

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.

Elevators



- Stand next to the control panel and consider pushing more than one floor, if you feel uncomfortable.
- Trust your instincts about people waiting to get on the elevator with you or already on the elevator
- If someone suspicious gets on the elevator, consider getting off the elevator.

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.

WEAPONS



- Assume that every home has a weapon
- Assume that every client could access a weapon
- Watch for signs of client behavioral escalation
- Know when to leave or request help
- Guns are often in bedroom, knives in kitchen
- Never reach for a weapon

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

Problem Solving



Intuition alone will not keep one safe.

Problem solving and interpersonal skills are as important as intuition.

The better you know your agency's policies, the more confident will be your decision making.

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**