

Safety Tips for Home Visits

Volunteer Advocate

In order to ensure safety during the home visit and/or interview, it is important that a CASA Volunteer consider the following tips:

1. Remove jewelry (necklaces, earrings, rings, etc.) or extraneous clothing parts (scarfs) that could be used against you.
2. When parking, survey the area for a place to park that facilitates an easy exit. Park so that you cannot be blocked in and so that you do not have to back out.
3. Survey your surroundings. Before knocking, listen for 5 to 10 seconds. Stand to the side of the entrance.
4. Once the door is opened, keep everyone in front of you or within your field of vision.
5. Sit in a place from which you can easily move toward an exit. Identify where the exits are located.
6. Be aware of all others in the room, observing both verbal and non-verbal cues and behaviors.
7. Have the participants sit down-the potential for aggression is reduced when someone is sitting. If individuals become agitated, ask them to go to separate parts of the home.
8. Use rooms other than the kitchen or a bedroom for visitation or interview because weapons are often stored out of sight in these rooms.
9. Do not turn your back on individuals in crisis or allow them to walk behind you.
10. Bring a portable phone that can be used to call 911 in the event of an emergency.
11. When placing a telephone call to schedule a visit or an interview, make sure your phone number remains private by dialing *67 prior to dialing the number.
12. NEVER give any personal information to the parties involved in the case, other than what is displayed on your CASA Volunteer identification badge.
13. If parties involved in the case ask for your contact information, provide them with the CASA office number and assure them that they can leave a message for you to contact them and that you will return their call promptly.