

# WELCOME

**NCEA WEBCAST**

**May 6, 2010**

# NCEA WEBCAST

- Presented by:

Janet Nelson, ACSW, LCSW

- Hosted by:

The National Adult Protective Services Association  
(NAPSA )



# NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE

## Personal Safety for Social Workers

NCEA WEBCAST

May 6, 2010

For technical assistance during the webcast,  
please call 1-800-939-8761

# NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE

- [www.ncea.aoa.gov/](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/)
- NCEA is a funded initiative of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA)
- AoA + three partner organizations:
  - University of Delaware Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE)
  - National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA)
  - National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

# NATIONAL CENTER ON ELDER ABUSE

- The NCEA serves as a national resource center dedicated the prevention of elder mistreatment through:
  - Disseminating of elder abuse information to professionals and the public
  - Providing technical assistance on elder abuse
  - Providing training resources to states and community based organizations
  - Synthesizing elder abuse research for the field



**NAPSA**

**NATIONAL ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES ASSOCIATION**

**[www.apsnetwork.org](http://www.apsnetwork.org)**



National Adult Protective Services Association

## TODAY'S WEBCAST

Introductions:  
Kathleen Quinn, NAPSA

Moderator & Questions:  
Aubrey Grant, NAPSA

Presenter:  
Janet Nelson, ACSW, LCSW

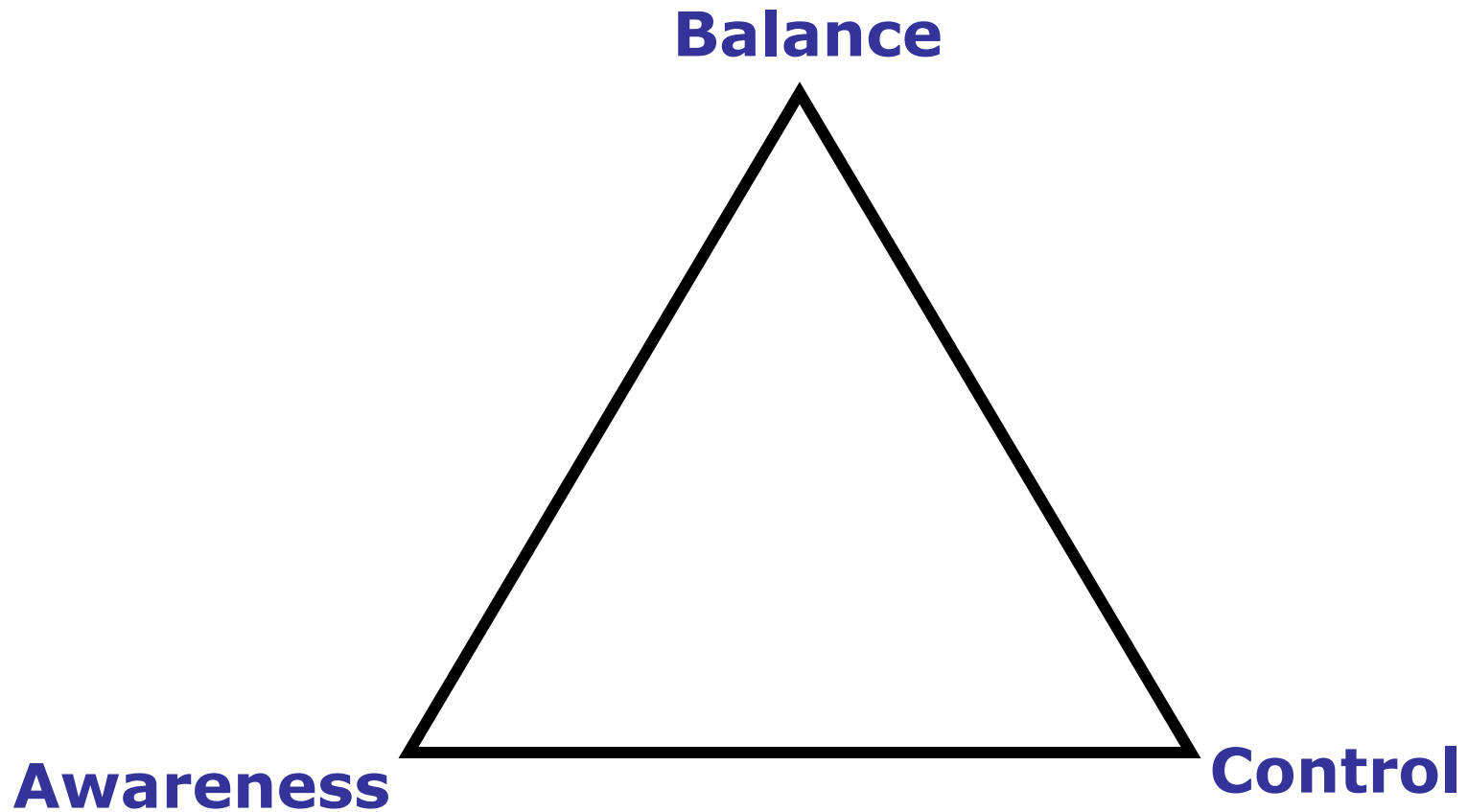


# **Everyday Self Defense<sup>SM</sup> for NAPSA**

**Janet Nelson, ACSW, LCSW**

[www.everydayselfdefense.com](http://www.everydayselfdefense.com)

# Triangles of Self Defense



# Awareness, Balance and Control

## A

Awareness (inner/outer)  
Align (posture, eyes, stance)  
Assess  
Assure  
Assert  
Alert  
Avoid  
Anticipate  
Act  
Affect

# Awareness, Balance and Control

## **B**

Balance (all types)

Breathe

Brain

Body language

Body usage

Body space

Boundaries

Back-up

Bravery

Behavior

# Awareness, Balance and Control

## C

Control

Center

Calm

Choice

Communication

Confidence

Contact (no physical)

Content

Commit

Cognition

# Pre-escalation

- **Know your client**
- **Close monitoring**
- **Modeling**
- **Cutting off inappropriate talk**
- **Setting limits, boundaries**
- **Knowing when to share power, exert power and when to let go**

# De-escalation

## DOs

- Do respond selectively
- Do use assertive skills
- Do empathize with feelings
- Do assert limits on behavior
- Do present institutional rules
- Do assert consequences
- Do trust your gut instincts

# De-escalation

## DON'Ts

Don't get loud

Don't argue

Don't try to convince

Don't answer abusive questions

Don't ask for feeling responses

Don't become defensive

Don't respond at a personal level <sup>(1)</sup>

# De-escalation: Strength-based

- What are the underlying factors contributing to their anger?
- What does anger do for them?
- How can you help them from getting annoyed?
- Think of yourself—what pushes your buttons?

# Conflict Style

- Accommodator
- Competitor
- Collaborator
- Compromiser
- Avoider

**Which are you?**

# Risks in Assertion & De-escalation

- The person's feelings may be hurt
- The person may react aggressively
- The person may react non-assertively
- The person may not understand or agree when you express yourself
- What you want may not happen

# Risks... Assertion & De-escalation

There is no guarantee when you behave assertively and attempt to calm a person, or a situation, that everything will turn out just as you want it to.

Step back and consider what the risks are...and the possible consequences.

The Assertion Formula– DESC <sup>(2)</sup>

# The Assertion Formula– DESC

- D- Describe what the person is doing
- E- Explain how you feel
- S- Specify what they need to do
- C- Explain the consequences

# Known Predictors of Violence

- History of violence
- Abusive language
- Threats
- High frustration and contempt
- Body telegraphing
- Police/legal trouble
- Substance abuse/alcohol abuse
- Paranoia or extreme desperation or zealot
- Socially isolated
- Stalking behaviors
- Knowledge of weapons and military training <sup>(3)</sup>

# Work Practices Associated with Workplace Violence

- Low staffing levels
- Working alone
- Working late at night or early in the morning
- Working with money or prescription drugs
- Long waits for services by customers, clients or patients
- The lack of available services
- Time spent with client is lengthy

# Home Visits: Assessing the Risk

- Is there a history of DV, violence, drugs, mentally ill?
- Are there firearms/weapons?
- Is it in an isolated/dangerous place?
- Are you meeting after hours?
- Have there been multiple complaints?
- What else?

# In Your Client's Home

- Make sure you understand that you are on *their turf* – a natural safety dilemma.
- Suggest meeting in a neutral or public place if possible and you feel it is a good safety measure.
- Have correct address and make sure others know where you will be and when. Google map the address for you and the home office.
- Drive around the neighborhood to get your bearings.
- Quickly gain an awareness of your surroundings.

# In Your Client's Home

- When you schedule a visit, let them know when to expect you. Let them advise you about any safety concerns in their area/neighborhood so they can become your partner in safety.
- Ask them who will be at their home during the visit. Request a full accounting of who lives in their home.
- Ask them to watch for your car upon arrival. Have them watch you go to your car as you leave.
- Drive past the house first in both directions. Know the neighborhood's entrance and exits.

# In Your Client's Home

- Park your car in position for an easy exit if possible. Avoid getting your auto into a position to be blocked in.
- Tell the client you're "on-call" and must park for an easy departure.
- Take a moment to observe the home's exterior. Look to see its hiding places, vulnerable points, blocked exits, and escapes routes. Take in environmental signals and your own internal signals.
- Look for any loose dogs/animals and ask that they be put up.

# In Your Client's Home

- Do not sneak up on anyone.
- Listen at the door before knocking and stand to the side when knocking and when the door is opened. (Positioning). Check for unusual odors as well.
- As you enter the home, notice the general interior layout, exits, and phones. Position yourself for an easy exit, if necessary.
- Avoid the kitchen—the most dangerous room—firmly request to move to another room, if possible.

# In Your Client's Home

- Don't get trapped in hallways or rooms at the end of the house.
- Wear clothes you can move in and comfortable shoes. Do not wear jewelry that could be used to harm you.
- Keep your purse locked in the trunk. Keep keys, a little money, and phone in pockets or waist pack (on your person).
- Play *what if* games to mentally prepare for various situations (e.g., threats by a client, suggestive comments, stranger threat, and out-of-control family members or neighbors).

# In Your Client's Home

- Look around and think of what objects could be used as weapons.
- Set boundaries with client and leave at once if they are crossed (e.g. inappropriate clothing, threats, drug use, unannounced visitors/relatives).
- If anything looks out of the ordinary in or around the dwelling, or you feel uneasy about the situation you are in, leave and/or call the police.
- If illegal activity is in progress, do not confront—leave immediately. Call the police.

# In Your Client's Home

- Travel with a cell phone. Keep it on and preprogrammed to Call 911 for assistance in any emergency or threatening situation. Have the GPS turned on.
- Most importantly, know your client. Be aware of what they may be capable of based on size, gender, IQ, mental health status, medications, legal status, criminal and violence history, etc.

# Safety: Dogs and Other Animals

- Avoid all contact if possible—don't think you can tame them
- Tell client to put animals up
- Honk horn to get residents' attention
- Stay relaxed and friendly
- Find out their name and use it
- Avoid direct eye contact
- Only pet under chin and chest with palm up (no hand, palm down over their head)
- Keep small doggie treats to “make friends”

# Home Visits with Law Officers

- Create a team approach with good prior communication
- Ensure the officer is aware of the history of the client's situation
- Develop a plan in case of hostile situation develops
- Know how to use the radio in the officer's cruiser
- Know where their spare keys are kept
- Ensure correct address information

# Safety Ideas

- Relationship with law enforcement
- Access to criminal records before meeting with clients
- LE accompaniment on home visits
- Generating cooperation amongst LE
- Access to LE radio frequency, 2-way radio
- Map of area, know escape routes

# Safety Ideas

- Establish an office “safe room” and code words
- Use a “buddy system”
- “Tag-team” for tracking in the field
- Call-in protocol—20 minutes
- Check-in board, low or high tech
- GPS, if possible, for instant tracking

# Safety Ideas

- Worksite analysis to reduce potential “weapons” in workplace
- A worker safety committee
- Give workers permission “not to go” if risk is high
- Develop a “risk assessment” tool, protocol
- Ongoing compulsory safety training
- A worker safety manual

# Engineering Controls

- Cell phones for field personnel
- Pre-programmed cell phones
- Text messaging
- Two-way radios, known frequency
- Phone alarms
- Fake calls

# Engineering Controls

- Metal detectors (stationary or hand-held)
- Changing office design to provide escape routes for employees
- Panic alarms
- Bullet-proof glass
- Entrance controls in certain parts of the building
- Closed-circuit TV cameras
- Restricting entrance to a facility after dark

# Administrative Controls

- Develop a model to predict violence
- Ask your workers: What do you need for adequate safety on the job?
- Address safety measures regularly in meetings
- Advise staff of their legal right to self-defense
- Be willing to file criminal charges in the name of the agency

# Administrative Controls

- Additional staffing
- A ban on working alone (at certain hours)
- Recording accidents, verbal abuse and “near misses”
- Training in diffusing violent situations and in self-defense
- Develop prevention, intervention and aftermath procedures <sup>(4)</sup>

# Agency Safety Ideas from Christina Newhill, Ph.D.

- Raising consciousness so that client violence is seen as a legitimate practice concern.
- Administrators and supervisors taking the lead in promoting safety.
- Offering high quality in-service safety training.
- Developing a user-friendly means of reporting and tracking incidents of violence.
- Establishing protocols with other organizations that agencies have interdependent relations with regarding safety.<sup>(5)</sup>

# Words of Wisdom

“Social workers who are prepared with the resources and skills to meet the unexpected are in the best position to protect themselves and , ultimately, to provide the best services for their clients.”

— Christina Newhill, Ph.D.

*Client Violence in Social Work Practice (2003)*

# **Violence Prevention**

- **Your ability to stay cool, use your head, and deal in the “here and now” will assist you in your ultimate goal--escaping without harm.**
- **The underlying principle in self-protection is to avoid danger and physical confrontation.**

# **Words of Wisdom**

**Avoid violence,**

**Prevent violence,**

**Escape from violence.**

# Everyday Self Defense<sup>SM</sup>

**Janet Nelson, MSW, LCSW, LLC**

[www.everydayselfdefense.com](http://www.everydayselfdefense.com)

***Everyday Self Defense for Social and  
Human Service Workers***

*A personal safety handbook*

**Trainings \* Conferences \* Retreats**

# References

1. [www.naswma.org](http://www.naswma.org)
2. Bower, S.A. (1976). *Asserting Yourself*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley
3. Chavez, L.J. (1999). *Predictors of Violence*. Critical Incidents Associates. [www.workplace-violence.com](http://www.workplace-violence.com)
4. *OSHA Guidelines for preventing workplace violence for health care and social service workers. OSHA-3148*
5. Newhill, C. (2003). *Client Violence in Social Work Practice*. New York: Guilford

# QUESTIONS?



# Wrap-up

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Janet Nelson, ACSW, LCSW
  - [www.everydayselfdefense.com](http://www.everydayselfdefense.com)
- NAPSA:
  - Aubrey Grant: 217-523-4431 x 5 or [aubrey.grant@apsnetwork.org](mailto:aubrey.grant@apsnetwork.org)

# WEBCAST FEEDBACK

- Please let us know what you think of this webcast
- You will receive a link to a survey in an email shortly after the webcast

THANK YOU!

# TO SHARE THIS WEBCAST

- This webcast will be archived and available via the NCEA and NAPSA websites in 7 to 10 days
  - [www.ncea.aoa.gov/](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/)
  - [www.apsnetwork.org](http://www.apsnetwork.org)

# THANK YOU!!