

## **9080 Personal Safety**

- remain aware of your surroundings at all times
- visualize your exit route
- install a silent alarm panic button app on your personal phone
- make sure you can dial “emergency call” from locked keypad on phone
- practice non-violent self-defense (NSD)

## **9090 Safety During Home and Community Visits**

In addition to following the Personal Safety guidelines, all Staff who visit with clients in their homes or in the community should have their own safety plan which may include:

- learn about the new client’s history of violence
- familiarize self with the client’s neighborhood and watch for potential dangers (known gang or cult activities)
- drive by the home one time to see if anything looks suspicious
- watch for animals that might be dangerous
- assess individuals / family to see if they are under the influence or agitated
- position yourself near an exit
- scan the environment for weapons or other hazards
- keep personal items (purse) in your car
- drive with your doors locked and windows up
- leave information at the office to let others know where the Staff will be and estimated time of return
- make sure your vehicle is in good working condition with plenty of gas
- back into parking spaces / driveways for quick escape
- park near lights if you will be leaving in the dark
- do not leave any valuables in your car as they could be an incentive for a break in
- keep your keys in your hands as you approach your vehicle
- check your backseat before entering the vehicle
- if anyone tries to force you into your car, throw your keys to distract them and run if possible
- if you are driving a client, try to have them next to you so you can see them
- if someone in your car is forcing you to drive, turn on your flashers, honk horn, stop suddenly, get out and run
  - o worst case scenario, cause a car accident, but not the loss of life
- if you are in your car and face an intruder, push on your horn and drive off quickly
- if stranded, ask for identification of anyone who stops to help, including police
  - o tell them someone is on their way to help you
- keep your home address unknown from clients
  - o check with various online resources (Spokeo, Google, etc.)
- trust your instincts

*Adapted from Be Careful: Personal Safety for Social Workers. Harkey, Jane.*  
<http://www.ceuschool.com/librarydocs/soc235.pdf>