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

OAAP'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.

OAAP'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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults with physical disabilities</td>
<td>6,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in residential treatment</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults with mental illness</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults with developmental disabilities</td>
<td>3,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults over the age of 62</td>
<td>15,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are based on 2015 investigations and are subject to change.*

Who we support

- 25 casey OHS investigators
- 32 casey OHS investigators
- 160 APS investigations (stateWIC)
- DARP analysts, investigators and administrative staff support approximately 25 casey OHS investigators and 32 casey OHS investigators and the 160 APS investigations who receive more than 38,000 reports of abuse every year. (2015 data)

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 APDAP doctors, OAAPI, CCDP and CMHP.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of responses</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, and safety measures are getting worse</td>
<td>Yes, but safety measures are not getting worse</td>
<td>No, but safety measures are improving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What do you feel are the most important aspects of safety the coordinator should prioritize first?

1. Training
2. Ensure no key safety
3. Policy clarification
4. LEA partnership

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

5. Risk assessment
6. 

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stressful</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathearseness</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques to develop</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of characteristics of clients involved in violent behavior</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical competence training</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing signs of preexisting mental health</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent awareness (preventing and criminalizing)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic plan</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence related to intimate partner</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription of violence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DHA ratifying policies for relationship</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal protective devices, etc</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with law enforcement</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey of 100 people
Building a case

Recruit for an OAAP 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

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

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

Personal protective equipment

MH - PPE available?

Do - PPE available?

APS - PPE available?
Paradigm shift

- How do we change the culture of safety?
  - Multi-level systemic approach
    - Legislation
    - DHS and DHA
    - Local offices
      - APS experiences are normalized
        - It is part of the job
        - Why would I report a threat?
        - "People with guns... business as usual"
        - "Dude... Oh that's 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
      - Minor Incident
      - Major Incident
      - Critical Incident
      - With/near Harm
      - Critical Harm
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
  - CRT 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 question/form
  - Two person protocol
  - Incident reporting procedure
  - Weapons in client’s homes
  - De-briefing protocol
  - Trauma debriefing
  - Formal check 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?
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