

# Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Institute

## Safety During an Interview

When conducting an interview, tensions can be high. Those reporting a concern may be anxious and feel emotionally vulnerable. Those responding to a concern may feel confused, angry, or threatened. In this mix of emotion, it is important to prepare for potential physical escalations and take some small but important preventative steps to keep yourself and others safe.

While some of the advice offered below may be outside of your control due to budget constraints or furniture that cannot be moved, look for multiple ways to improve your situational awareness and office safety.

- ❖ Having a plan helps you prepare to respond to a crisis. When we don't have a plan, we lose precious time and slow our reaction down when we need to move quickly and decisively. Muscle memory will be created by advance preparation and planning of what you will do in a crisis situation.
- ❖ Understand Amanda Ripley's Survival Arc. When a crisis occurs, we want to move quickly past denial and avoid becoming weighed down by slow deliberation. Time matters! The sooner we can move through denial and deliberation, the quicker we can move to decisive action.
- ❖ While privacy matters, you should balance the need for a more secluded office space with the potential of physical violence and the proximity to help.
- ❖ Invite visitors into your office space and offer them a seat that positions them in a manner that gives you a way to exit quickly. Don't put someone between you and the door, particularly if the door is the only potential exit from the room.
- ❖ Have an awareness of how you would exit the room if there was an emergency. Keep in mind there may be other exits in a crisis, such as a window or a secondary door.
- ❖ Have a primary exit and secondary exit in mind. Having two exit paths is smart in the event one of them is blocked or unavailable.
- ❖ Avoid having small, heavy objects within easy reach on your desk, table, or shelves, including paper weights, awards, or other knick-knacks. These could be used as weapons or thrown.
- ❖ Avoid having anything sharp or made of glass in easy reach of people visiting your office. This may include scissors, glass objects, or letter openers.
- ❖ Consider static and portable alarm buttons that can quickly notify administrative assistants and/or law enforcement if you are fearful for your safety.

DENIAL

DELIBERATION

DECISIVE  
MOMENT

Remember, think of your safety in terms of a layered plan with multiple parts that work together to mitigate the risk of you getting hurt.

