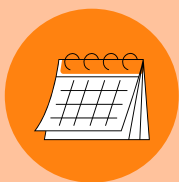


Home Visit Tips for Support Coordinators: *Staying Safe and Healthy*

Home visits are an essential component of the monitoring conducted by Support Coordinators. They contribute to ongoing planning and evaluation of support needs and services, and provide an opportunity to discover new information. This tip sheet offers guidance for strategies to enhance personal safety during home visits.

Staying Safe



Ahead of Time

- Touch base ahead of time to confirm where to park, whether there are any safety hazards in the area, and who would be home at the time of the visit.
- If a risk is identified (crime in the area, icy roads, animals, etc.), create a safety plan to minimize risk.
- If warranted, conduct the visit with a colleague.
- Let your supervisor know who you are going to visit, where you are going, and when you plan to arrive and leave.
- Make sure your phone is fully charged and you have it with you.



During Your Visit

- When you arrive, maintain a safe distance from the door. Households may have pets that could run out or jump on you.
- You can request that an animal be put in another room while you meet if you are uncomfortable or allergic.
- Make note of where the exits are in the home/building in the event of an emergency.
- Be attuned to an individual's level of frustration and triggers for challenging behaviors. Recognize when breaks or rescheduling are needed.
- If you are concerned about bed bugs, limit what you bring, wash clothing worn, and dry on the hottest setting of the dryer.
- Be aware of your surroundings, stay in the moment, and trust your instincts.
- Alert your supervisor when your visit has concluded.

Staying Healthy



- Follow state requirements related to masking. Touch base ahead of time to make sure all who will be present in the home are well. Once requirements are lifted, follow any and all state guidance and confirm mask-wearing preferences in accordance.
- If desired and feasible, ask families to improve ventilation during the visit by opening windows or meeting outdoors.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash and sanitize hands regularly and do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth, or face.
- Plan ahead if you have allergies and the household you are going to visit has pets.

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Direct Service Providers for Children and Families: Information for Home Visitors*. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevelopment/covid-19/guidance-for-home-visitors.html>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2013). *Guidelines for Social Work Safety in the Workplace*. <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6OEdoMjcNC0%3d&portalid=0%27>
- Oregon Health Authority. (2016). *Home Visiting Safety: Staying Safe & Aware on the Job*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KL3r_3N_Qek
- Victor, P. (2014). *Safety Tips for Home Visits from a Veteran NYC Social Worker*. NASW New York City Chapter. <https://www.naswnyc.org/page/489>



Preparation of this resource was supported by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities.
March 2023

RUTGERS

Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School

The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities
Department of Pediatrics
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Liberty Plaza, 335 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

boggscenter.rwjms.rutgers.edu
p. 732-235-9300
f. 732-235-9330