

WORK ARRIVAL:

- Visually check parking lot when you arrive to work
- Note anything suspicious and report it to the appropriate staff
 - Obtain plate # if applies
- Vary your parking
- Do not park next to an unknown van or truck
- Sound your horn if you feel unsafe
- Be alert and aware of surroundings
- Visually check building when you arrive especially if no one else is present
- Utilize the sign in/sign out procedure for the office
- If you are unsafe at any time, call 911
- Always have your cell phone near you and ready for use
- Keep your cell phone charged
- Think safety in the office. Keep doors locked and secure. Don't give out codes. Do not prop doors open.

Information collected from:

DCS Child Welfare Professionals and participants of Resilient Workforce BSC

PLAN FOR THE VISIT:

- Conduct a history search/criminal checks to note any safety concerns
- Familiarize yourself with the area you are going to
- Do a Google Satellite Search of the home
- Check Facebook for parents and their Friend's list
- Go in Pairs when possible and the situation warrants - partner up with a buddy
- Download Red Panic Button App
- Ensure supervisor knows the address of where you are going and ETA as well as when you plan to leave/return to home/office
- Group email/group text/call so your supervisor and team know your location for the day
- Establish a good relationship with LE
- Take LE when needed
- Alert LE of where you are going so they are aware of a potential situation
- Use sign in/out system for your team
- Think worst case scenario and devise a plan!
- Call ahead to confirm address and any potential safety hazards. Ask if anyone else will be in the home
- Make a request for only family members directly involved in the case to be present in the home.
- If you made contact with the child prior to going to the parents' home, ask the child about the parents' potential response to your presence. Use your best

judgement for when this is appropriate.

TRAVELING TO SITE:

- Trust your gut - do not dismiss your instincts or your feeling something is wrong
- Make sure vehicle is well maintained with plenty of GAS!! Fill up before a visit if you are getting low - try to never get below a 1/4 of a tank.
- Use "Find Friends"
- Drive around the area before parking to look for any potential hazards or groups of people that could pose a threat. If passing hazards or potentially unsafe gathering of people, reschedule your appointment.
- Be aware of groups of people hanging around and lingering
- Park on the street and avoid the driveway if possible. Park as close as possible. Face car away from the home for quick exit if needed/possible. Park in a well-lit, visible area if possible. Lock your doors when leaving the car.
- Be Cautious and aware of "Beware of Dog" signs
- Honk or call to alert someone you have arrived if there is a vicious dog or animal in the area. Do not get out of car until the animal is secured. If you need to leave, leave. Do not put yourself in a situation if you feel unsafe due to the animal.
- Lock bags and valuables in the car and out of sight -preferably the trunk
- Carry only what you need to engage, gather information, and work with family
- Don't carry big bags that weigh you down or are easy to grab
- Keep your keys in your hand walking to and from the car
- When walking to the home walk confidently and look like you know where you are going. Do not be talking on your cell phone, texting, or looking at the cell phone.
- Be observant of the situation and your surroundings. Remember the scene/environment can change quickly!
- Wear comfortable shoes/shoes you can move quickly in. Wear comfortable clothing that allows mobility.
- Be aware of your clothes and jewelry - you do not want to wear valuable items or items that will draw attention
- Do not wear scarves or items someone can use to pull you into an entryway, stairwell, alley, etc.
- Be aware that a lanyard can be used to pull/choke you
- Be aware of stairwells and dimly lit areas
- Observe any weapons in the home and/or yard and any potential weapons
- Look for "No Trespassing" signs
- Be aware of hazards on steps/floors/yard
- Do not go in an active Meth Lab. PERIOD! If children are in the home, call the police. If you inadvertently find yourself in an active lab, get de-contaminated at

the scene and then go to the ER to be checked out.

DURING THE VISIT:

- Follow this mantra: I'm present, I'm in the moment, I am aware of my surroundings
- Trust yourself, your instincts, your intuition
- Listen to your body
- If you're aware of what's going on, then you can increase your safety
- Red Panic Button App
- Be aware of hazards on steps/floors/yard
- Give your eyes a chance to adjust to the light before entering the home
- If it is dark in the home, ask if it is ok to turn on lights or open the curtains
- Ask for the T.V. or music to be turned off especially if it is loud
- Walk through the house at the beginning of your visit
- Ask if anyone else is in the home or if anyone is expected
- Be aware of your surroundings and situation: continually assess as the situation can change quickly
- Pray for Safety (if this is something you do and something you believe)
- When knocking and door is opening stand to the side of the door towards the opening so you can see inside the house and so you can assess the situation before entering the house
- Try to sit on hard surface when able or sit on edge of furniture for easy movement
- Respect personal space and keep a safe distance
- Avoid sitting in the kitchen if possible due to hazards (knives, boiling water, etc)
- Be aware of windows and do not locate yourself in front of them if possible.
- Know your exits
- Have your cell phone easily accessible and readily available - Make sure it is always charged! Charge your phone whenever you are driving
- Assess to determine if there is a concern for Domestic Violence in the home and be observant of any signs of violence in the home.
- Trust your instincts - do not dismiss your gut feelings
- Locate yourself near an exit and with your back to an area that someone cannot come up behind you.
- Wear Nitrile Gloves (latex may not be strong enough for some pills/drugs) when handling urine or other body fluids, conducting pill counts etc. Better yet, have parents count out their own pills while you observe
- When leaving take a quick scan to see if the environment has changed in any way
- Return to the car with key ready, check front and back seat and floor board of car before getting in
- If you are being followed, do not drive home; drive to the nearest police or fire station and honk your horn or drive to a location where you can safely call the police

- Do not leave your car unless you can walk safely into the building

- Keep desk and cube clear of objects that could be used as a weapon
- Avoid giving out personal information

OFFICE VISITS:

- Meet in the office or neutral ground when safety is a significant concern
- Plan an emergency escape route in your office
- Alert co-workers/supervisors if you anticipate a difficult or possibly hostile CFTM or Office Visit
- Know your code words: Dr. Baker/Red Folder (have code words in the office and with your team to alert them to unsafe situations or that you are in an unsafe situation)
- Wear Gloves when handling urine or other body fluids, clothing, etc. Nitrile gloves when conducting pill counts. **Better yet, have parents count out their own pills while you observe.**
- Signal a co-worker or supervisor that you need assistance – have a pre-planned signal so as not to draw notice or further escalate the situation if the person(s) you are meeting with is angry.
- Talk with confidence and assertiveness (but caution yourself against arrogance, authoritarian, aggressive)
- Avoid working alone in the office after regular working hours; if not possible, notify someone you are in the office late and make sure all doors are locked
- Avoid seeing clients alone after hours

DEFUSING TECHNIQUES:

- Try to stay calm and listen attentively to keep a situation from escalating
- When a person starts to get loud, speak more softly. They will need to quiet themselves to hear you and it is calming.
- Avoid sudden movements
- Avoid confrontation. Be direct as needed, but do not engage in argumentative behavior.
- Maintain eye contact and personal space
- Don't try to "throw" additional information at the person or continue to provide details/ask for responses to the issue as this may further agitate the person or create confusion. Instead, focus on steps to de-escalate the situation and slowdown in order to help the person calm and return to a more normal state. Use reflective statements and empathy. You may need to suspend or postpone the meeting if you feel they will re-escalate once you return to the topic of discussion.
- Signal for help when needed (have a pre-determined code with your co-workers to alert them without a great deal of distraction and to avoid further escalating the situation)