

Safety Best Practices for Home Visiting Agencies

Create a Culture of Safety

- Create safety policies and procedures that are regularly updated, easily accessible to all staff, and regularly reviewed with all staff. Incorporate all levels of staff in drafting and revisions.
- Establish a safety committee that holds regular meetings and has a diverse membership, including home visitors, supervisors and upper management, as well as community leaders.

Provide Initial and Refresher Trainings

- Partner with local law enforcement and other agencies with specific safety knowledge.
- In addition to general safety procedures and crisis intervention, training topics should include:
 - Animal safety
 - Communicable diseases
 - Driving safety
 - Drug safety
 - Gang safety
 - Insects
 - Weapon safety
 - Safety considerations related to:
 - Domestic Violence
 - Intoxication
 - Mental illness
 - Suicidal clients
 - Homicidal clients
 - Threats of self-harm by clients

Equip Home Visitors with Safety Resources

- IDs with clips or breakaway lanyards
- Whistles or other noise-making devices
- Cell phones
- Agency vehicles for use during visits
- Emergency kits (for example: first aid, car safety, blood borne pathogens)
- Snow shovels, lock de-icer
- List of emergency numbers

Encourage Safe Practice

- Allow home visitors to cancel visits or travel with another staff person when safety is a concern.
- Acknowledge and reward home visitors when they are appropriately cautious.
- Ensure home visitor schedules and contact information are updated and easily available to staff.
- Follow weather-related school closings and advisories.

Develop an Incident Reporting System

- Provide a list of situations that must be reported to a supervisor and/or to law enforcement.
- Develop a system to document and track incidents and threats.
- Require specific, written coverage plans for when a supervisor is unavailable.
- Regularly review data for trends and communicate with staff and management.
- Use this information to update safety policies and procedures, as needed.

Support Home Visitors In the Event of an Incident

- Assist with immediate and ongoing medical and legal needs resulting from the incident.
- Debrief with staff and witnesses and complete an incident report according to agency policy.
- Develop a response plan. File criminal charges and address home visiting clients, as appropriate.
- Provide counseling or referrals, as well as compensation for lost or damaged property.
- Review safety policies and procedures in light of incident.