



SECTION: Health and Safety

POLICY: HS 14

DATE: June 2025

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December 2022 February 2021; November 2018;
September 2018; November 2012

STAFF SAFETY POLICY

PREAMBLE:

No training or planning can anticipate and account for every possible scenario that may involve or lead to an unsafe encounter. Access and service coordination planning includes the identification of possible risk to staff safety and the development of appropriate safety plans for staff as a preventative measure.

POLICY

The safety of staff is a priority at all times and must be considered when meeting with clients. Employees have a joint responsibility with Contact Brant to develop the skills and techniques aimed at preventing and handling personal safety situations while working.

PROCEDURE

1. Staff will demonstrate professionalism, skills and above all common sense when dealing with situations that may pose a risk to their personal safety.
2. Employees will ensure all meetings held outside the Contact Brant office as well as meetings outside of office hours have the following information recorded in their Outlook calendar:
 - Name of client/family
 - Location of meeting (include street address if a home visit)
 - The scheduled time of the meeting (start and projected end time).
3. Employees will assess risk based on information on record about the family and their circumstances. When an employee is concerned about any perceived risk of harm to themselves:
 - 3.1. Review the situation with their supervisor or CEO at the earliest opportunity to assess immediate and future service needs to ensure a safety plan for the employee.
 - 3.2. Safety planning may include, but is not limited to, having a co-worker attend the appointment with the employee, scheduling the visit in a suitable community location or within office hours, meeting virtually, or having another staff on alert to confirm the meeting has been completed safely.
 - 3.3. Having another staff on alert:

Pre-arrange with another Contact Brant employee who has agreed to be available to receive a call or text at a specified time after the meeting is completed.

If the staff does not call the designated person at the pre-arranged time, the designated employee will attempt to locate their co-worker:

- Call/text the employee's cell
- Call the client's home to see if the staff is still there
- Call the employee's home
- If unable to confirm where the employee is, call the police.

3.4. Program staff are equipped with an agency-provided cell phone that they must have with them for any meetings. Emergency numbers and other employees' contact numbers should be programmed into the cell phone.

4. An employee who finds themselves in a situation where they feel at risk due to such examples as the individual's body language and tension level, the client's anxiety, edginess, defensive responses, raised voice should:

4.1. Remove themselves safely from the situation wherever possible.

4.2. If leaving is not possible, employ de-escalation strategies, (such as taught through PMAB and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training). Steps to de-escalate a situation if someone appears agitated, tense or upset, include but are not limited to:

- Remain calm and patient
- Give the person space and do not attempt to move without indicating that you intend to do so, including informing the client when you need to leave
- Provide appropriate information the person may be asking for
- Be supportive: continue to speak in a calm, friendly, non-threatening manner, providing non-verbal supportive responses (i.e., maintain eye contact, nodding head, etc.)
- Be direct: respond in the affirmative, speaking confidently and with self-assurance.
- Ignore the inappropriate behaviour, comments and demands, but not the individual
- Rescheduling the interview to another date

4.3. Seek additional supports, as appropriate, to address safety issues (police, other staff).

4.4. Clients should not be provided service if under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In the event of finding a client intoxicated or family violence, staff should leave the premises.

4.5. In the event of family violence, the employee should call police, as well as the appropriate child welfare agency if children are present, only when in a safe place.

4.6. The employee will inform the CEO or designate of the situation as soon as possible once safety has been secured. The CEO or designate will debrief

with the employee involved.

4.7. The employee must document all concerns and incidents in EMHware Contacts once the situation is resolved.

5. **Other Safety Considerations:**

5.1. Employees should take precautions whenever an animal is in the vicinity. If an animal is loose outside the meeting location, consider staying in your vehicle and calling the client using your cell phone. If you should receive an animal bite, immediately wash the area with soap and water and have the bite examined by a physician to assess any risks.

5.2. If using a home phone to call a client, use call blocking by first dialing *67 and then the client's number.

5.3. Staff should limit taking personal belongings to the interview location. Clothing considerations could avoid items that could be grabbed or used to cause harm (e.g., scarves, necklaces/chains), religious symbols or ornate jewellery.