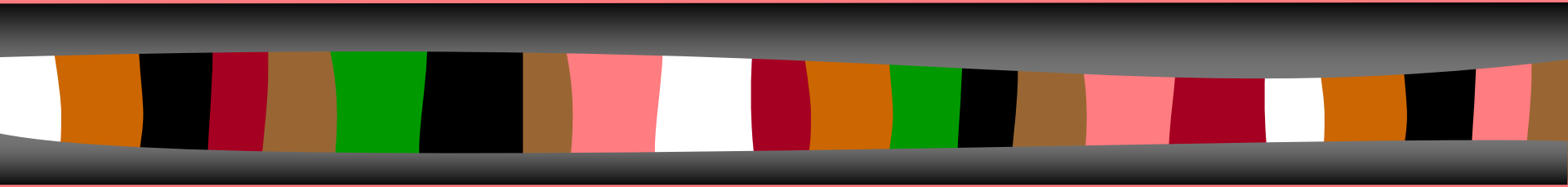


Home Visitor Safety



Training Companion to Home
Visitation Safety Guidelines
General Safety Guidelines



Presenter

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Important Note

When utilizing the guidelines provided in this training and the entire Safety Manual, it is important to remember the context in which they will be used. Safety considerations may vary from location to location as well as from situation to situation. For example, safety issues in rural areas may differ somewhat from safety issues in urban areas. Because each community is unique, the safety issues encountered in that community may also be unique. With regard to safety issues, there are other factors, in addition to context, that may need to be considered. Those factors include agency policies and procedures as well as current state laws.

Safety guidelines often need to be adapted and/or expanded to address the specific concerns of each location or situation. Supervisory sessions provide an appropriate venue for discussion of specific safety concerns and fine-tuning of safety procedures. The supervisor should be available and immediately informed if the home visitor fears for his/her safety. The safety of the home visitor is of utmost importance. The focus of this manual and training is to provide general guidelines to enhance understanding and awareness of safety issues for home visitors.



Training Objectives

Participants will identify and understand:

- Importance of maintaining a safe environment for working in homes and community.
- Potentially unsafe environments.
- Strategies to ensure personal safety as well as safety of co-workers and families being served.



Safety Guidelines for Home Visitors

- Manual development - Home Visitation Leadership Advisory Coalition (HVLAC)
- To promote safety practices for home visitation workers across programs
- Objectives:
 - Set safety guidelines for home visitors
 - Identify special circumstances that may impact the safety of home visitors
 - Identify reporting procedures per OK law
 - Provide links and resources



General Safety Guidelines

If imminent danger...

- Leave immediately.
- Call 911 (or local emergency #).
- Call local DHS Child Welfare or Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-522-3511 if children are in danger.
- Call supervisor to advise of situation.
- Debrief with supervisor regarding observations.
- Contact family as safety permits (consult with supervisor) to ensure their safety.
- Assure parents you will continue to work with them (if possible) within program guidelines.



If you believe someone is in danger during a phone call...

- Get as much information about caller's location as possible.
- Tell them you are calling 911 or other emergency services --- unless you fear it may worsen the situation or they will hang up. Try to keep caller on line by using another phone or ask someone else to make call.
- Consult with supervisor as soon as possible.
- Stay in contact and/or follow up with family as safety permits.



Prior to a home visit 1

- Determine risk factors for family or environment. Consult supervisor.
- Prior to leaving office, call to confirm parent is available for visit.
- Based on area, schedule visits in safest part of day. Avoid after dark w/out supervisor approval.
- Become familiar with a new area before visiting.
- Be aware of places you can seek help.
- Provide make-of-car & license plate # with supervisor and co-workers.
- Leave daily schedule with supervisor & office staff - notify of any changes.



Prior to a home visit 2

- Always sign in & out of office for each visit.
- Keep vehicle well-maintained - at least 1/2 tank gas.
- Program cell phone to call 911 or other emergency #.
- Leave valuables at home or in trunk **before leaving**.
- Carry driver's license and small \$\$ in your pocket.
- Always wear photo ID or name badge.
- Wear comfortable clothing and shoes – closed toe, can move quickly.



Parking and leaving vehicle

- Stay alert.
- Assess safety of home and area before stopping.
- Park in the open and near light source.
- Find safest walking route.
- Avoid parking where car could be blocked - park on street rather than driveway and in direction to leave.
- In apt complex - find family's bldg before exiting car.
- Take only items necessary for home visit.
- Do not leave valuables visible in car.
- Lock car at all times.



When approaching a home

- If you are approached, be brief and move on. Don't be drawn into conversations.
- If a person persists, follows you, or you believe you're in danger, **loudly** yell for help. Run to nearest place with people.
- Be aware of smells associated with substance use.
- Look & listen for signs of someone at home - assess signs of danger involving occupants.
- Do not enter the yard/home when:
 - a. Questionable persons are present
 - b. Parent/others are intoxicated
 - c. Violence is in progress
 - d. There is no quick escape
 - e. Vicious animals are present



When entering a home

- Stand to side of door when knocking.
- Do not enter home until you see your client. If not, indicate you will call to reschedule.
- If denied entrance, do not attempt to persuade. Leave and consult supervisor.
- When door opens, quickly observe inside to determine any threats to safety.
- Only enter if an adult is present
- Observe adults for suspicious behavior. Leave if you feel unsafe.



When in the home

- Stay near an exit. Remain alert and observant.
- Be aware of unusual sights/smells, drug paraphernalia, pornography, weapons.
- Remain aware of possible other persons and inquire about others present.
- Proceed with permission and caution when entering any room.
- Do not accept food or beverages.
- When possible, sit in a hard chair rather than upholstered furniture.
- Limit amount of personal information you share.
- Leave immediately if you feel unsafe.



When leaving the home

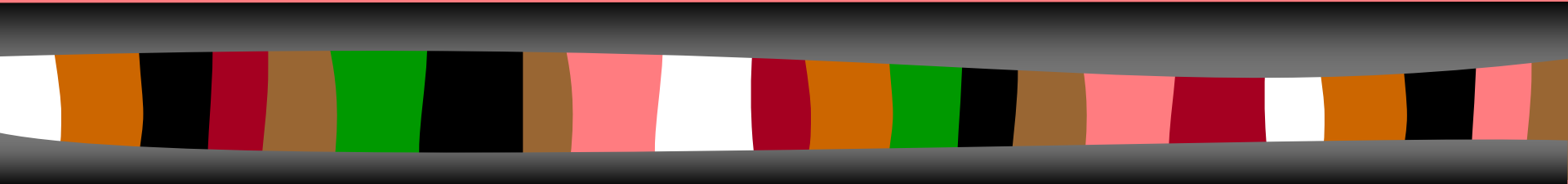
- Have car keys in hand.
- Observe your surroundings.
- Do not linger, leave immediately.



Useful Items to have available

- Cell phone and charger
- Emergency #s and contact information
- Small amount of money & change
- Plastic trash bags
- Disinfectant wipes and hand cleaner
- Latex gloves
- First aid kit
- Other items that you may need?

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