

STAYING SAFE II

TIPS FOR THE SOCIAL WORKER DURING VISITS

Here are some tips on how to stay safe when meeting your clients

RIGHT BEFORE THE VISIT

- Before entering, **look around and plan your escape route**
- Before entering, **do a scan of the interior of the house to assess potential hazards**
- **Listen outside the door for disturbances**, e.g. yelling, screaming, fighting
- **Do not enter the house** if summoned by an unseen person, wait for the person to present himself/herself
- **Never enter a client's home** when no one has responded and the door is ajar
- **If client is alone, of the opposite gender and poses safety concerns**, do not enter the home

DURING THE VISIT

- **Allow easy exit route:**
 - Position yourself next to the exit
 - Do not have anyone else between you and the exit
 - Do not allow the door to be locked
- **Maintain space** between client and yourself
- **Always have your phone with you** with emergency services number on speed dial
- **Be alert to signs of possible physical attacks** (deliberately provoking behaviour, raised voice and getting physically close to you)
- **Be alert and observant of the environment and behaviours of those present.**
 - Note any unusual smells, e.g. gas
- **Be wary of new figures present at the visit**, especially if the client is known to be part of a criminal peer network
- **Never turn your back to your client for any reason**
- **Keep your hands out of your pockets**

IF CLIENT EXHIBITS ABNORMAL BEHAVIOUR



Arrange for a break to avoid further confrontation



Avoid antagonising them



End visit and leave if client or family member appears irritated



If there are other clients at the scene,
move them to a safe place immediately.

Prioritise young children and elderly clients

Remember, the most important tip is to trust your gut instinct! If anything seems unusual or out of the ordinary, make your excuses and leave. Stay safe!