SAFETY TRAINING FOR INTERNS
PERSONAL SAFETY

- **Look Out for Your Own Welfare**
  - As Social Workers (and social work interns), we often so focused on our clients that sometimes we neglect our own personal welfare.
  - We are sent to work with clients in neighborhoods that make the evening news. We often work with individuals who are at their most vulnerable.
  - Unfortunately, there is no specific solution to providing social workers guaranteed safety.
  - However, there are essential safety measures you can take to protect yourself in your field placement.

- [https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements/](https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements/)
PERSONAL SAFETY

BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

- While we should be always work with our clients strengths it is important to balance our optimistic outlook with practicality.

- Social Workers work with individuals who may impairments. Issues ranging from mental illness, substance abuse and/or intellectual disabilities may prevent individuals from being able to appropriately assess situations and may contribute to acting out or aggressive behaviors.

- Interns may also be working with these individuals. Even if the individuals are not impaired they may be unhappy that the agencies are involved in their lives. (Think Child Protective Services)

- The risk of violence is real and can occurs no matter the economic, social, gender, or racial make up of a community.

  - It is a mistake not to be aware of surroundings.
BASIC RULES

▪ Many agencies have specific training related to the populations they serve. For example: hospitals and nursing homes will have additional training on Biomedical safety protocol that students will have to attend.

▪ Working in the community with clients will have a different feel and different safety requirements than working with clients in an office setting.

▪ However, there are basic rules that apply to all.

▪ Keep your valuables safe (cell phones, keys, money, credit cards.....

▪ Be aware our clients may be highly emotional, impaired and have poor impulse control

▪ Do not allow yourself to be cut off from an escape by clients

▪ Be aware of your social media accounts, phone numbers, email... Do not put your personal information “out there” for everyone to see.
ALWAYS BE IN THE  K.N.O.W

- Know the Population
- Notify Supervisors of your location
- Observe and assess the situation
- Wear a Noise making devise

https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements/
KNOW YOUR POPULATION

- Find out about the population your agency works with. Discuss personal history, such as gang association and history of violence. Do they have a history of alcohol or substance abuse.
- Should you keep door open when meeting with them? Should you meet in a public place?
- Lastly, *If there is immediate danger or the availability of a weapon, remove yourself from the situation and alert the appropriate authorities.*

https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements/
NOTIFY OTHERS OF YOUR LOCATION

If you travel outside the office....

▪ Make sure your supervisor knows where you are going and who you are going to see.

▪ Also keep your cell with you (on silent)

https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements/
OBSERVE AND ASSESS THE SITUATION.

▪ At all times, interns should evaluate the risks and avoid exposing themselves to danger.

▪ After completing an assessment of the situation, do not hesitate to follow your agency’s procedure for reporting an incident.

▪ Ask yourself: Are there people hanging around who are not normally there? Are there weapons?

https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/safety-tips-for-social-work-field-placements
WEAR A NOISE MAKER

- Wear a whistle or other noise making device on your wrist or keychain. Make a lot of noise!
- The best safety policy and procedure is the safety policy and procedure that’s observed and used!
- A portfolio is a good place to keep phone and keys (at your reach but out of sight)
- Keep your phone & keys with you.
“Ever been mugged? I was, it was more than twenty years ago, and I'm still traumatized. It seems every day I watch women walking from a store to their car, eyes glued to their phone, purse dangling on their shoulder. Wake up!!

Put your phone away. Stop looking like an easy score. Keep your head up, look around, watch what's going on. The bad guys are looking for an easy target. Don't be one.”

- M. Bergan -
FINAL THOUGHTS

▪ Always talk to your supervisor if you have any concerns about safety

▪ Notify your Faculty Field Liaison so he/she is aware of the situation

▪ Your Faculty Field Liaison may also contact the Director of Field so she knows what is going on as well.
REFERENCES

