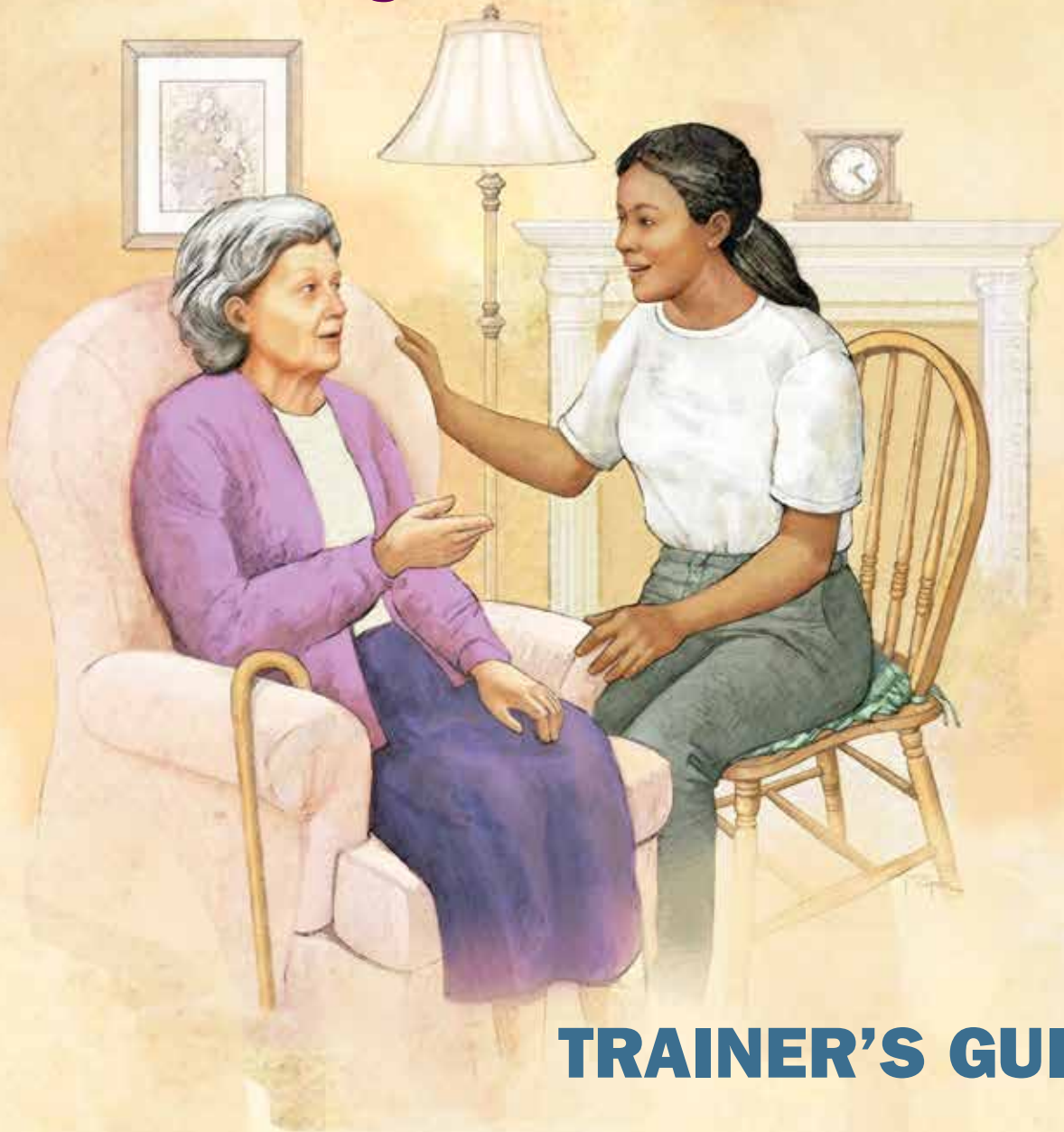


# Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

## Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare



## TRAINER'S GUIDE

**Practical Tips for Homecare Workers**

**STAY SAFE AT WORK**

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health





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**NIOSH**

## Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare

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### Suggested Citation

NIOSH [2014]. Caring for yourself while caring for others. Cincinnati, OH: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2015-102.

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**November 2014**

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## Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare

### Learning Objectives:

By the end of this training, participants will be able to do the following:

- Describe the types of threatening behavior homecare workers may face when working in homes.
- Identify factors that can heighten the risk that threatening behaviors may occur.
- Explain how to manage their own emotions and reactions when threatened.
- Outline effective strategies to reduce risks and handle threatening situations safely.

### Workshop at a Glance

Activity	Time	Materials
1. Welcome and Introductions—How Do You Feel in Threatening Situations?	30 minutes	Handouts, PowerPoint slides, prepared flip chart page
2. Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior	20 minutes	Four copies of role play script; purse with cash in a wallet, walker, chairs for the roleplay; PowerPoint slides
3. Responding in Safe Ways and Managing Feelings and Reactions in Threatening Situations	45 minutes	Handouts, PowerPoint slides, prepared flip chart pages
4. Speaking Up to Set Safe and Healthy Boundaries with Clients	25 minutes	Handouts, PowerPoint slides
Total Time	2 hours	

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### Preparing to Teach:

#### 1. Review the Trainer's Guide and background materials and prepare to present.

Read background information to support your presentation. This workshop complements and reflects the information provided in the following sources:

Homecare Workers' Handbook: *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others*—We hope that you will share copies of this booklet, which is designed as a reference for workers in the field, and will reinforce the lessons in this training with all participants.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-103/pdf/2015-103.pdf>

NIOSH Hazard Review: "Occupational Hazards and Home Health Care"—This gives extensive technical information for professionals and agencies, including information to guide agencies in their efforts to ensure safe and healthy practices.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-125>

You may also want to read the following resources:

*Home and Community Health Worker Handbook*, British Columbia, Canada, Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH).

<http://www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/6C69D638-8587-4096-A8AA-7D2B0141C3B2/59614/HandbookHomeandCommunityHealthcareWorkersHandbook.pdf>

*Safety Manual for Homecare Workers*, Oregon Homecare Commission.

<http://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9062.pdf>

Arrange to have copies of local policies and information. This workshop focuses on safety risks inside homes, and it includes recommended guidelines. You will need to learn host agency policies regarding the steps homecare workers are expected to take when they are faced with threatening situations, and get copies of the policies.

Homecare workers also face risks getting to, entering, and leaving clients' homes. Because of the limited time, those risks are not addressed. Learn what information and policies the host agency has regarding worker safety when going to and leaving clients' homes, and have copies of the policies available for participants' reference.

**Instructions** for conducting training are in the "Detailed Lesson Plan" in black.

**Tips for Trainers** are in shaded boxes.

Please note that the emphasis is on creating a positive, welcoming, and safe environment for dialogue. Focus on encouraging participation and affirming the contributions of participants to the discussion. Thank participants for their role as homecare workers and for their dedication.

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A risk when teaching health and safety is to “blame the workers” for not upholding the safest practices. In fact, there are external pressures, circumstances, and environmental factors that can challenge them and undermine their health and safety. This course has a goal to empower workers to identify the risks they may face on the job, determine if there are any needed tools or equipment, and engage their clients, agencies, and employers to work with them to address concerns and develop effective strategies for making changes.

As well as using these tips, we urge you to identify personal examples related to each of the topics to prepare you to encourage discussion and model the contributions you hope to receive.

Suggested scripts are in **purple**. As you become more familiar with the workshop, feel free to use your own words to convey the key points.

**Class size matters!** Activities are designed for groups of 8–14 participants to best engage each individual. If you present to larger groups, you will need to adapt some activities, and some participants may have less time to contribute to discussions. Big classes also lengthen the time needed for activities and modules.

### 2. Place handouts (1 packet for every participant) at each seat before the workshop, and include an evaluation form.

Distribute printed copies of the PowerPoint show at the end of the workshop. (It may be printed 2, 3, or 6 slides per page.)

### 3. Prepare flip chart pages in advance:

- Activity 1—“In Threatening Situations, We Tend to Feel...” .
- Activity 3—Use the same page from Activity 1, but to the topic “In Threatening Situations, We Tend to Feel ...” add “and Act ...”
- Activity 3—Safe and Effective Responses in Threatening Situations.
- Activity 3—Strategies for Staying Calm in Threatening Situations.

### 4. Bring these supplies:

- Three extra copies of the signs for role play in Activity 2. See back pages of this trainer’s guide.

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- A purse and wallet with some cash in it for the role play, and—if possible—a walker.
- A package of pens for participants.
- An easel and flip chart paper.
- Laptop computer, LCD projector, and screen.
- Markers.
- Painter's or masking tape.

### 5. Make sure your room is ready.

- Set up chairs and tables in a square or U shape so all participants can see one another. Using round tables with four participants each is an alternative, but it is not as likely to encourage engaged attention to full-group discussions.
- Have refreshments ready, if applicable.
- Arrange for AV equipment, and set up the PowerPoint to the title page before class.
- Set up the easel with the prepared flip chart pages at the front of the room.
- Unless you are using sticky flip chart pages, it's helpful to put some short pieces of tape along the easel to use during the training.
- Arrange enough room and props for the role play. Mrs. Crowley begins the role play in one chair, and then she moves to a second to indicate she's gone from the dining room to the living room. The purse needs to be placed on a shelf or table near the second chair.

### 6. Prepare for role play.

Activity 2 includes a role play that you should prepare for. You will need to do the following:

- Make three extra copies of the script.
- Assemble the props: a purse with some dollars in it, and a walker if one is available.
- Recruit, if possible, someone who can perform the role play with you and rehearse in advance. Both of you should try to play your parts realistically, with convincing body language and facial expressions noted in the script. As an alternative, you can recruit volunteers as participants arrive for the session and give them a chance to look over the script.
- You will read the narrator's role and introduce the role play. If it is challenging to recruit three volunteers, you may also play Belinda Martin, the homecare worker, because it is her role that participants will want to focus on in the discussion.
- Arrange the chairs, area, and props for the role play.



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### Detailed Lesson Plan

#### Activity 1: Welcome and Introductory Activity: How Do You Feel in Threatening Situations?

**Materials:** Handouts, PowerPoint slides, prepared flip chart page

**Time required:** 30 minutes

##### 1. Welcome participants to the workshop (4 minutes).

Display the title slide of the PowerPoint presentation, read the workshop title, and mention the host of the program. Introduce yourself and review the purpose of the workshop as listed in the session goals on slide 2.

##### Say:

“Hello! This is the workshop *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others—Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare*. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

“It’s a pleasure to be here with you and have the chance to discuss your health and safety as you provide care, support, and services to clients. We know you do a lot of hard work, and we want you to be as safe as possible and not experience psychological stress or physical harm.

“Today’s topic is particularly serious. Serving people in their homes is an important mission that has many benefits for people receiving services, and it can also be rewarding for you as workers. Yet, home settings make homecare workers more vulnerable. Each time you enter a client’s community and home, you face a potentially unprotected and unpredictable environment.

“Today’s workshop is going to focus on safety risks inside homes. Let me explain what we won’t be covering:

- “We know that you may also face risks getting to, entering, and leaving clients’ homes. Because of our limited time, we won’t be addressing those risks today.

##### Tips for Trainers

Your approach to this introduction sets the tone for the entire workshop!

Speak warmly and enthusiastically to convey:

- The importance of the information to be covered.
- Your real concern for workers’ well-being.
- Your belief that participants intend to do their jobs well while protecting the health and safety of themselves and their clients.

##### Tips for Trainers

Get information and agency policies about community safety before the workshop to distribute to participants after the session.

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- “And, we know that pets in people’s homes can be threatening at times. That is addressed in a workshop on environmental risks, so we won’t discuss being threatened by dogs or other pets.
- “Finally, we know that working with people with dementia can have risks. We have a training module devoted to that work, so we won’t address that today.

“Our focus today is on safely handling threats within the home from other people. This slide lists our goals. We want you to be able to:

- “Describe the types of threatening behavior homecare workers may experience when working in homes.
- “Identify factors that can heighten the risk that threatening behaviors may occur.
- “Explain how to manage your own emotions and reactions when threatened.
- “Outline effective strategies to reduce risks and handle threatening situations safely.

“Although the session is designed for you as homecare workers, we believe this information can be important for clients, too. We encourage you to share the useful information that you learn today with them and with their families and other caregivers.

“Each of you has a packet of handouts with space for taking notes. Please do not look ahead in the packet. Please focus on the work we’re doing now. At the end of the workshop, I’ll also distribute copies of the slides we’ll be seeing, so you will have that information, as well.

“Are there any questions before we begin our first activity?”

### 2. Introduce the range of threatening behavior being discussed in the workshop (7 minutes).

Show slide 3 and say:

“When we think of threatening behavior, we might jump immediately to imagine that it means being physically attacked. But we are defining it in a broader way.

“For instance, is it threatening if clients yell or scream at you, call you names, speak to you abusively, or say they will harm you? Yes! So threatening behavior includes when people speak to you in threatening ways. It also includes threatening body language. Have any of you ever been around someone whose facial expressions or body stance made you feel threatened?”

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Acknowledge any nods or raised hands, and invite a participant to give an example. Affirm the story and continue presenting the ideas on the slide.

**“Inappropriate sexual advances can include suggestive talking, requests for sexual activity, gestures that suggest sexual activity, and being touched in ways that you do not want or are not comfortable with. All of that can be threatening, can’t it?”**

Acknowledge any nods or raised hands, and invite participants to give examples. Affirm stories that volunteers share, and continue presenting the ideas on the slide.

**“Workers sometimes find in the home people using illegal drugs, and that can be threatening to them. They also may see unsecured weapons around the house or even on display. All of this can be threatening. Finally, when a worker is physically attacked, that is absolutely threatening to his or her safety and health. So, when you think of threatening behavior, we want you to keep all of these types in mind.**

**Who might threaten a worker when they are working in homes?”**

Invite volunteers to give responses, which may include clients, family members, others living in the home, and visitors to the home. After affirming the answers that participants give, show slide 4 and confirm that threats can come from any of these people.

**Ask:**

**“What types of people can be threatening? Do people need to be young, strong men to be threatening?”**

Invite volunteers to give responses, and stress that both men and women—and people of all ages—can be threatening.

### **3. Begin pair introductions (2 minutes).**

Ask participants to introduce themselves to one another, first in pairs. Then they will introduce their partners to the whole group. Ask them to turn to page 2 of their handouts. This page has the same list of possible threatening behaviors that they have just seen on the slide. Instructions ask them to first introduce themselves to their partners and then to share a little about their histories in homecare. After the introductions, they are to explore the emotions they feel when they are threatened at work or in their lives. Explain that they will have just 5 minutes for these introductions.

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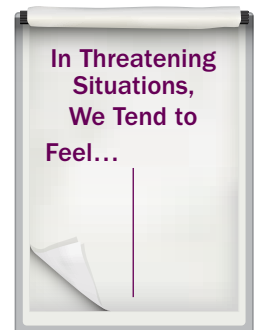
Ask participants to call out numbers that add up to half the people in the session. For example, if there are 12 participants, have them count out “1” through “6” twice. If there is an odd number of people, have the last person repeat number “1” and create a trio with the other two people who called out “1.” After they have counted off, ask them to pair up with the person who called out the same number for these introductions, and begin.

### 4. Conduct pair activity (5 minutes).

Circulate among the pairs, answering questions and offering support as needed. Announce when 1 minute remains, letting participants know to wrap up their discussion. Encourage them to think of the emotions they experience when threatened. When time is up, invite participants to return to their seats.

### 5. Facilitate introductions and capture emotions (10 minutes).

Invite a pair to begin introductions by introducing each other and sharing one or two of the emotions they discussed. Note the emotions on the flip chart, along the left-hand column. Discuss, as suggested by varied responses, that people may feel different emotions, such as anger, fear, annoyance, disgust, anxiety, frustration, resentment, panic, and distress. Emphasize there are no “right” or “wrong” emotions to feel; it’s just important to be aware of what goes on inside themselves so that they can manage those feelings and consciously choose to respond in the safest and most effective ways.



### 6. Wrap up the activity (2 minutes).

Note that threatening behavior can provoke a range of emotions. Threatening behavior can be emotionally challenging and create stress as well as risks to the health and safety of homecare workers. That’s why it is so important for homecare workers to be prepared for the possibility that threatening behavior may occur. To protect their safety, homecare workers should anticipate both how they are likely to feel and how they are likely to react.

Thank participants for their openness in sharing their emotions and for the good discussion. Say that the next topic will focus on recognizing early signs and risk factors that suggest that threatening behavior might occur.

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### Activity 2: Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior

**Materials:** Four copies of role play script; purse with cash in a wallet, walker, chairs for the role play; PowerPoint slides; handouts

**Time required:** 20 minutes

#### 1. Introduce the discussion of risk factors and early signs that there is a potential for threatening behavior (3 minutes).

Explain that, before discussing risk factors and early signs indicating that the potential exists for threatening, you will present a role play. Invite two or three volunteers to join you at the front of the room. (See preparation instructions.)

Display slide 5.

#### Say:

“Although we are presenting this role play, your job is to be a careful observer and listener, so you can analyze what is happening. Please pay attention and think through these questions.

“What are the potential health and safety risks for the Belinda Martin, the homecare worker in this story? What might happen to Belinda?”

“How would you describe whatever threatening behavior you see or hear?”

“What risk factors and signs suggest that there might be future threatening behavior?”

“Why might the threatening behavior continue, become worse, or decrease or stop in the future?”

“If you look on page 3 in your handouts, the questions are also there, and you can take notes if you would like.”

Check that participants understand their role as observers, and then present the narrator’s introduction to the role play.

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### 2. Present Role Play (5 minutes).

Support volunteers in presenting the role play as smoothly as possible. When the role play ends, lead participants in a round of applause and thank the volunteers for the great jobs they did portraying the characters. Invite them to sit down and join in the debrief.

### 3. Debrief the role play (5 minutes).

Explain that, for now, you want participants to focus on the aspects of the story suggested by the questions on slide 5. Discuss each of the questions, drawing out the answers noted below:

- What are the potential health and safety risks for Belinda, the homecare worker in this story? What might happen to Belinda? Belinda could be physically attacked by Paul in the future, she might be the brunt of more verbal abuse, and he might steal from her.
- How would you describe whatever threatening behavior you see or hear? Paul was verbally abusive to both Belinda (calling her a stupid cow) and Mrs. Crowley (saying, “What are you good for?”) and physically threatening. (He shoved Mrs. Crowley and then came close to her face and waved money at her as he demanded more. He grabbed Belinda and pulled her aside.) His promise to return to get more money was threatening as well.
- What risk factors and signs suggest there might be future threatening behavior? These include Paul’s loss of his job, his criminal history, his agitation, the urgency with which he needs money, and his promise to return.
- Why might the threatening behavior continue, become worse, or decrease or stop in the future? It seems that it is likely to continue or become worse as Paul shows no concern for his mother’s well-being. It’s unlikely he’ll find another good job given his attitude and record, and his agitation might suggest drug use or other problems.

### 4. Explore the importance of identifying early signs and risk factors that suggest threatening behavior is likely to occur (3 minutes).

**Say:**

**“We will be discussing more aspects of this role play later, but first I’d like to focus on how it illustrated that often, before threatening behavior erupts, indications show it’s likely to occur. Which ones did you see in this story?”**

Invite responses and discuss. Ensure that the discussion includes that Belinda had already indicated Paul was a troublesome person even before he arrived. Mrs.

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Crowley's refusal or inability to acknowledge the danger he posed would also be a contributing factor to further difficulties. Paul's own agitation, the stress of losing his job, and his urgent need for money suggests more threatening behavior is possible.

### **5. Review risk factors and early signs (3 minutes).**

Display slides 6 and 7, and ask volunteers to read the risk factors and early signs on each slide. Ask for reactions and comments as the points are read. Wrap up by asking why it is so important to pay attention to these signs, and discuss. Emphasize that when the opportunities arise to prevent threatening behavior by paying attention to early signs and risk factors, it can be much more safe and healthy for everyone. Note that discussion will come back to the steps to take in a few minutes.

### **6. Wrap up activity (1 minute).**

Thank participants for their attentive listening and thoughtful analysis of the role play. Explain that the next topic to discuss is how Belinda, the homecare worker, reacted in the situation. This will give participants a chance to explore how they might react.

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### Activity 3: Responding in Safe Ways and Managing Feelings and Reactions in Threatening Situations

**Materials:** Participant handouts, PowerPoint slides, prepared flip chart pages

**Time required:** 45 minutes

#### 1. Recall discussion of emotions and explore how homecare workers might react in threatening situations (8 minutes).

Refer to the chart with the list of emotions from the introductory activity, and recall that this is what participants said they would feel when threatened.

**Ask:**

“How did Belinda feel in this role play?”

Check off emotions already on the list, and add any other emotions participants suggest. Highlight that, just in the course of an interaction that lasted about 5 minutes, Belinda experienced many emotions—anger, frustration, hurt, and fear.

**Ask:**

“How did Belinda act and react in this role play? Please just describe what she did rather than saying what you think of how well it worked.”

Add the heading “and Act” to the flip chart page from Activity 1, and write responses in right-hand column.

**Then ask:**

“How do you tend to act and react when you have these emotions and feel threatened? This is not what you think is best or how you wish you would act, but how you actually do act.”

Write additional responses on the flip chart, and check off ones already listed that participants say is the same as the way they might react. Thank participants for speaking openly.





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### 2. Explore homecare workers' goals in situations with threatening behavior (2 minutes).

**Ask:**

“If any of these reactions aren't the ones you'd wish for or choose, why? What is the downside of responding in these ways? What are your goals as you think about the best responses in threatening situations?”

Discuss responses, and draw out that some responses can escalate the tension and increase the threat of physical harm being done, such as when Belinda told Paul he couldn't borrow money from his mother. Ensure that the dialogue emphasizes that the goals of homecare workers in threatening situations are to do all that they can to ensure their own and their clients' safety, health, and well-being.

### 3. Discuss the safest and most effective ways to respond in threatening situations (8 minutes).

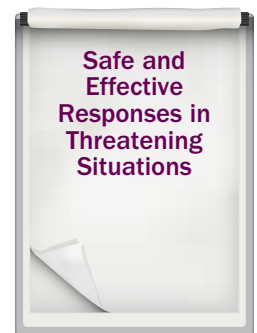
**Ask:**

“With our understanding that our goals are to ensure your own and your clients' health, safety, and well-being—what was effective and safe about how Belinda responded in this role play, and what was less safe and less effective about how she acted?”

Write Belinda's safe and effective responses on the flip chart and invite participants to take notes on page 4 of the handouts. Her effective responses include: Belinda tried to put a positive spin on Mrs. Crowley's initial defense of her son, she withdrew a bit to let him have his conversation with his mother, she quickly came to Mrs. Crowley's assistance when she was at risk of falling, she didn't retaliate when Paul called her a “stupid cow” or pulled on her arm, and she knew that she should report the situation to her supervisor. Discuss differing and shared opinions.

Participants may mention that her less safe and effective responses included speaking back to Paul to tell him he couldn't borrow money; her body language, which indicated her dislike and disapproval of him; and that she hesitated to contact her supervisor.

After participants have listed Belinda's safe and effective responses, ask them for others that they would want to keep in mind when they are in threatening situations.



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Add these to the flip chart, and again encourage them to take notes. Discuss any thoughts and ideas that are questionable, highlighting that every situation is unique, and there may be different right responses in different circumstances.

### 4. Review safe and effective responses (15 minutes).

When participants have exhausted their suggestions for safe and effective responses, or time is up, review slides 8–12 and discuss the strategies for staying safe and healthy despite threatening behavior. Invite volunteers to read the slides, and for all participants to share thoughts and ideas as you review the tips.

- Slide 8, Safe and Effective Strategies to Avoid Threatening Behavior—Emphasize the importance of being alert and trying to avoid allowing situations to escalate into more threatening behavior.
- Slide 9, Safe and Effective Responses to Threatening Behavior—Note that staying calm may be the most important advice, though—as participants have discussed—it can be difficult. Notice that the word is “present,” which suggests that you consciously project calmness and confidence, even if that’s not exactly how you’re feeling. Keeping your demeanor calm, your voice low, and your body language nonaggressive can all help to keep situations less dangerous. Note that Belinda tried to give Paul an order by saying he couldn’t borrow money from his mother. This could easily make him more agitated and make his reactions more aggressive.
- Slide 10, Safe and Effective Responses to Threatening Behavior—If a situation is escalating, it becomes more important to keep your distance, have a clear exit, and avoid behavior that might be provoking—even if that is not your intention. To protect your safety, make sure you’ve let others know your location and schedule, and have a cell phone.
- Slide 11, Safe and Effective Responses to Threatening Behavior—Homecare workers should not tolerate verbal or other threatening behavior, and if a client or other person does not stop when asked, the worker needs to leave the home. Trust your judgment! If the threat is serious, or may result in harm to the client or others in the home if you leave, call the police. When facing threatening behavior in homes, workers should contact their supervisors as soon as possible to discuss the situation and talk about how clients will be cared for in the future.
- Slide 12, Safe and Effective Responses to Threatening Behavior—Workers also need to be prepared to call their employers for help in situations they’re not sure how to handle. Even if workers are able to successfully remove themselves from threatening situations, it is important to report all incidents to their employer and also report illegal behavior to the police.

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- Note that Belinda was torn when Mrs. Crowley urged her not to report her son's behavior. Ask participants how they would respond if they were in her shoes. Discuss the challenge of defying the wishes of a client they care for, and emphasize that, nevertheless, they have a right to speak up to ensure their safety—and the client's, too.

Wrap up the presentation by asking if participants have any comments or questions about these tips, and discuss.

### 5. Introduce emotional management (2 minutes).

Recall that the most important advice is to stay calm, but it is easier said than done. Acknowledge that you believe every adult has moments when we act because of feelings and reactions that overtake us. These are moments when our emotions are in control, not us. We are not able to choose, or do not choose to respond in the way we would most like. Ask if participants agree, and recognize their responses. Discuss any comments or thoughts.

Explain that you also believe that every participant practices emotional self-management all the time, dozens of times a day. This is an incredibly important skill to use in threatening situations in homes, and you would like to ask them to recall the ways they help themselves stay calm and respond intentionally when they are in threatening or stressful situations. Offer an example of how you help yourself stay calm, such as counting to 10, taking a deep breath, talking to yourself about your goals and positive hopes, or visualizing a scene that calms you. Write your example on the flip chart.

### 6. Come up with ideas of strategies to stay calm in threatening situations (9 minutes).

Ask the group to offer all of the strategies participants can think of in the time allowed to help themselves stay calm in threatening or challenging situations. Encourage participants to take notes on page 5 of their handouts and apply these strategies to help themselves stay in control

#### Tips for Trainers

Ideas that participants share for keeping self-control may include these strategies:

- I keep quiet for a while.
- I focus on keeping my voice and tone calm, slow, relaxed, and positive.
- I say to myself, "I don't know what's going on for them." This builds compassion.
- I put myself in their shoes.
- I will give them the benefit of the doubt.
- This is their craziness—it's not about me.
- I use my body to get a grip: smile or look calmly at ease if I can keep it real; stand back; relax my shoulders; change my position.
- I rehearse with a friend.
- I think of my kids or spouse to give me strength.
- I pray and call upon my God for strength.

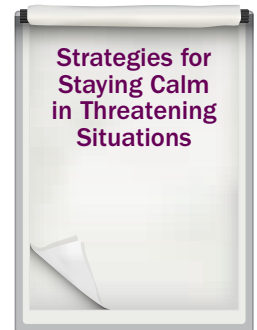
I use these affirmations:

- I can be calm and do the best possible thing!
- I will pick my battles.
- I can get through this.

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and respond as safely and effectively as possible. Wrap up by discussing any concerns or questions that arise.



### 7. Wrap up activity (1 minute).

Thank participants for the great ideas. Urge them to keep the strategies in mind as they handle any threatening or stressful situations they come up against in their lives and work.

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### Activity 4: Speaking up to Set Safe and Healthy Boundaries with Clients

**Materials:** Participant handouts, PowerPoint slides

**Time required:** 25 minutes

#### 1. Introduce the pair activity (3 minutes).

Show slide 13 and refer to it as you speak.

**Say:**

“Our next activity is going to give you a chance to think through how you would handle threatening situations and speak up to reduce the possible risks in them.

“I’d like you to pair up with the person sitting next to you for this activity. I’m giving each pair one scenario. Your job for the next 5 or so minutes is to read the scenario you are assigned and decide how the homecare worker ought to speak up to handle the situation.

“If you look on page 6 of your handouts, you will see seven scenarios. On the slide and on a worksheet on page 7, there are five questions. Please take 5–10 minutes to discuss the scenario I am going to assign your pair.

“Are the instructions clear?”

Answer any questions that arise, and give each pair the scenario you are assigning them. Ask them to begin immediately and work for the next 7 minutes.

#### 2. Conduct pair activity (7 minutes).

Circulate among the pairs, offering help and answering questions as necessary. When 5 minutes have passed, give everyone a 2-minute warning, and ask them to answer the questions they haven’t gotten to yet. Allow an extra minute or two if the pairs need more time. When the time is up, ask for everyone to give their attention back to the full group.

#### Tips for Trainers

There are seven scenarios; enough for seven pairs to each have a different one. If you have fewer than 14 participants, select from among the scenarios those you think best fit the needs your participants.

You may want to assign a different scenario to each pair, or give the same scenario to two different pairs and compare their thoughts in the discussion.

## **Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare**

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### **3. Facilitate pair reports and discussion (14 minutes).**

Ask for a pair to volunteer to go first, and explain that you would like them to read their scenario and then present their answers to the five questions. Discuss their responses for a minute, and invite reactions from others. Acknowledge that the choices aren't always clear and easy for homecare workers, and that staying safe in threatening situations won't always be easy.

Repeat the process as time allows or until all the scenarios have been discussed.

### **4. Conclude the workshop (1 minute).**

Thank participants for their great participation throughout the workshop and for their commitment to doing the best they can for their clients, while taking good care of themselves, too, despite the risks of threatening behavior. Distribute copies of the slide show, and any policies you have prepared to give them. Offer your hope that the session has been helpful, and wish them the best in their future work. Offer any other assistance you have available, and give details of any other sessions you plan to offer.

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### Activity 2: Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior

#### Role Play—Page 1 of 3

**Narrator:** Welcome to the home of Edith Crowley, and let me introduce you to the people you will be meeting in the following scenes.

- Edith Crowley is a wonderfully kind 76-year-old woman with heart disease. She is easily fatigued and has difficulty keeping up with activities of daily living. Six months ago, she fell and broke her hip and had hip replacement surgery. She hasn't been comfortable walking since. She uses a walker, but she has become increasingly homebound.
- Belinda Martin, a heavy-set woman in her 50s, has been Mrs. Crowley's homecare worker for 4 months. She works daily from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., shops twice a week, and prepares lunch and dinner for Mrs. Crowley.
- Paul Crowley is Mrs. Crowley's 43-year-old son. He has a history of substance abuse and has been in prison for a number of offenses. He is currently working, and Mrs. Crowley hopes he is building a more successful life for himself.

**Mrs. Crowley:** (With warm appreciation) Oh, Belinda, you're so good to me. That was a great lunch. I appreciate all you do for me. And you make the grocery money go so far! I just wish I could do more for myself. I'm not sure what I'm good for anymore.

**Belinda:** (Sounding very fond of her employer) Mrs. Crowley! I don't even want to hear you say that. You are the kindest person on earth, and your friends love you and are so glad you're here. Just think, what would your friend, Maria, do without you?

**Mrs. Crowley:** That's kind of you to say. And I know Paul loves and needs me. Oh, don't look like that! He's a good boy.

**Belinda:** (She grimaced when Mrs. Crowley mentioned Paul's name. Now she's sounding resigned and trying to put a positive spin on it.) He's lucky you think so! You're just too good.

**Mrs. Crowley:** Well, anyway. Would you please help me get into the living room? I think I'll watch some TV this afternoon.

**Belinda:** Sure.

## Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare

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### Activity 2: Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior

#### Role Play—Page 2 of 3

**Narrator:** Belinda supports Mrs. Crowley as they slowly move to a new seat. As she's helping her get settled, they hear someone using the key in the front door, and Paul, dressed casually and looking unkempt and agitated, barges in.

**Mrs. Crowley:** (Happily and excited) Oh, Paul! It's so nice of you to visit! I've been missing you!

**Paul:** (Grudgingly warm) Hey Ma! How you doing? (He ignores Belinda as he leans over to give his mother a brief greeting.)

**Mrs. Crowley:** But shouldn't you be at that new job you've got?

**Paul:** Those miserable SOBs fired me! I tell you, I can't get a break. You wouldn't believe what they expected of me. Just because of my record, they thought they could walk all over me.

**Belinda:** (She is staying nearby but out of the way. As he speaks, she is rolling her eyes and shaking her head, clearly thinking his view of things is wrong.)

**Mrs. Crowley:** Oh dear! That's terrible! And it is so hard for you to get good jobs. Just because you have had some hard times ... .

**Paul:** Yeah, and now I need money. What can you give me?

**Belinda:** (Seemingly unable to stop herself from bursting in) You can't ask her for money! She's barely making ends meet as it is!

**Paul:** Stay out of this, you stupid cow!

**Mrs. Crowley:** Stop! Both of you! It's all right! Of course I can help. Let me see what I've got. Oh now, where's my purse? (She struggles to get up and walk over to a bureau, where her purse is. She's moving very slowly, and she finally makes it across and opens her purse.) It's so silly how hard it is to find things in my purse.

**Belinda:** (She is again holding back, but looking worried and upset.)

**Paul:** Geez, Ma, I haven't got all day! (He pushes his mother aside, nearly knocking her down.)



## Module 7: Tips for Safely Handling Threatening Behavior When Providing Homecare

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### Activity 2: Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior

#### Role Play—Page 3 of 3

**Belinda:** (When Paul pushes Mrs. Crowley, she rushes up to her and leads her back to her seat, looking very angry.)

**Paul:** (As Belinda helps Mrs. Crowley back to her seat, Paul rummages in her purse, pulls some dollars out of the wallet, and looks disgusted. He goes back over to Mrs. Crowley and Belinda, who is leaning over her, takes Belinda harshly by the upper arm and pulls her away. Then he gets close to his mother, and brandishes the few dollars in her face.) For Pete's sake, is this all you have? I need more!

**Mrs. Crowley:** I'm sorry, Paul! It's all I have. I can't get more till my Social Security check comes in next week.

**Paul:** Well, what use are you then? I'll be back next Friday. You'd better have more money then.

**Mrs. Crowley:** Oh, Paul. Don't be mad at me. Won't you stay and visit?! I'll get the money.

**Paul:** I'm not visiting you with this cow here. I'll come later next time. Have the money. (He leaves the house.)

**Belinda:** Mrs. Crowley! He's no good! And you can't give him your money! How will you get by? And he scares me. He's really tough.

**Mrs. Crowley:** I know he has a rough manner, but he has a heart of gold, really!

**Belinda:** I'm sorry, but I just don't buy it. It's our responsibility to report cases of potential abuse, and this is abuse. He's a danger to both of us.

**Mrs. Crowley:** No! You mustn't! He's had such a hard life and so many tough breaks. You have to promise you won't speak of it. It would kill me!

**Belinda:** Oh, I don't know what to do!