



Back to Basics: Home Visiting Safety and Boundaries Refresher

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Objectives

Define key safety considerations and professional boundaries that influence effective home visiting practices.

Analyze and discuss common safety scenarios encountered during home visits, reflecting on personal perspectives, evidence-informed strategies, and best practices for maintaining safety and professionalism.



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Opening Question

What's one safety precaution you always keep in mind before a home visit?

Defining Safety

Safety is freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger or loss.



Journal: Safety Boundaries



How do you describe feeling safe?

What helps you feel safe?

What Are Boundaries?

Clearly established limits that allow for safe connections between service providers and their clients.

- **Present in all aspects of your work with families.**
- **Trust and Relationship Building**
 - Clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role as a home visitor.
 - Ability to know where you end and the client begins.
- **Communication**
- **Home Visitor Responsibilities**



Turn & Talk



How do you *prepare* for a home visit with a family?

How does *safety* come into your preparation?

Be prepared to share out a strategy.





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***Please share safety
preparation
strategies discussed
in your group.***

Safety Best Practices for Home Visitors

Prepare

- Review family information and known concerns.
- Share your schedule with your supervisor.
- Plan your route and parking.
- Know your program's safety protocols.

Stay Aware

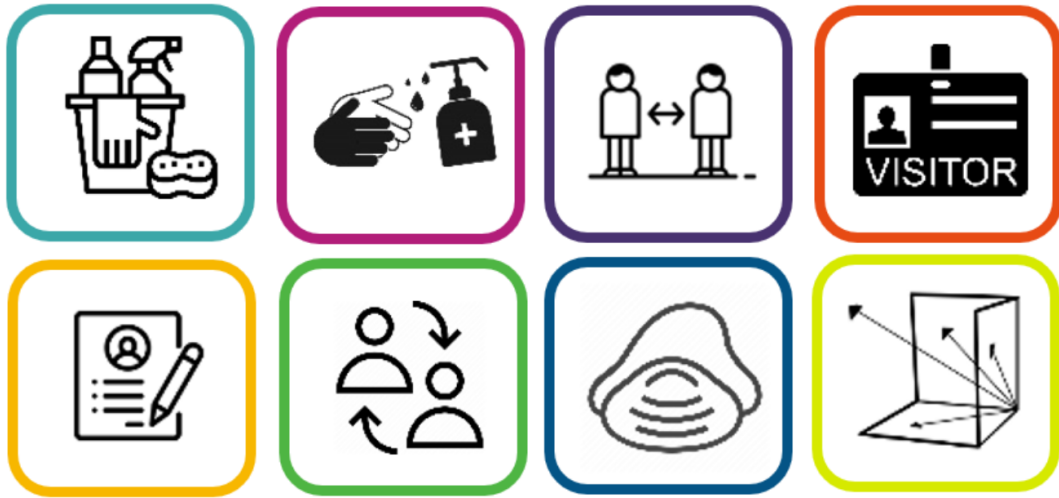
- Observe your surroundings before entering.
- Be aware of changes in the environment.
- Identify exits and maintain situational awareness.
- Trust your instincts.

Communicate

- Keep your supervisor informed.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Document concerns.
- Reach out for support when needed.

Respond

- Follow program protocols.
- Leave if safety becomes a concern.
- Debrief with your supervisor.
- Reflect on lessons learned.



Safety Protocols

- Provide policies on how to handle specific situations.
- Are designed to ensure that situations are handled thoughtfully.
- Acknowledge that safety is a complex issue involving many individuals.
- Ensure that each individual involved understands their role.

Professional Capacities

- What you bring to the work
- Training
- Organization Protocols
- Self-awareness
- Boundaries
- Knowing policies
- Communication
- Supervision
- Trusting instincts



Pause • Assess • Communicate • Respond



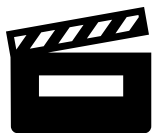
Pause – What am I noticing?



Assess – What information do I have? What information do I need?

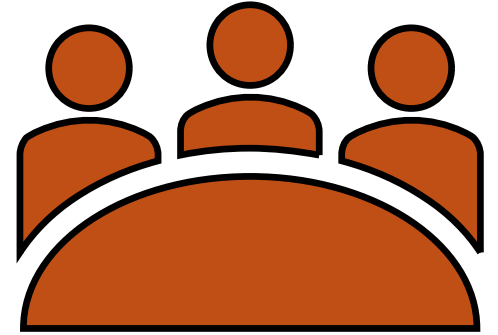


Communicate – Who needs to know? What conversation needs to happen?



Respond – What action is appropriate based on my program's policies, procedures, and professional judgment?

Safety Small Groups



At your table:

- Read the assigned scenario together.
- Discuss the guiding questions.
- Capture common themes and strategies.
- Be prepared to share key takeaways with the larger group.

Safety Conversation #1 Neighborhood Safety

You arrive for a scheduled home visit and notice several unfamiliar individuals gathered outside the family's apartment building. They appear to be arguing loudly. While no one approaches you directly, the situation makes you feel uneasy. The family is expecting your visit and has not shared any concerns about the neighborhood.

The discussion questions are on your handout.





Safety Conversation #2

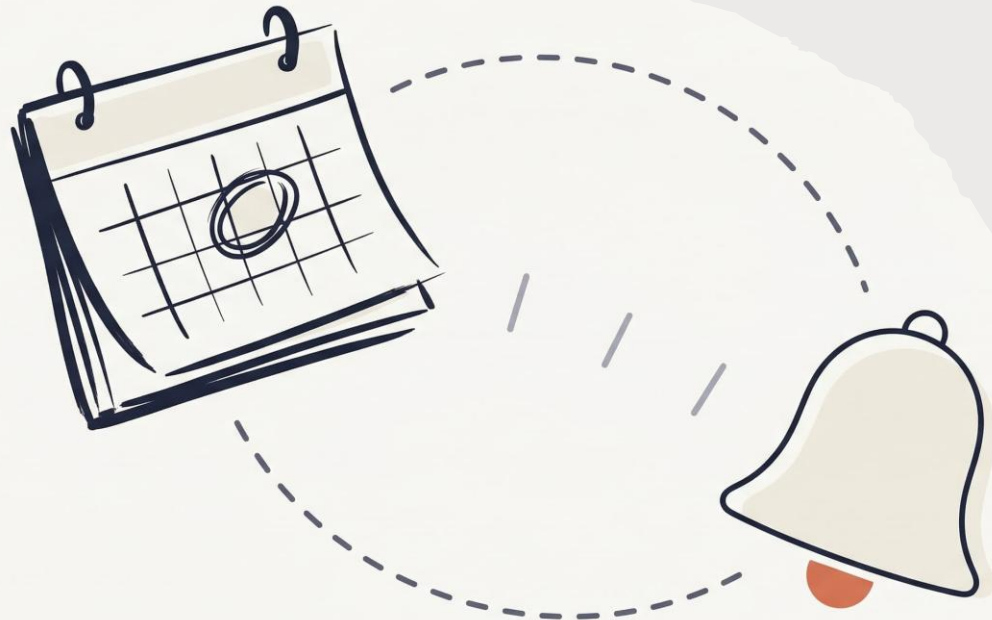
Unexpected Visitors

About halfway through a home visit, another adult unexpectedly enters the home. The individual appears upset and begins arguing loudly with another family member in a different room. Although the argument is not directed at you, you begin to feel uncomfortable and uncertain whether it is safe to continue the visit.

The discussion questions are on your handout.

Safety Conversation #3

Professional Boundaries



Over several months, a family has developed a strong relationship with you. They begin asking for rides, request to borrow money until payday, and occasionally text you outside of work hours for non-urgent matters. You want to maintain the trusting relationship you've built while also maintaining professional boundaries.

The discussion questions are on your handout.

Safety Conversation #4

Trusting Your Instincts

As you prepare for a scheduled home visit, you realize you've been feeling increasingly uneasy about visiting this family. Nothing specific has happened during previous visits, but recent conversations and changes in the neighborhood have left you feeling uncomfortable. You cannot identify one clear safety concern, but your instincts tell you something feels different.

The home visitor asks not to be assigned to visits with this family moving forward.

The discussion questions are on your handout.



What Common Themes Emerged?

- How did your **initial reaction** impact your perspective and next steps?
- What **themes** emerged across the conversations?
- What **strategies** were mentioned?
- What would help you feel more **prepared**?





Putting It Into Practice

- Choose one **scenario**.
- With a **partner**:
 - One person is the **home visitor**.
 - One person is the **parent/person part of scenario**.
 - Practice beginning the **conversation**.
- Focus on:
 - Asking **questions**
 - Seeking **understanding**

Home Visiting Safety

Questions to Ask in Going To and From the Home Visit:

What do you observe as you approach or leave the home?



What are you hearing as you approach the home, from outside or inside? Should you call the family to confirm your arrival before heading up to the door?



If there are unusual or new aspects of the environment, what feeling do you have in response to them?



Strategy
Share



What has worked for you in
feeling safe in-home visits?



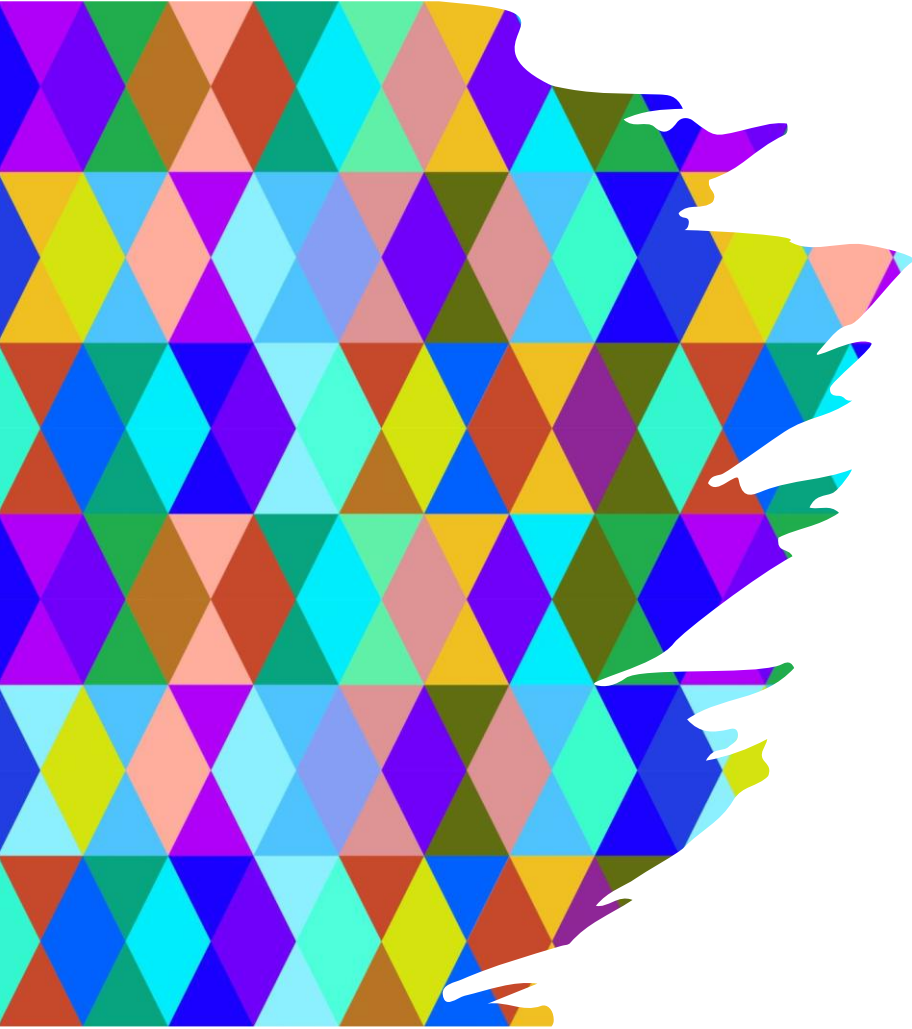
Final Reflection

Think about my daily routine before, during, and after a home visit from a “personal safety” perspective.

Should I make changes in my daily routine to ensure that I am maintaining personal safety and self-care?

Bring any concerns about personal safety to my supervisor for guidance.

Resources



- [Questions to Ask Before, During, After a Home Visit.pdf](#)
- [Home Visiting Safety: Staying Safe & Aware on the Job](#) Video
- [Institute for the Advancement of Family Support Professionals](#)
 - [Three Keys to Personal Safety](#)
 - [Best-Practices-for-Home-Visitors.pdf](#)
- **PAT Safe and Healthy Home Environments PER**
- [Home Visits – Tip Sheets and Resources](#)
- [Home Visitor Supervisor's Handbook | HeadStart.gov](#)
- <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/safety-practices/home-visitor-supervisors-handbook/home-visitor-safety>
- https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/video/attachments/webinar-slides_1.pdf
- [Focus on Ethics. Professional Boundaries in Early Childhood Education | NAEYC](#)
- [Ethical Considerations for Home Visiting | ECLKC \(hhs.gov\)](#)