Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn what safety procedures should be in place before and during a visit.
2. Participants will learn strategies on how to address their safety concerns.
3. Participants will learn how other agencies handle safety concerns and what policies they have in place.
Setting boundaries set the tone for the professional relationship.

Spend a few moments thinking about the kinds of boundaries you would set up for both yourself and for your clients.
AT A GLANCE QUIZ

A visiting professional at a home visit.

List three correct safety measures in these images and three things that threaten safety.

Know where you are going!

Use a program like GoogleMap to check out the neighborhood before you go.

Evaluate risk factors before, during and immediately after your home visit.

Using safety assessment forms help you to develop and sharpen your “safety lens.” This can help you recognize more hazards and the speed at which you can spot them.

- Car Checklist – Prior to / Day of Visit
- Entrance to Home
Other Hazards

- **Animals**: Many people have animals. Some friendly, some not so friendly. It's always a good idea to check this when talking to the client on intake or when planning the first home visit.

- **Communicable Diseases & Health Hazards**: Coming and going in and out of homes and being in contact with many families throughout the week increases the chance of spread of communicable disease between staff and families.

- **Drugs & Chemical Hazards**: Some signs of drugs or hazardous chemicals in a home are more obvious than others. If you get a feeling that things are not right then trust your instincts to know when to leave or to ask for help.

- **Weapons**: One can assume that every home may have a weapon of some kind in it. And that every client can access a weapon.

Cornerstone

- **Attitude**: What are you taking into the home?
It is our professional responsibility to monitor ourselves closely and work on our own issues sometimes with the help of reflection and reflective supervision.

AT A GLANCE QUIZ

A visiting professional leaving her car upon arriving at a client's residence.

List three correct safety measures in these images and three things that threaten safety.
Before the Visit
- Always let someone know where you are going.
- Review intake form for possible concerns of violence or substance abuse.
- Mentally rehearse the visit and what you need to accomplish.
- Don’t wear excessive jewelry and dress appropriately.
- Take your ID with you, but do not wear your ID cord around your neck.
- Wear comfortable shoes with low or no heels.
- Carry a cell phone with you, when possible.

Approaching the House
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Park your vehicle in a way that you can make a quick exit, if necessary.
- Do not block anyone’s parking space.
- Lock valuables in the trunk of your vehicle.

During the visit
- Be aware of the exits from the home.
- If possible, keep yourself between the client and the door.
- Sit near an exit or facing the hallway so you can see the hall and bedrooms.
- Use non-threatening body language and avoid any conflict.
- Be respectful of the client’s home and their emotions.
- Listen to your instincts and feelings.
- Do not touch the family pet.
- Be cautious and use common sense.
- Leave if you feel threatened or if you notice unlawful or peculiar behavior.
- Report your concerns to your supervisor or police when necessary.

Physical Appearance
- Those very things can work against us when dressing for safety. Consider the following statements regarding various items of clothing:
  - Religious or political symbols - cautious wear
  - Jewelry - avoid flashy jewelry that may make you a target
  - Long hair - wear it up to prevent it from being used against you
  - Shoes - should be comfortable and protect the feet.
  - Ties & Scarves - use clip on ties that cannot present a choking danger

Some phone numbers you should have for the communities you are serving
- Emergency
- Police (non-emergency)
- Fire (non-emergency)
- Supervisor
- Ambulance
- Taxi company
- Tow company
- Your car’s service garage
- Traffic report station
- Weather Info.
- Roadside Assistance

Information and phone numbers your supervisor should have
- Next-of-kin (work telephone #)
- Next-of-kin (home telephone)
- Your family physician
- Other medical issues, such as diabetes, Medic Alert Bracelet, etc.
Do you have set policies for...

- Cars
- Entrance into a home
- Animal Hazards
- Communicable Diseases & Health Hazards
- Drugs & Chemical Hazards
- Weapons

- If you don't feel safe, what should I do?
- Who do you call first, second, or third?
- When do you call?
- If you are hurt on the job, what do you do?
- Can I change my visitation schedule without notifying anyone?
- Are the families we serve informed of the agency's safety policies?

Parts of this presentation was adapted from

- BE SAFE: A guide to home visits and off-site activities from Providence Healthcare
- Home Visitor’s Handbook: For the Head Start Home-Based Program Option
  https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/PDFs/5F613A8CC15D89DAFE1D1568DB0719A.pdf
- HOME VISITOR SAFETY: MIECHV Program Training Module

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