

Responding to Threats

Background Notes

As child welfare workers, we work with families in emotionally charged situations. Threats are a daily part of the job for caseworkers that investigate accusations of child abuse and neglect. We work with people who have mental health issues, abuse drugs and alcohol and people who engage in criminal activities. It is imperative that be taken into account when we are meeting with people, whether it is in their homes, at the Courthouse, or in our office buildings.

Tasks / Assignments:

- Accompany an experienced CPS worker on an assessment, preferably one that requires an immediate response. Observe the potential safety concerns and take notice of what the experienced worker did to minimize/counteract them. Discuss what you observe with the worker.
- Review the "Prevention of violence/ weapons in the workplace" policy at http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/safety/080_008.htm and make sure you understand your responsibilities for reporting threats.
- Ask your supervisor to explain your office's procedure for preventing and responding to threats.
- Make a list of safety tips and "what-to-dos" in each of the following areas and review them with your Supervisor.
 - Before leaving the office
 - Dogs
 - Observing the neighborhood surroundings
 - Entering and exiting a residence
 - Clandestine drug labs
 - Guns
 - "Bugs and other creepy critters"
 - Assessing a physical threat
- Discuss with your supervisor any concerns you may have about your personal safety on the job and how to ameliorate your anxieties.

Discoveries:

