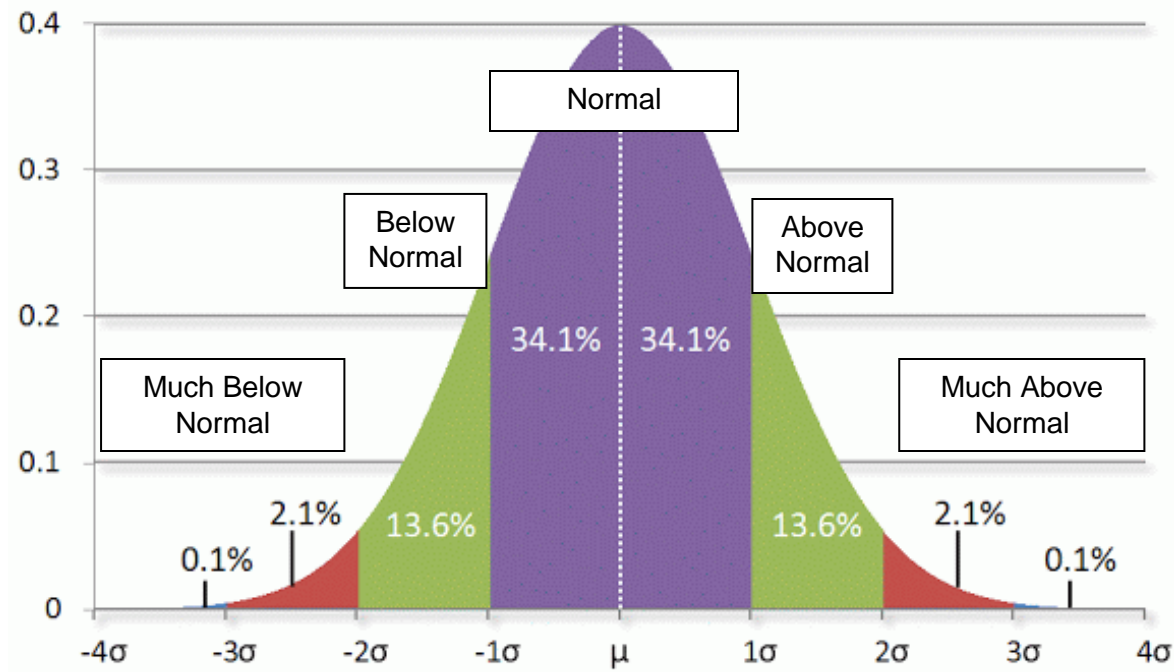
# State policies

- Workplace Incident Response Policy
- Prevention of Violence/Weapons in the Workplace
- Employee Safety for Clandestine (Methamphetamine or other illegal) Drug-manufacturing Labs
- Reporting of Incidents
  - TINS: Any event where the situation is threatened
  - Incident Report



# Reporting of incidents

- Does APS report when an incident occurs?
  - Terminology
    - Incident versus experience



# Risk assessment

- Process
  - Identify hazards/events(s) of an activity
  - Determine consequences/impact and possibility
  - What controls do we have in place and what controls do we need in place?
  - What is the risk with current controls and what is the risk with proposed controls?
- Goal
  - Prioritize high level risks
  - Reduce the high level risks with proposed controls



# Analysis: Field requests

- Training for all staff
- All access pass
  - Law enforcement databases
  - State databases
- Use of non-lethal weapons
- Policy clarification





# Analysis: Recommendations

- Training
  - Safety planning
  - Risk assessment
  - Situational awareness
  - Self-defense/protection
  - Physical escape and defensive maneuvering
  - Vicarious trauma
  - Drug identification and weapons
  - De-escalation
  - Communicable diseases
  - CIT training



# Analysis: Recommendations

- Policies
  - Self-protection
  - Non-lethal weapons
  - Language in state contracts for investigator safety
  - Authority across practice to reduce concerns of liability
- Legislation
  - Vulnerable Adult Multi-Disciplinary Team (funding, increased requirements)
  - Investigator safety training requirements
  - Formal data tracking system across all practices that include safety components



# Analysis: Recommendations

- Procedures
  - Screening questions/form
  - Two person protocol
  - Incident reporting procedure
  - Weapons in client's homes
  - De-briefing protocol
  - Trauma debriefing
  - Formal check in/out procedure
  - Cell phone requirements and coverage concerns
- Other
  - County/region specific risk assessment work group



# Lessons learned

- Multi-level communication
  - Macro
  - Micro
- Documentation
- Data tracking
- Employee safety at all levels



# Thank you!

Insert Quote and/or links to annual reports, FE study, safety survey

# Questions?

Marie Cervantes

Director

Office of Adult Abuse Prevention Investigation

503-945-9491

Jessica Denison

Safety coordinator

Office of Adult Abuse Prevention Investigation

503-947-4221

PRESENTATION

## It's Dangerous Out There

**Building a safety program to protect your APS workers**

OAAPI

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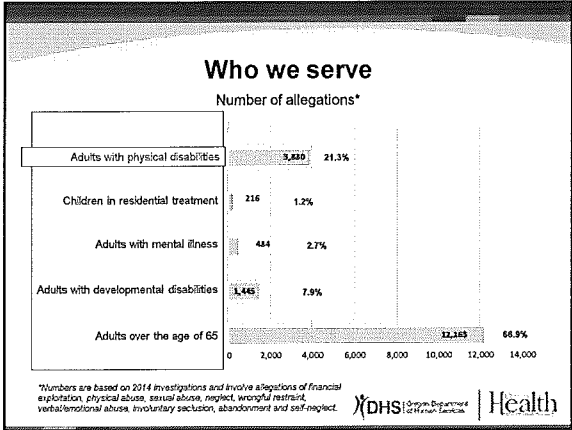
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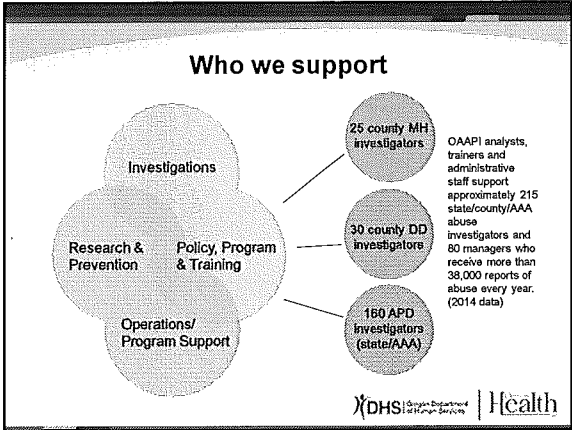
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Meeting the need  
**Executive Leadership**

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### Process

- "Know your why"
- Safety survey
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### "Know your why"

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### "Know your why"

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### Why a survey

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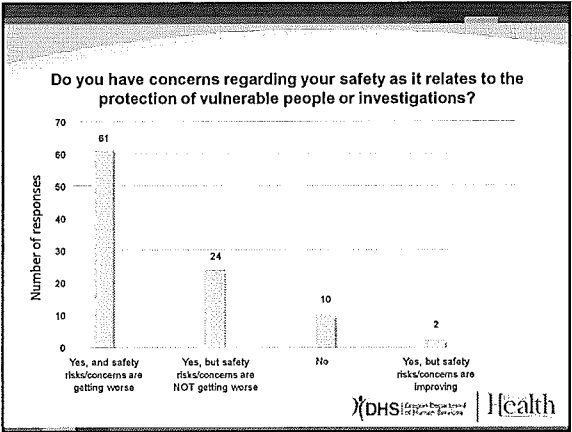
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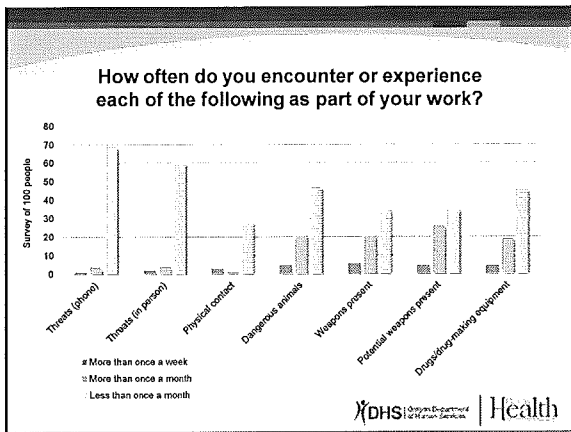
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- Training**
- Clarify DHS policies regarding expectations and worker's rights in assaultive situations
- Liaison between law enforcement and Adult Protective Services
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- Research national "best practices"

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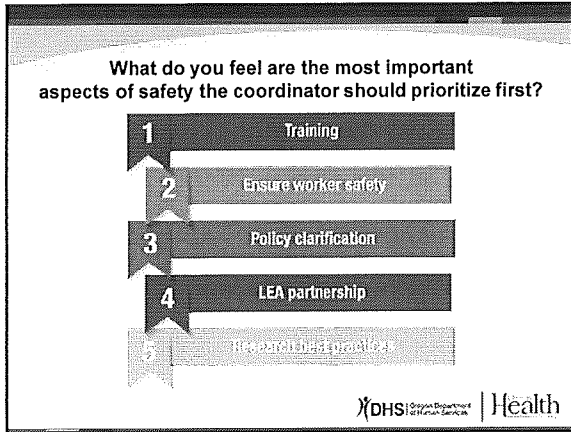
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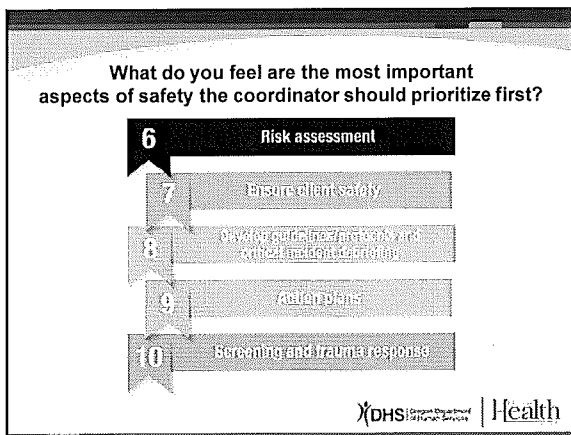
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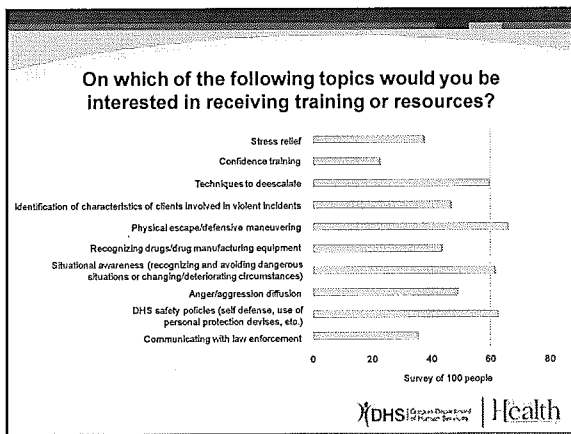
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### Building a case

Recruit for an OAPI safety coordinator position to develop the key aspects of safety identified by staff in the survey, such as training, trauma debriefing, screening, etc., in partnership with programs we support.



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### Action steps

- Engage with executive leadership
  - Field visits
  - Sample reports
  - Investment in staff
- Cost of doing nothing
  - Trauma
  - Retention
  - Morale



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— APS worker

Making the shift  
**Safety Coordinator**

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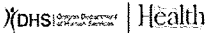
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### Initial tasks

- Research
  - Current data
  - Information gathering
- Learning the system
- Training
  - Basic safety training
- Field visits
- Risk assessment





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### Field visits


- 36 counties in Oregon = 215+ investigators
- Preliminary data collection
- Safety trends
- Past safety experiences



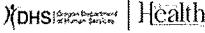
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160 APB  
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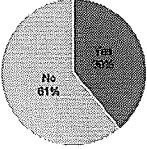
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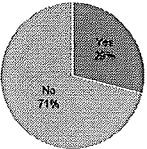
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### Personal protective equipment

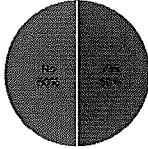
MH - PPE available?




DD - PPE available?



APS - PPE available?





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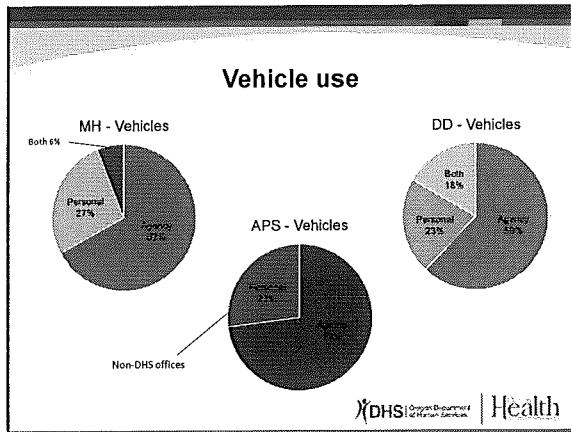
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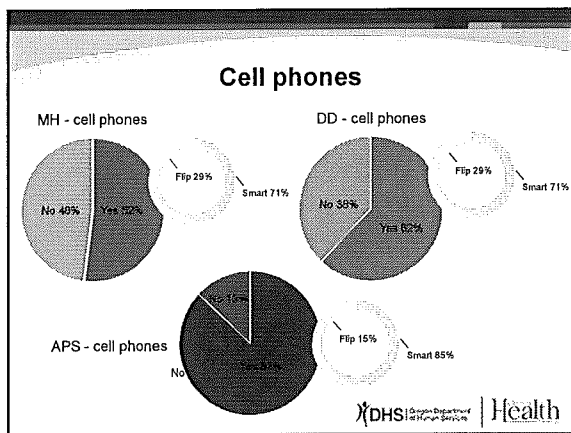
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### Paradigm shift

- How do we change the culture of safety?
  - Multi-level systemic approach
    - Legislation
    - DHS and OHA
    - Local offices
      - APS experiences are normalized
        - o "It is part of the job"
        - o "Why would I report a threat?"
        - o "People with guns... business as usual"
        - o "Drugs?... Oh that is normal"
- Going from **good** to **great**
- How do you think about prevention?



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### Culture of safety

## Q x A = E

**Q = Quality of the safety system**  
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### State policies

- Workplace Incident Response Policy
- Prevention of Violence/Weapons in the Workplace
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- Reporting of Incidents
  - TINS: Any event where the situation is threatened
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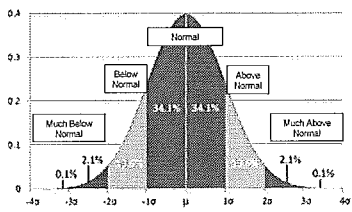
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### Reporting of incidents

- Does APS report when an incident occurs?
  - Terminology
    - Incident versus experience



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**Risk assessment**

- Process
  - Identify hazards/events(s) of an activity
  - Determine consequences/impact and possibility
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- Goal
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**Analysis: Field requests**

- Training for all staff
- All access pass
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- Use of non-lethal weapons
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**Analysis: Recommendations**

- Training
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**Analysis: Recommendations**

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**Analysis: Recommendations**

- Procedures
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- Other
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**Lessons learned**

- Multi-level communication
  - Macro
  - Micro
- Documentation
- Data tracking
- Employee safety at all levels



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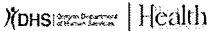
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**Thank you!**  
Insert Quote and/or links to annual reports, FE study, safety survey



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**Questions?**

Marie Cervantes  
Director  
Office of Adult Abuse Prevention Investigation  
503-945-9491

Jessica Denison  
Safety coordinator  
Office of Adult Abuse Prevention Investigation  
503-947-4221



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