

# Responding to Threats

## Background Notes

As child welfare workers, we work with families in emotionally charged situations. Threats are a daily part of the job for caseworkers who investigate accusations of child abuse and neglect and manage those same cases. We work with people who are struggling with problems such as mental health, drugs and alcohol and people who engage in criminal activities. It is imperative this be taken into account when we are meeting with people, whether it is in their homes, at the courthouse, or in our office buildings.

## Tasks / Assignments:

- ❑ Accompany an experienced CPS worker on an immediate response assessment. Observe potential safety concerns and notice what the experienced worker did to minimize/counteract them. Discuss what you observe with the worker.
- ❑ Review the "Prevention of Violence/Weapons in the Workplace" policy at: [http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/safety/080\\_008.htm](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/safety/080_008.htm) and "Safety Expectations and Roles Related to Violence in the Workplace" [https://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/safety/080\\_008\\_add.htm](https://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/admin/safety/080_008_add.htm) regarding responsibilities for reporting threats and dealing with weapons in the office.
- ❑ Ask your Supervisor to explain your office's procedure for preventing and responding to threats, concerns you may have about your personal safety on the job and how to ameliorate your anxieties.
- ❑ Make a list of safety tips and "what-to-dos" regarding the following areas. Review them with your Supervisor.
  - Before leaving the office
  - Dogs
  - Observing the neighborhood surroundings
  - Entering and exiting a residence
  - Clandestine drug labs
  - Guns
  - "Bugs and other creepy critters"
  - Assessing a physical threat

## Discoveries:

- *What did the CPS worker do to minimize the safety concerns?*
- *What specific steps are required per policy regarding weapons and safety?*
- *What tips did you learn from your Supervisor?*