

# Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

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



## PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

**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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**SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™**

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

## Participant Handouts

### Learning Objectives:

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

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

### Workshop at a Glance

Activity	Time
1. Welcome and Introductions—How Do You Feel in Threatening Situations?	30 minutes
2. Risk Factors and Early Signs Indicating the Potential for Threatening Behavior	20 minutes
3. Responding in Safe Ways and Managing Feelings and Reactions in Threatening Situations.	45 minutes
4. Speaking Up to Set Healthy and Safe Boundaries with Clients	25 minutes
Total Time	2 hours

**Threatening Behavior Homecare Workers May Experience**



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**The spectrum includes ...**

- Verbal threats and abuse.
- Threatening body language.
- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Exposure to illegal activity.
- Display of weapons.
- Physical attack.

**Pair Introductions**

First, introduce yourself to your partner, sharing your name, and your background in home health care.

Then discuss what, if any, threatening behavior you have experienced when providing home health care, and share how you tend to feel when you are threatened. What emotions do you experience? (If you have not had threatening experiences at work, consider how you feel in threatening situations in your life.)

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**Safe and Effective Responses in Threatening Situations**

1. 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?

Safe and Effective	Less Safe and Effective

2. List more safe and effective responses when handling threatening behavior:

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## **Addressing Threatening Situations and Speaking Up:**

### **How Would You Handle This Situation and Speak Up?**

1. Your client has been struggling with his health conditions, and it has put a strain on his relationship with his children. He's been increasingly unhappy and has taken it out on you during your past three shifts. He's said he hates that he has to have a stranger take care of him. He has called you names, used profanity, and called you an insensitive idiot.
2. Your client's son has been at the house twice in the past month. The first time, he ignored you. The second time, he made you uncomfortable asking about your personal life and telling you that he liked your butt. Today, when his mother isn't nearby, he is making insinuating and inappropriate sexual suggestions and gestures.
3. As you are getting lotion for your client's feet from the bedside table, you find a gun. You speak up about it, and your client says, "Oh, yes. I keep that loaded so no one can mess with me!"
4. You arrive at your client's home to find a group of people playing poker for money in the dining room. You can smell the marijuana they are smoking.
5. Your client has a live-in boyfriend. The boyfriend expects you to clean up after him and to prepare his meals, and he has given you a hard time in the past when you've explained the boundaries of your assignment. Today, he gets really mad at you when you say you won't make him lunch, and he tries to slap you.
6. Everyone in your client's family is worried about her granddaughter. She is using a variety of drugs and behaving erratically. She has stolen from her parents and her grandmother and had violent outbursts. She has been banned from her grandmother's home—but today, when you arrive, you find her in the home, and your client seems frightened.
7. You've taken the case of providing homecare for Mr. Duncan, who has gone through a half-dozen homecare workers because he's so mean. You think of yourself as someone who has the experience and savvy to handle him. He is worse than you expected. He is uncooperative and resists assistance with his ADLs, cursing you all the while. He slaps out at you, and threatens what he will do to you. He is really frightening you, and yet you feel terrible about what will happen to a man no one can or will care for.



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**Addressing Threatening Situations and Speaking Up:  
How Would You Handle This Situation and Speak Up?**

1. What would you be feeling if you were in this situation?

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2. What strategies would you use to manage your feelings?

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3. What would be your goals in this situation? What's your bottom line?

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4. What strategies would you use to reduce the risks and stay safe in this situation?

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5. What would you say, and to whom would you address this situation?

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