

THREATENING CALLS

DE-ESCALATION & SECONDARY TRAUMA

the PROBLEM

In June 2021, department leaders identified **the need to address threatening calls**. The pandemic led to a historic spike in unemployment and a corresponding increase in call volume for the Division of Employment Security (DES) and the department as a whole.

The department saw a **marked increase in callers threatening harm** to themselves or others. While DES had an existing protocol, the increase in threatening calls highlighted a need for updated, uniform guidance for the entire department.

the SCOPE

The team's goal was to reduce the harm of critical calls to both callers and staff.

the APPROACH

Through an internal survey and other research, the team found these keys to handling threatening calls:

- a zero tolerance policy
- updated protocols
- more rigorous training

the TEAM

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Benefit Program Supervisor, DOLIR-DES

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Administrative Support Assistant, DOLIR-MCHR

the DATA

Of staff frequently handling calls:

49% have handled threatening calls

31% have experienced secondary trauma

the PROPOSAL

PROTOCOL

Staff and Supervisor Protocols: Instructions explaining roles of staff and supervisors when receiving a threat.

Staff Checklist: A checklist to guide staff and allow them to gather key information about a threatening call.

Incident Tracking: A department-wide record of all incidents, allowing the department to track frequency over time and to identify staff who may need support as a result of incidents.

TRAINING

An overall training to all staff addressing threats that would increase staff awareness of protocols and create a more alert, supportive environment.

A more in-depth training for staff who handle outside calls at least 15% of the time. This training would help staff feel more confident, limit secondary trauma, and reduce risk to callers.