

FIELD INSTRUCTOR ORIENTATION TRAINING

Online Module Training 2020



Module 6: Safety in the Practicum

As social workers we all need to work in safe situations

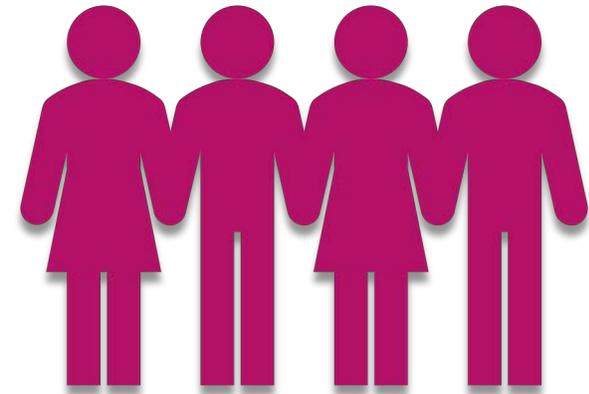
- ▶ Social workers provide services in an increasingly complex, dynamic social environment and have a broadening client base.
- ▶ The profession's primary mission is "to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty" (NASW, 2008, p. 1).
- ▶ In the past 40 years, we have experienced severe economic and social disparities that have led to increases in the number of people unable to meet their basic needs without assistance from public and private agencies.



Why focus on safety?

- ▶ These social and economic changes have created pressures in social work practice settings as more people seek social work services from agencies that have often experienced budget cuts and sometimes lack adequate resources to meet the needs of people desperate for help.
- ▶ The number and variety of people to whom social workers provide services and the variety of settings in which these services are provided have contributed to an increasingly unpredictable, and often unsafe, environment for social work practice.

▶ *NASW Guidelines for Safety in the Workplace, 2013*



Statistics Citing Safety for Social Workers

- ▶ Social workers experience many forms of violence in the workplace, including threats of violence, physical assaults, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment (Respass & Payne, 2008).
- ▶ An analysis of 8 years of labor statistics found that social service workers were in one of the most high-risk groups for workplace violence (Respass & Payne, 2008).
- ▶ While workplace violence had declined for all professions, the smallest decline was in social services (Respass & Payne, 2008).

Students and their workplace violence experiences

- ▶ Criss (2010) conducted a random sample survey of 595 master of social work (MSW) and bachelor of social work (BSW) students to assess for experiences of workplace violence from clients.
- ▶ Over 41% had experienced client violence, although only 3.5% had experienced physical violence.
- ▶ Forty-seven percent reported fearing verbal abuse from their clients, and those who had experienced client violence worried about it happening again.



Different Realms of Safety Defined

▶ Physical Safety

- ▶ Tangible and concrete factors that can be easily evaluated and measured

▶ Social Safety

- ▶ Describes the sense of feeling safe with other people. Requires the use of emotional intelligence, tolerance of diverse beliefs & opinions

▶ Psychological Safety

- ▶ Refers to the ability to be safe with oneself. To rely on one's own ability to self-protect against any destructive impulses coming from within oneself or deriving from other people

▶ Moral Safety

- ▶ Ongoing considerations of honesty and integrity, personal and professional ethics

Where to find these Important Safety Issues

- ▶ Physical & Environmental Safety
 - ▶ Home & Community
 - ▶ Environmental
 - ▶ Orientation
 - ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Social Safety
 - ▶ Supervision
 - ▶ Communication Skills
 - ▶ Boundaries
- ▶ Psychological Safety
 - ▶ Safety Plans
 - ▶ Phases of Learning
 - ▶ Agency Dynamics
- ▶ Moral Safety
 - ▶ Code of Ethics
 - ▶ Confidentiality and HIPPA
 - ▶ Scope of practice & Identifying as a social work student

Physical Safety in the Agency Ideas

Office Safety

- Have student keep their workspace free of impediments & exits clear
- Orient student to and provide them access to alarm systems that can alert others
- Access to visually open meeting spaces / presence of another team member
- Explain the restriction of client access to objects that may be used as weapons
- In some settings, secure entry and access to front door. Secure employee separate entrances. Well-lit hallways
- Agency Safety Protocols – Who, what, where, when, how, debrief plan? Supervision! **Don't assume the student knows this.**

Assess risks

- Universal Precautions.
- 2020: Covid Precautions
- History is the best predictor of violence. Prior to initial assessment, document past violence, current report of current violence, and client's treatment or interventions.
- Consult with multidisciplinary team to assess history of threats/violence.
- If you feel there is a risk for the student, ask that client be seen in office or that you pair student with agency employee
- In supervision, address Behavior, Eye Contact, Tone/Volume/, Mood/Affect, Motor activity, Thought Process/Content, Active Substance Use

Physical Safety in the Practicum

Violence in the moment

- ▶ Get out If possible!!!! Say you have a call/text, etc.
- ▶ Call 911 immediately in the community; panic # in the office, panic button
- ▶ **Use de-escalation techniques and non-violent self-defense when possible. Does agency have training the student should receive?**
- ▶ Never reach out for a threatening weapon. Back up and tell the client your moves before you make them so that nothing is unexpected or threatens a client who may be violent.
- ▶ Protect your head; block with cushion, pillow, arms, clipboard

After an Incident

- ▶ Help the student get medical attention immediately
- ▶ As soon as appropriate after the violent incident: Consult your supervisor and any available agency director. Please notify field team at UMaine
- ▶ Have student complete an incident report with supervisor and inform them that there is University incident which must also be completed.
- ▶ If the student is sexually assaulted, report immediately to Field team who will report to the University Title IX office. Call police. Advise them to not change or alter their condition in any manner and seek medical examination

Some Basic Physical Safety Tips

Community Concerns

- Be aware of your surroundings around agency and in community
- Know how to get to your destination, know area & amenities
- Have daily schedule available, so that your location and your estimated time of return is known. Share with Supervisor/Co-Workers
- Have a cell phone available to call for directions or help
- If risk is a concern, make a plan with supervisor and department team
- Prepare for the unexpected and have back up safety plans
- Clothing, Weather, Phone Reception. Keep keys & phone within easy access
- Vehicle upkeep/Keys (Spare?)
- After dark, if there is a threat, walk out with a partner or group to car.
- Observe on-comers. If approached use direct, confident language of your intentions, "Sorry, I cannot help you"

Physical Safety in Home Visits

Home Visits

- Drive with plenty of gas; keep doors locked
- Don't stop your car if "bumped"; drive to the nearest, well-staffed business and call the police for a report
- Park in a driveway facing outward, try to park where you cannot be blocked in
- Call client to let him/her know you have arrived. If possible, have client meet you at the door
- Note the location of exits. Leave the door unlocked if possible -state that this is part of your home visit protocol
- Scan for weapons, signs of previous, current or potential violence. If weapons are present, leave and reschedule location
- Assess the client's/family's demeanor, possible substance use, threat of violence to self or others
- Be cautious of animals; you are a stranger. You always have the right to ask for animals to be held in another room or yard
- Keep your phone available. If needed, state that your office is expecting you back at (time) /expecting your call
- Do not hesitate to leave and reschedule to time or location for any reason (gut feeling, threat, other concerns)

Home Visiting Safety



https://youtu.be/kL3r_3N_Qek

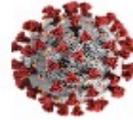
Environmental Safety

COVID-19 & Blood Borne Pathogens, Workstation Safety, Harassment, Safety Online,

Please Refer to the University COVID-19 policies and the School of Social Work COVID-19 Policies

<https://umaine.edu/socialwork/field/field-forms-and-policies/>

What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



CS 314957A 04/10/2020

cdc.gov/coronavirus

Internet Safety

Choose	strong passwords
Keep	your privacy settings on
Make	sure your internet connection is secure
Be Careful	what you download
Be Careful	what you post
Be Aware	of agency tech rules
Don't friend	your client, client's family
Don't look up	medical records of family & friends
Think	before you search someone

- The University covers all students registered for Field Practicum with a *Certificate of Insurance*.

To be able to draw on this insurance, students must

1. operate w/in the scope of their level of practice
2. Receive regular supervision from a qualified professional
3. Identify themselves as a social work practicum student

- ▶ We ask all students to be covered by a form of Health Insurance – all students are offered the University Student Health Plan if they have no other coverage.
- ▶ Typically students are not included in the agency's Worker's Compensation Plan unless they are on the payroll. This is important when assigning students difficult client cases.

Thank you for
keeping our
students safe

Information taken from

- ▶ CDC Publication Coronavirus
- ▶ Moylan, C. , Wood, L. (2016). Sexual Harassment in Social Work Field Placements: Prevalence and Characteristics. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work* 2016, Vol. 31(4) 405-417.
- ▶ *National Association of Social Workers - NASW Guidelines for Safety in the Workplace, 2013*
- ▶ *National Association of Social Workers - Massachusetts Chapter. Copyright 2001, NASW/MA*
- ▶ <https://umaine.edu/socialwork/field/field-forms-and-policies/>