Slide 1 SAFETY BASICS FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONAL Slide 2 **Training Objectives** • What do you hope to learn? • What concerns do you have? Do you have a dangerous job? Slide 3 Rule #1 • SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!!

Surveys conducted by NASW

- In a 2005 survey of 1029 NASW members:
- 62% had been subject to psychological aggression in the past year with 85.5% experiencing this in their career
- 14.7% experienced physical assault perpetrated by clients in the past year with 30.2% experiencing this in their career
- In a 2006 National Study of 5000 social workers: 44% said they face personal safety issues in their primary employment practice.

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- Potential for violence is increased in practice areas such as child welfare, adult protective services, mental health, criminal justice and domestic violence shelters
- Social Workers with the least amount of experience (zero-five years) most likely to experience safety issues on the inh
- experience safety issues on the job

 They are also more likely to work in mental health or child welfare agencies

Slide 6

 The Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced that more assaults (48%) occur in the health care and social services industry than any other

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CONFRONTATION FACTS

- Nothing is ROUTINE!
- The MEANS and OPPORTUNITY to carry out an attack are readily at hand
- ANYONE can SUCCESSFULLY attack you
- Most attacks are conceived and executed by subjects acting ALONE
- Assailants decide when, where and whom to attack. Motivations can be SELFISH or IRRATIONAL and INDESCRIMINATE

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CONFRONTATION FACTS CONT'D

• Weapons can be easily HIDDEN about the

Slide 9

Assaults on Social Workers

- Female workers that are killed are also more likely to be a victim of sexual assault
- 2004 Social Worker Teri Zenner (Kansas) was attacked and killed during a "routine" home visit with her 17 year old client.

 This prompted new policies of social workers required to carry cell phones and included
- personal safety training as part of their annual required training hours.

Further Assaults

- April 2005: woman in Texas fires a shot gun at two social workers visiting her home

 March 2006: Social Worker Sally Blackwell
- (Texas) who investigated accusations of child abuse and neglect kidnapped from her home, killed and found in a field.
- Family stated threats were a daily part of her

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- 2008: Social Worker Brenda Yeager was conducting a scheduled visit involving an infant when her attackers were waiting inside. She was also sexually assaulting before suffocated to death by both the male and female attacker.
 2011: Stefanie Moulton, Mental Health Worker was killed at the group home where she was employed by a client diagnosed with schizophrenia and episodes of major mental illness.

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SAFETY PLAN OF ACTION

- General Outline developed by NASW $Mass a chusetts \hbox{'s Chapter's Committee for the} \\$ Study and Prevention of Violence Against Social Workers

 Recognition of client agitation

 Establish code words with staff to signal
- danger secretly
- De-escalation attempts

Slide 14 Plan of Action Cont'd Dis-engagement skills Self-Defense BEHAVIOR IS NOT PREDICTABLE! Slide 14 Get to know the client, before "knowing" the client Conduct a thorough assessment of each client that you are assigned	
Slide 14 Get to know the client, before "knowing" the client Conduct a thorough assessment of each	
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 Conduct a thorough assessment of each 	
Do they have a prior history of violence?	
 Do they have alcohol/drug use history (past or present)? Do they have a history involving weapons? 	
	
Slide 15 SAFETY IN NUMBERS ————————————————————————————————————	
 When at all possible, go on home visits with a partner Statistics for safety with a partner improve by 	
70 % versus alone 2 partners reduce your chance of being	
assaulted by 90% Review roles when working with a partner/positioning	

Working with Partners

- Code words
- Discuss home visit afterward with partner/
- What could we have done better?

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CONTACT VS. COVER

- Conducts all communication with subject
- Issues commands when required
- Devotes full attention to the subject
 Discourages any hostile acts by the subject
 Alerts Contact worker of

- any weapons
 Intervenes if necessary to protect partner
 Resists distractions
 Maintains exit at all
- times

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HOME VISITS

- Utilize cell phone
 Who knows where you
 are??
 Do not bring purses or
 calendars with personal
 information/Clipboards
 Be aware of animals
 Never let your client
 leave your sight
 Know your exits
 Always be prepared for
 the unexpected

- Do not remove your shoes
 Avoid sitting in soft furniture
 Be mindful of problems associated with third parties

ssociated with third arties LLWAYS trust your nstincts! EAVE if something oesn't feel right	-

HOME VISITS CONT'D

- Action is quicker than reaction
- YOU control the situation, don't let the situation control you...
- "Routine" contacts are most dangerous because we let our guard down
- Past behavior is a good predictor of future behavior
- Know your client's past
 Assaultive priors?
- Separate personal stressors from work

Slide 20

Approaching the Residence

- Conduct a "drive-by" of the residence first
- Know your address and location!
- Park car in an "exit" position/not in front
- Before knocking on the door, look and listen
 Look into windows and determine how many
- Look into windows and determine how many people are inside and if there is any danger
- Listen for signals that may indicate danger

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Entry

- Identify yourself
- Ask your client who else is in the residence
- Complete a scan of the residence
- Never let someone get between you and the exit
- Be respectful

Dog attacks

- Don't be afraid to request the dog be put away
 NEVER scream and run
 Remain motionless, hands at your sides and avoid eye contact
 Once the dog loses interest in you, slowly back away until he is out of sight
 If the dog does attack, "feed" him your bag, coat, or other...
 If you are knocked down to the ground, curl up into a ball, protect your ears and remain motionless
 Partner??

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COLOR CODE OF AWARENESS



Slide 24

Crisis Rehearsal

 Crisis Rehearsal is the use of mental images (internal movies) including defensive tactics to develop appropriate reactions to confrontations. By repeatedly imagining yourself in a crisis where you successfully defeat a threat, you condition yourself to respond with the same proficiency in the same manner. The more you practice the better prepared you will be.

Three Steps of Crisis Rehearsal

- Visualize the threat/issue
- Visualize your response, both verbally and physically. Be specific!
- See yourself successfully resolving the situation

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Slide 27

Why workers Underreact/Overreact

- Failure to understand the dynamics of confront at ions
- Failure to be mentally prepared
 Failure to receive training
 Failure to believe in training
 Mythical thinking
 Inhibition

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Assailant Indicators

- When ready to attack, harder for them to think
- Hands in pockets
- Eye Contact-"Windows to the Soul"
- Body Positions
- Emotions are honestbelieve anything but happiness
- Behaviors: testing the waters, not following requests, scanning, target glance, evasive

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DEESCALATION

- Recognize warning signsAwareness of change in
- demeanor

 Cues and appropriate
- responses
 Respect-separate person from problems, focus on specific events
- Tension and distance (proximity)
- Nonverbal impressions
 Assess the effect of your

- Assess the effect of your actions
 Using calm behaviors
 Redirecting
 Look for what is similar not differences
 Mutually agreed on solutions-they may not be exactly what you want want

Slide 30

Verbal Abuse

 U.S. Legal Definition: "Verbal abuse is the use of words to cause harm to the person being spoken to. It is difficult to define and may take many forms. Similarly, the harm caused is often difficult to measure. The most commonly understood form is name-calling. Verbal abuse may consist of shouting, insulting, intimidating, threatening, shaming, demeaning, or derogatory language, among other forms of communication."

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OFFICE SAFETY

- Identify common objects found in office that can be used as a weapon

 Eliminate objects that may be thrown
- Avoid personal pictures in view
- Positioning of you versus client (worker closest to exit)
- Be the "voice" when you hear things escalating with one of your co-workers and their client

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OFFICE SAFETY CONT'D

• If a client becomes hostile and leaves, do not pursue

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NOTHING is Routine!

- Don't act on automatic pilot
- Recognize the potential for violence
- Let circumstances dictate your actions
 Be ready to carry out your plan instinctively
- Cultivate actions that are unexpected

I've been working with this client a long time...

- Remember, A client's world view may be different from yours
- Lack of medication compliance/CD issues
- Working with clients that are extremely vulnerable and for some at a point of severe hardship/difficulties

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Ramsey County Case

- February 2014: Offender disclosed to his social worker that he had several specific plans to kill his probation officer because he thought the probation officer had filed a child protection report and that he was losing his visitation rights with his child.
- Complaint and warrant filed for Terroristic Threats.

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Being a "Safe" Professional

- Establish and maintain appropriate boundaries
- Address boundary violations when they occur Use caution when divulging personal
- information about yourself

 Avoid having personal photos or information in view of clients
- Never be afraid to "use" your supervisor as an "out" for safety purposes

Slide 37				
	 Maintain an unlisted address and telephone 			
	number		 	
	 Be aware of the potential of personal 			
	information on the internet especially social			
	media		 	
	 Consult with supervisor if concerned with 			
	behaviors of a particular client			
	Document! Document! Document!			
		•		
CITAL DO		Ì		
Slide 38	a - DUILE		 	
	3-5 RULE			
	The majority of attacks will occur within 3-5			
	seconds		 	
	 The attacks are initiated within a distance of 			
	3-5 feet		 	
	The victim will sustain 3-5 blows			
Slide 39				
Silue 33	Weapons		 	
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MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- You need to be aware of safety concerns so that you return home at the end of each and every day
- TRUST your instincts!
- NOTHING in our job is worth dying for or placing ourselves at risk

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Other things to consider/train

- UA safety and collection
- Building safety & evacuation plans between departments
- Safety during transports
- Meth lab awareness
- Control Tactics/Self Defense Training
- Instilling a culture of safety and prevention
- Utilizing Technology
- Crisis Management

Slide 44

"Hindsight is a wonderful thing but foresight is better, especially when it comes to saving life, or some pain. "

Slide 45

Resources

- Arrowhead Regional Corrections
- Community Corrections Institute
- Professional Training Services
 Hennepin County Department of Community
 Corrections Field Services Division
 National Association of Social Workers
- (socialworkers.org)

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