# **Home Visits**

#### AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH CLIENTS WHERE THEY LIVE

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#### PREPARING FOR A HOME VISIT Before you leave the office

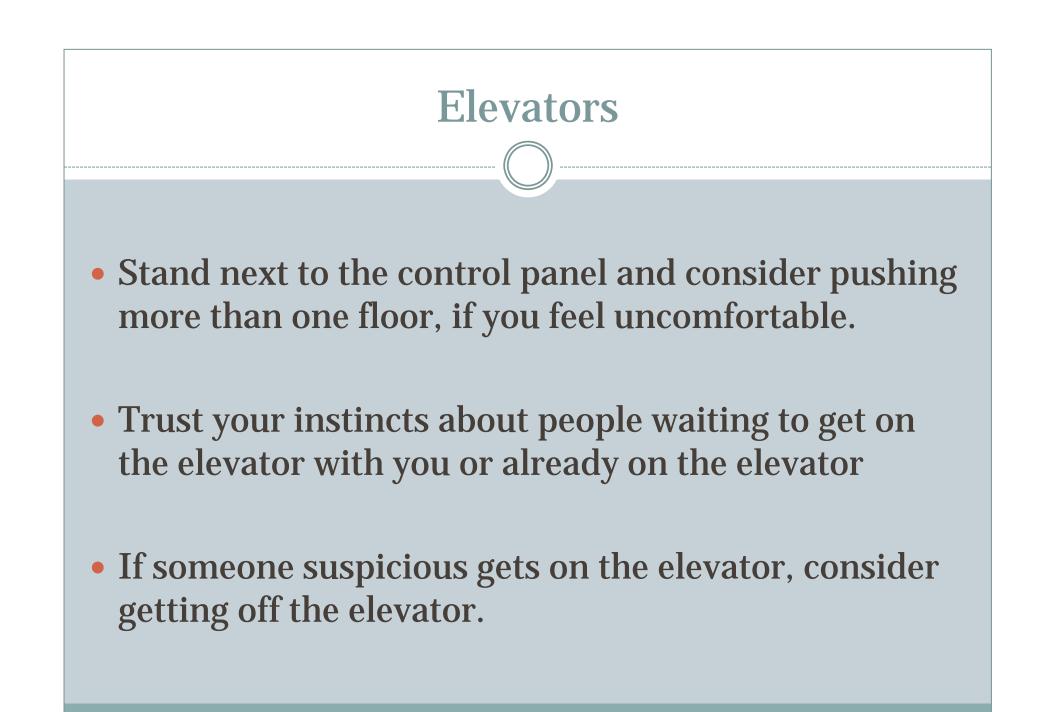
- Review what you need to accomplish, and if possible call/text client to confirm the visit.
- Take your ID with you, but do not wear your ID cord around your neck.
- Wear comfortable safe shoes with closed toes.
- Carry a cell phone with you, if possible.
- Put all valuables from your car in your trunk at the office.
- At the office, always sign out with client name and address identified.
- Consider bringing something for children in the household to play with during your visit

## Approaching the House

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Park your vehicle in a way that you can easily leave, if necessary.
- Watch for restricted parking signs to assure that you are not ticketed.
- Try to not walk through groups on street/sidewalk
- If the visit presents significant safety hazards, consider an alternative site to meet and/or make a joint visit.

## When Entering the Home

- Pause at the door before knocking and listen. If there is quarreling or loud noises, leave and reschedule.
- Do not enter a home with young children unless there is an adult present.
- Acknowledge all family members-smile, make eye contact, and recognize that you are a guest in the family's home.
- Introduce yourself and your role.
- Explain all processes and procedures so they know what to expect.



# **During the Visit**

- Respect the client's home and their cultural practices.
- Use non-threatening body language and remain calm and polite.
- When possible, sit on a hard chair.
- Be aware of the exits from the home. Until you become familiar with the client, consider sitting between the client and the door.
- Thank the family for inviting you into their home and for their time.
- Listen to your instincts and feelings. Leave if you feel threatened or if you notice unlawful or peculiar behavior. Report your concerns to your supervisor.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Clothing can do several things to make a statement about our personality, background and any affiliations we may have.

- Religious or political symbols wear cautiously
- Jewelry avoid flashy jewelry and limit use
- Shoes should be comfortable, protect the feet, and be easy to take off at front door
- No short shorts, tank tops, T shirts with printing, or jeans with holes, even if fashionable!
- Avoid wearing scents as some people are sensitive

### **OUTDOOR SAFETY AND TRAVEL**

#### **Things to consider:**

- No matter where you are going, be sure your car has enough gas and is in good working order.
- In the winter, know how much snow is on the ground and whether there is ice under the snow when walking on sidewalks and stairs
- Carefully park so as to not get stuck in the snow.

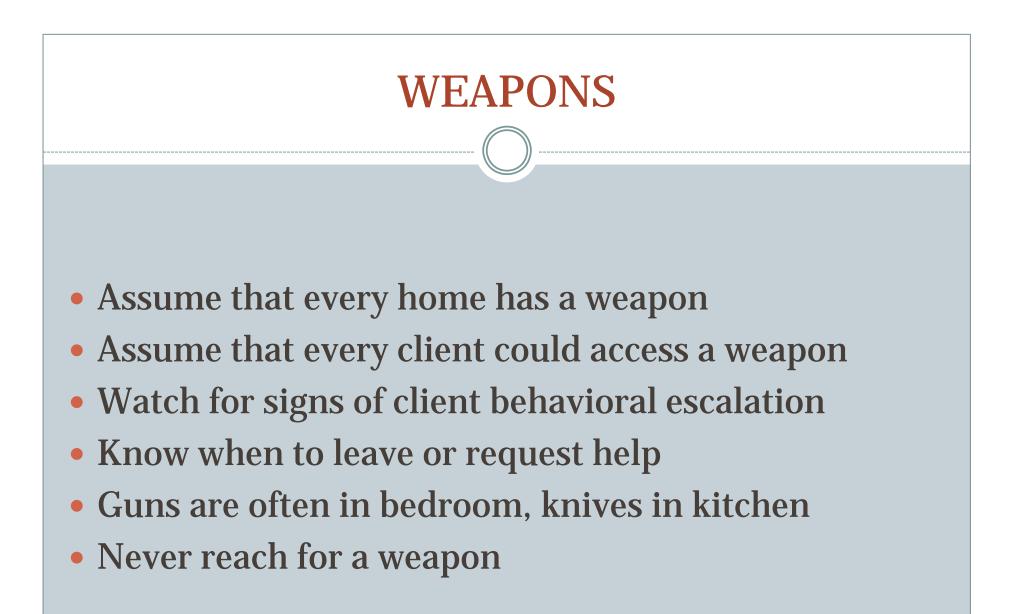
#### ANIMAL HAZARDS

Many families have animals.

- When setting up appointment for the home visit, check to see if the family has a pet. If so, share with them that it is agency policy that all animals be secured away such as putting them in a bathroom, basement, or bedroom.
  - Watch for clues: If you are unsure if there are animals in the residence look for signs that may warn you of the presence of an animal.
  - Be vigilant: These are not your pet's and you have no idea on how they will behave.

## DRUG AND CHEMICAL HAZARDS

- Be alert to the behavior of those outside and inside of the house
- Be aware of the smell of incense or marijuana
- Notice, without staring, any drug paraphernalia or alcohol present in the home
- When it is clear that individuals in the home are inebriated or high, schedule an appointment for another time
- Talk with your supervisor after the visit.



#### **BOUNDARIES AND LIMIT SETTING BEHAVIORS**

Boundaries set the tone for the professional relationship. Prior to initiating home visits, spend a few moments thinking about the kinds of boundaries you want to establish for both yourself and for your clients when visiting them in their home.

- Know your own triggers
- Ask yourself, what would a reasonable person do?
- Respect personal space. Do not initiate touch. If for some reason it is necessary, ask permission.

### **SELF AWARENESS & REFLECTION**

Understanding yourself will help you set up limits and boundaries for interactions with clients. Ask yourself the following questions.

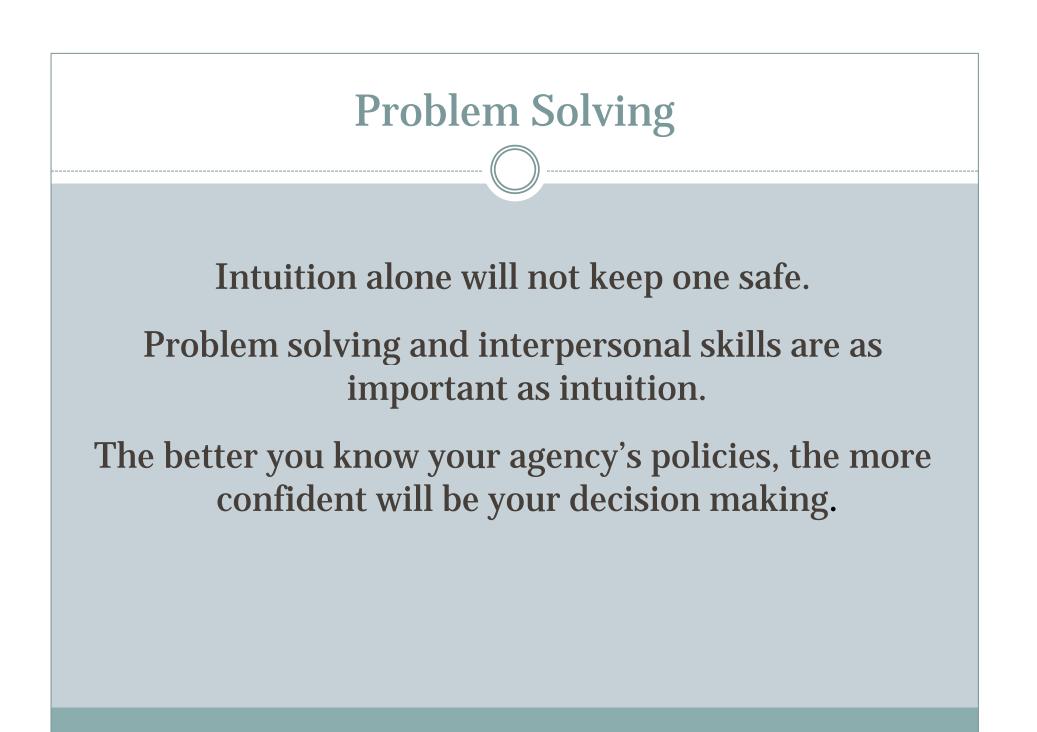
- Is it OK for client to raise their voice at me?
- Is it OK for a me to continue with this visit with a client who is inebriated or high?

## Intuition

Intuition is sometimes called instinct and can be helpful when used in some situations. When home visiting, we need to re-teach ourselves to listen deeply and pay attention to the subtle messengers of intuition.

#### Intuition can cause some of these feelings.

- Hunches, Doubt, Hesitation, and Fear
- Anxiety
- Wonder
- Curiosity
- Suspicion



# When leaving the home

#### THANK THE FAMILY AGAIN FOR INVITING YOU INTO THEIR HOME AND FOR THEIR TIME

#### HAVE CAR KEYS IN HAND, DOUBLE CHECK TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE ALL OF YOUR BELONGINGS, AND

#### **OBSERVE YOUR SURROUNDINGS AS YOU** LEAVE AND GO TO YOUR CAR