

HOMELESS TRAINING

– BY RYAN DOWD –

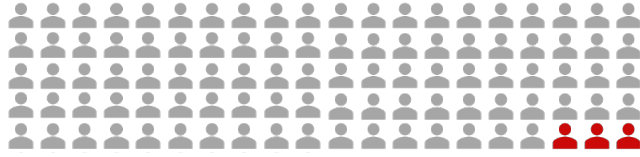
MENTAL ILLNESS SHORT COURSE:

High Risk & Low Risk Situations



RESEARCH ON VIOLENCE

Of 100 people with severe mental illness,
only 3 are violent.



HIGH RISK RED FLAGS

Step 1

Look for “red flags.” There are 3 red flags that point to higher risk mental illness.

Primary Red Flag



Angry or Violent Talk

If the person appears to be very mentally ill **AND** shows anger or talks about violence.

Special Situations



History of Violence

The #1 predictor of future violence is past violence.



Stalking-Style Delusion

When a customer has a delusion that they are in a romantic relationship with one of your staff.
While they are less likely to be violent, they are more likely to stalk for a long time.

Step 2

If you find red flags, call law enforcement.

LOW RISK SYMPTOMS

DIFFERENT ≠ DANGEROUS

Symptoms **NOT** Associated with Violence

- Strange or repetitive movements
- No emotion
- Not making sense while talking
(words that don't go together, made up words, stopping mid sentence, switching between unrelated topics)
- Delusions (believing something that is not real) without angry/violent talk
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing something that is not really there) without angry/violent talk

IGNORE MENTAL ILLNESS

DON'T Engage the Mental Illness

Don't try to convince them of reality.

- It strengthens the delusion.
- It creates unnecessary conflict.

Don't try to use their mental illness to get them to do what you want.

DO Ignore the Mental Illness

If they are not breaking any rules... just ignore the mental illness.

Focus on what you need them to do... *not* the mental illness.

What if they **won't let you** ignore their mental illness?

STEP 1

Express uncertainty about it.

STEP 2

IMMEDIATELY shift the conversation to something else.

THE CHECK-IN

Come up with a reason to have a short conversation with the individual. This can help pull them back into the moment.

NOTES

MENTAL ILLNESS

HIGH & LOW RISK SITUATIONS

Only
3% of 100 people
with severe
mental illness are

violent



You need to be able
to identify what is
HIGH RISK
and **LOW RISK**.

BEHAVIORS TO LOOK FOR

Angry or violent
talk

History of
violence

Stalking-Style
Delusion



If someone has one of
these red flags,
call law enforcement.

Strange or repetitive
movements

No **emotion**

Not making sense
while talking

Delusions
(without angry/violent talk)

Hallucinations
(without angry/violent talk)

**LOW
RISK**

Tools to Use

- ✓ Ignore Mental Illness
- ✓ The Check-In



Remember...

**DIFFERENT
≠
DANGEROUS**

SOURCES

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CREDITS

Instructional Designer

Ryan Dowd

Researcher

Krista Reynolds

Graphic Designer

Katherine Boils

Video Editor

David Young

Actors

Tommy Kramer

Bengy del Villar

Consultants/Feedback

Krissie Dowd

Andrea Hert

Joe Jackson

Dr. Willie Jackson

Megan Jones

Neil McMenamin

Hailey Palmquist

Rachel Popplewell

Crystal Pecora

Hugo Saltijeral

Carolyn Sprawka

Dr. Eric Ward