



Home Visitor Safety: Self-Assessment

SELF-ASSESSMENT | March 2026

Introduction

Home visitor safety is a complex issue that encompasses real or perceived threats of physical and/or psychological violence.

This self-assessment is designed to help you think about the times you've felt unsafe—either physically or psychologically—and the reasons you may have felt this way. This is an opportunity to pause, reflect on yourself, and identify areas where you feel well-prepared and confident, as well as areas where you may need more support. Your honest reflections can help you and your organization build a safer, more supportive work environment—one where every home visitor can do their best work while feeling respected, protected, and cared for. Use this self-assessment in supervision and as a team discussion tool to identify areas where you and your colleagues need additional support, and to urge agency leadership to take concrete action to strengthen home visitor safety. Home visitor safety extends beyond individual responsibility; it is a system-wide priority that demands organizational policies, supports, and accountability.



HVWFD
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- WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT -

& Jackie Walorski Center for Evidence-Based Case Management

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What do we mean by home visitor physical safety?

Physical safety refers to the protection from bodily harm or health risks for both the home visitor and the individuals in the home. Key elements include:

- **Environment:** The home is free from immediate hazards (e.g., structural dangers, exposed wires, aggressive animals).
- **Personal safety:** Home visitors are not exposed to violence, threats, or unsafe behaviors (e.g., domestic violence, substance use during visits).
- **Infection control:** Hygiene protocols are followed to prevent illness transmission, especially important in health-related visits (e.g., personal protective equipment, health screenings, clean and disinfectant materials).
- **Emergency protocols:** Clear procedures exist for visitors if they feel unsafe (e.g., check-ins, exit plans, calling supervisors or authorities).



Common Examples of Physical Safety Threats Home Visitors Experience

- Home visitor arrives at a home with an aggressive dog. The home visitor may stay outside, ask the caregiver to secure the dog, or reschedule if safety cannot be secured.
- A caregiver appears visibly intoxicated during a home visit. The conversation becomes unpredictable and uncomfortable. The home visitor ends the visit early, ensures personal safety and documents and reports the incident.



Home Visitor Physical Safety Self-Assessment

Each statement pertains to an aspect of home visitor physical safety. Reflecting on the **past six months**, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Individual Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In the past six months, I have felt physically unsafe in the office.				
In the past six months, I have felt physically unsafe in the field.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The training and/or support I have received for maintaining my personal safety is sufficient.				
I understand and can implement practices that help maintain my personal safety in the office.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand and can implement practices that help maintain my personal safety out in the field.				
I feel confident about assessing safety risks with families and in the communities we serve.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know what to do if I have a safety concern before, during, and after a home visit.				
I feel like I have a voice in establishing or refining our organization's safety policies and protocols.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I review my organization's policies and protocols around home visitor safety at least annually.				



Program/Team Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have colleagues on my team with whom I can talk about physical safety concerns at the office and in the field.				
Our team regularly exchanges information to keep each other informed about safety concerns in the neighborhoods we serve.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our team regularly exchanges information to keep each other informed about safety concerns in the office we serve.				

Supervisor Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable bringing up safety concerns with my supervisor.				
My supervisor is prepared to support my colleagues and me around home visitor physical safety in the office and out in the field.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor regularly checks in with me about safety concerns.				
My supervisor regularly helps me figure out strategies that help me to be/feel safer.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor encourages open communication among the team about safety concerns and provides resources and support for those who need it.				



Organizational Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organization is committed to maintaining the personal physical safety of our staff.				
My organization has a clear incident reporting system that I know how to utilize.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My organization has a clear protocol for providing support, debriefing, and follow-up after an incident.				
My organization has clear policies and protocols around home visitor safety.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My organization encourages me to discuss with families how they can support my physical safety around a home visit (e.g., keeping pets in another room, giving clear instructions about parking and how to enter the apartment building, etc.).				



Reflection Questions

Use the space below to reflect on your responses to the physical safety assessment.

1. What are three strategies you have implemented as a result of training and/or supervisor support related to your personal safety out in the field?
2. If you have received training in home visitor safety, how could the training be enhanced or improved?
3. What situations tend to leave you feeling uneasy or unprotected?
4. Are there situations where you might overestimate the safety risk? If yes, what are some reasons why (e.g., signs of physical decay in a neighborhood, perception of law enforcement about the neighborhood, previous personal experience with unsafe situations, little to no experience with actual risky behaviors, etc.)
5. What could help you, or your team, feel physically safer in the office and out in the field?



What do we mean by home visitor psychological safety?

Psychological safety for home visitors refers to a work environment in which home visitors feel comfortable expressing concerns, asking questions, sharing ideas, and acknowledging mistakes without fear of judgment, punishment, or negative consequences.

In this context, it means that home visitors feel:

- Respected and supported by supervisors and colleagues;
- Safe to speak up about challenges they encounter as a home visitor;
- Able to seek help or feedback when they're uncertain or emotionally impacted; and
- Confident that their well-being matters as much as their performance.

This concept is especially important in-home visiting programs, where staff often face emotionally demanding, unpredictable, and sometimes high-risk situations. Psychological safety allows them to reflect honestly, learn from experiences, and maintain both professional effectiveness and personal resilience.



Common Examples of Psychological Safety Threats Home Visitors Experience

- A parent discloses ongoing domestic violence and shows visible injuries. The home visitor provides resources and reports as required but feels deeply distressed afterward.
- A bilingual home visitor notices that translated program materials feel culturally off. She suggests to her team that they be revised.



Home Visitor Psychological Safety Self-Assessment

Each statement pertains to an aspect of home visitor psychological safety. Reflecting on the **past six months**, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

Individual Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel emotionally safe when interacting with families during home visits.				
I feel emotionally safe when interacting with my colleagues.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have access to the resources and support I need to handle unsafe or uncomfortable situations with families and colleagues.				
I feel comfortable seeking help (such as reflective supervision or accessing behavioral health supports) after a stressful home visit.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can recognize when I'm feeling emotionally overwhelmed or unsafe.				
I receive adequate training on de-escalation, boundary setting, and personal safety.	☐	☐	☐	☐



Program/Team Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel comfortable raising concerns with my colleagues about my safety without fear of negative consequences.				
I feel supported by my colleagues when I face difficult or risky situations.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can openly discuss mistakes or challenges from home visits without fear of blame or judgment.				
Team meetings provide a psychologically safe space to share ideas or express disagreement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that our team values mutual respect and trust.				

Supervisor Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My supervisor listens to and takes my safety concerns seriously.				
When I report a safety concern, I receive timely follow-up and clear guidance.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My supervisor encourages me to prioritize my well-being and psychological safety.				



Organizational Level 	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Our organization has clear policies and protocols for supporting and promoting staff psychological safety in the office.				
Our organization has clear policies and protocols for supporting and promoting staff psychological safety in the field.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel confident that my organization would support me if I experienced harassment, threats, or violence on a home visit.				
I believe leadership prioritizes staff psychological safety as highly as home visiting participant outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe that my confidentiality is respected when reporting safety or well-being concerns.				
I feel my psychological safety is considered in organizational decision-making.	☐	☐	☐	☐
My organization offers behavioral health services (e.g., employee assistance programs).				



Reflection Questions

Use the space below to reflect on your responses to the psychological safety assessment.

1. What does “feeling psychologically safe” mean to you in your work?
2. What would a “psychologically safe” team meeting look like to you?
3. What agreements could be added to strengthen psychological safety in your team?
4. What situations tend to leave you feeling uneasy or emotionally unsafe? What helps you recover?
5. What could help you, or your team, feel emotionally safer and more grounded in this work?

