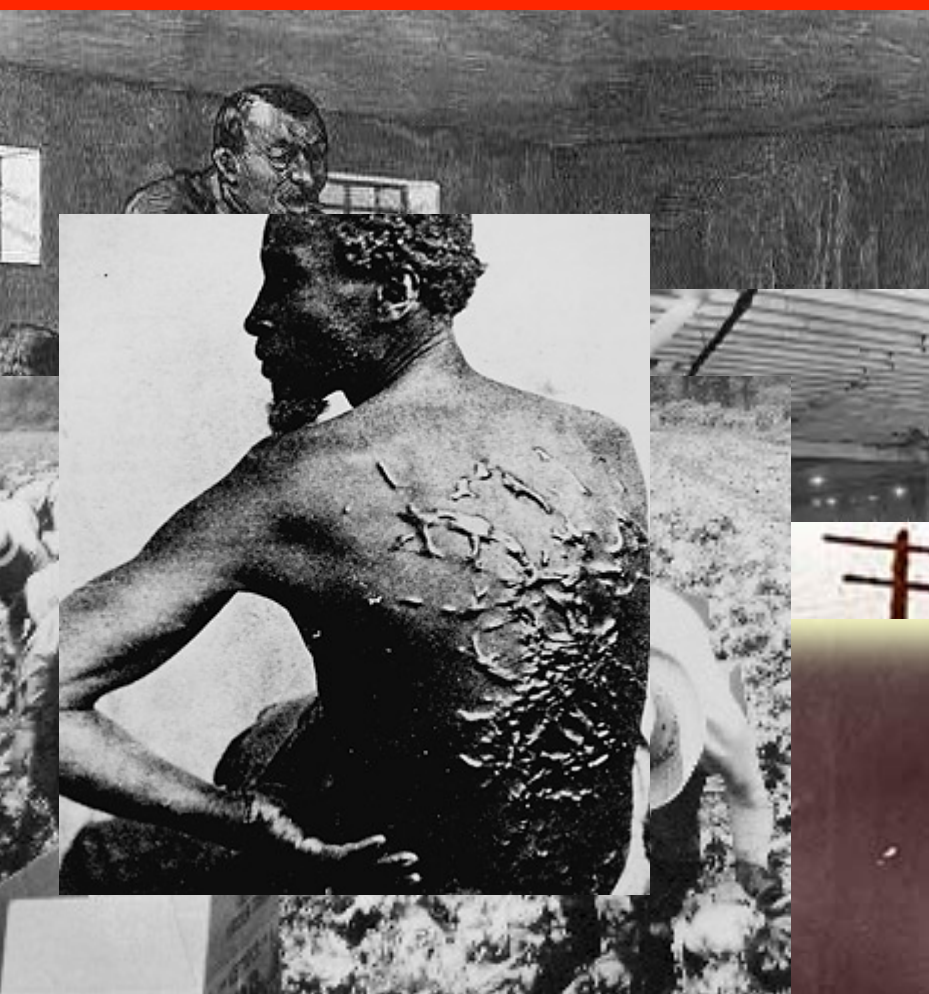


# Improving Mental Health Safety in the Workplace

Gerald Lewis, Ph.D.  
[glewis@geraldlewis.com](mailto:glewis@geraldlewis.com)



# Historical Context

- Prior to 1900s- little to no physical or emotional safety
- Unions- early 1900s- wages, some conditions, a few benefits
- Social security- 1935
- Child labor laws- 1938
- Civil Rights Act- 1964
- Sexual Harassment- 1984
- Drug-Free Workplace- 1988\*
- ADA- 1990
- FMLA- 1993
- 21<sup>st</sup>- Gender/transgender...

After thousands of years...  
In less than 100 years...

# Employee Assistance Program

- Began in the 70s
  - Alcohol focus: Grassroots, through AA and unions
  - Now “broad brush”
- Assessment services
- Now includes: “work/life balance,” “stress management” (resilience)
  - Legal support
  - Financial support
  - Childcare/eldercare
- Educational
- Crisis management

# Drug & Alcohol Concerns

## The Workplace is a Microcosm

- Policies and procedures
- DO NOT USE LABELS!!!
- Assessment process already set up
  - EAP
  - FFD
  - Security/police
  - Drug/alcohol testing
- Do not let them drive home

# Policies to Maintain Workplace Safety

- Physical safety
- Emotional Safety
  - Drug and alcohol
  - ADA/FMLA
  - Hostility (not violence)
    - Sexual harassment
    - Discrimination
    - Threats and non-physical behavior
    - Protective order
  - Impaired employee
    - ADA
    - FMLA
- Code of Conduct/Behavioral Expectations

# ADA

- The definition of disability in the **ADA** includes people with **mental illness** who meet one of these three definitions:
  - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
  - A record of such an impairment.
  - Being regarded as having such an impairment.
- Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, **eating**, sleeping, **walking**, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, **breathing**, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.
- “Reasonable” Accommodation

# The 10 Commandments for the Workplace...

This applies to all employees at all levels.

## **Thou shalt...**

- 1. Speak in a normal tone of voice (no yelling, raised volume or sarcasm).***
- 2. Refrain from using profane or vulgar language.***
- 3. Maintain courteous personal space.***
- 4. Work effectively with others to facilitate the completion of their duties and responsibilities.***
- 5. Maintain a suitable dress code as designated by the department head or manager. This may include clothing, make up, jewelry, tattoos, etc.***
- 6. Maintain good personal hygiene.***
- 7. Maintain care and cleanliness of the workspace and equipment.***
- 8. Report to work on time and abide by your specific work schedule.***
- 9. Abide by all company policies (i.e. smoking, sexual harassment, drug and alcohol, etc) .***
- 10. Maintain courtesy and cooperation even in the face of discourtesy.***