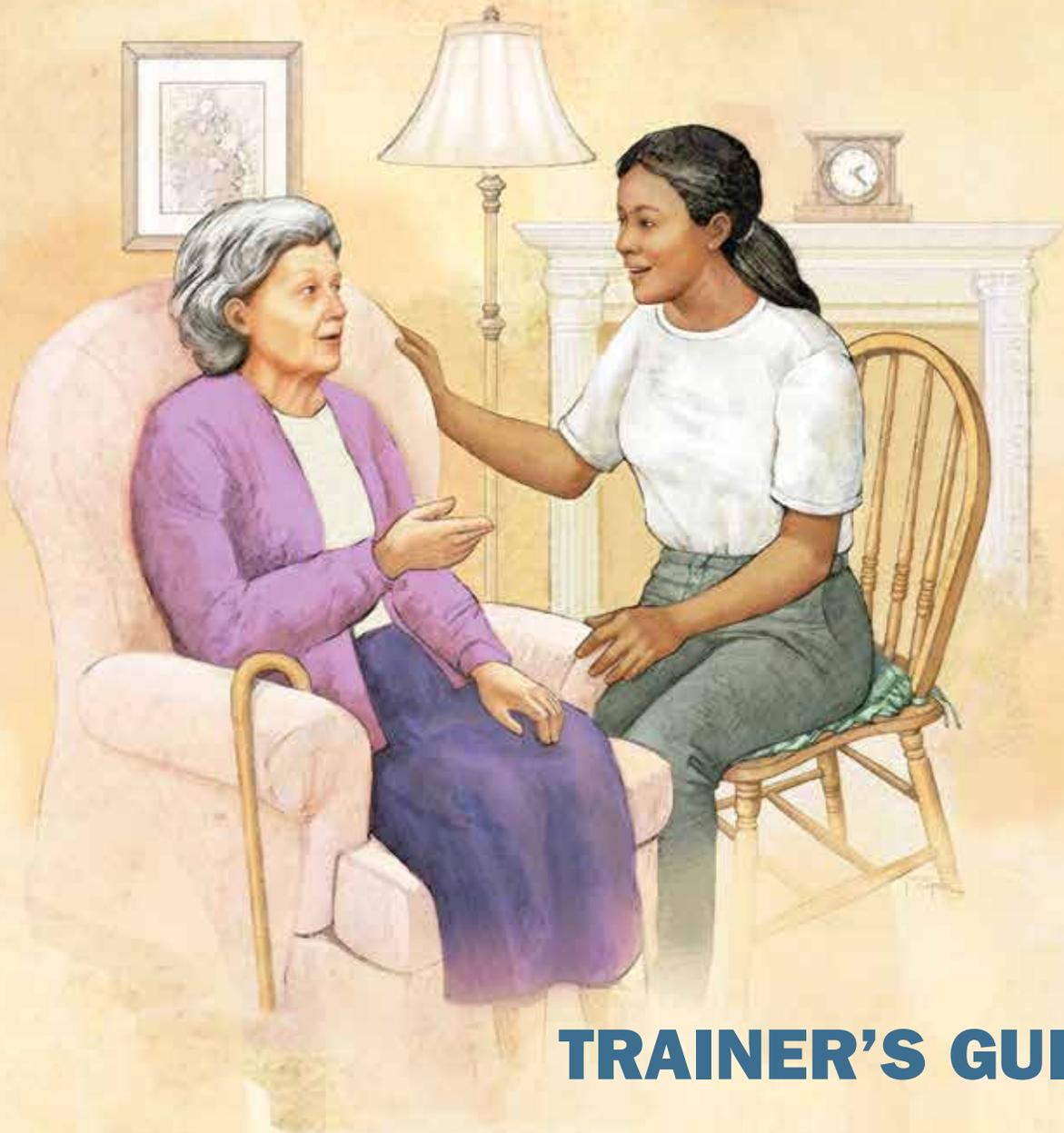


# Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

## Module 1: An Introduction to Homecare Health and Safety



## 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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## Module 1: An Introduction to Homecare Health and Safety

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<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-102/default.html>

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### Learning Objectives:

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

- Understand the importance of homecare worker health and safety.
- Recognize the main areas of risk.
- Describe strategies for ensuring their own health and safety.

### Workshop at a Glance

Activity	Time	Materials
1. Welcome and Introductions	10 minutes	Easel, prepared flip chart pages, markers, handouts, PowerPoint, handbook: <i>Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others</i>
2. Exploring Health and Safety Risks in Homes	35 minutes	Prepared flip chart pages, handouts
3. Why Health and Safety are So Important	10 minutes	Prepared flip chart pages, handouts
4. Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe	35 minutes	Handouts
5. Communicating Effectively about Safety	25 minutes	Handbook
Total Time	1 hour and 55 minutes	

### Preparing to Teach:

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

- Read background information, including the handbook *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others* and the NIOSH Hazard Review “Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare.” These give you extensive background to support your presentation.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-103/pdf/2015-103.pdf>
- Instructions for presenting training are in black type in the “Detailed Lesson Plan.”
- **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 health-care workers and their dedication.
- A risk when teaching health and safety is to “blame the workers” for not upholding the safest practices. In fact, external pressures, circumstances, and environmental factors can challenge them and undermine their health and safety. The goal of this course is 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 address concerns and develop effective strategies for making changes.
- As well as using these tips, think of personal examples related to each of the topics so you are prepared to prompt 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. If you present to larger groups, you will need to adapt some activities, and not all participants will be able to contribute to discussions.

#### 2. Make sure your participant handouts (1 packet for every participant) are ready and placed at each seat before the workshop and include the following:

- Handbook: *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others*.
- 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—Outline of the Human Body.
  - Printed outline on two pages taped together lengthwise.
- Activity 2—Exploring Health and Safety Risks in Homes.
  - Separate sheets for each of the rooms of a house: bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom, laundry/basement, and outside of the house.
  - Health and Safety Risks in Homecare.
- Activity 3—Why Our Health and Safety are So Important.
  - Our health and safety are so important because ...
  - We may put our health and safety at risk because ...
- Activity 4—Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe on the Job.

### 4. Bring the following supplies:

- A package of pens for participants.
- 2 flip chart stands and flip chart paper.
- Laptop computer, LCD projector, and screen.
- Markers.
- Painter's or masking tape.
- A set of red sticky dots.

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

- Set up chairs and tables in a square or U shape, so everyone can see one another.
- Have refreshments ready if applicable.
- Arrange for the AV equipment and set up PowerPoint to title page before the class.
- Post flip chart pages with outline of body at front of the room against flat wall so it can be written on.
- Post flip chart pages with areas of houses around the room before class begins.
- 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.

### Detailed Lesson Plan

#### Activity 1: Welcome and Introductions

**Materials:** Easel, prepared flip charts, markers, handouts, handbook

**Time required:** 10 minutes

Display the title slide of the PowerPoint, read the workshop title, and mention the host of the program. Introduce yourself, display slide 2 of the PowerPoint, and play the short video. Then review the purpose of the workshop as listed in the session goals on slide 3.

#### Tips for Trainers

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

Speak warmly and enthusiastically to convey the following:

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

#### Say:

“Hello! This is the workshop *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others—An Introduction to Homecare Health and Safety*. 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.

“My goals are to give you an overview of the risks you face as well as tips for using constructive approaches with others so you can reduce the chances that you will have any health and safety problems while at work.

“While the session is designed for you as homecare workers, we believe this information is important for clients, also. I encourage you to share what you learn with them.

“Each of you has a packet of handouts for taking notes. At the end of the workshop, I’ll distribute copies of the slides we’ll be seeing as well as a resource booklet, *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others*.”

## Module 1: An Introduction to Homecare Health and Safety

Invite participants to introduce themselves. Display the prepared flip chart with an outline of a human body, as well as slide 3 of the PowerPoint, and explain how the introductions will be done.

### Say:

“Now I’d like you to introduce yourselves.

“We’ll start with a volunteer, and I’d like each of you to share your name, your role at work, and how long you’ve been working in homecare.

“Then, I’d like for you to come up and mark the drawing with a red dot to show any body parts that feel strained or cause you pain or difficulty in your homecare work. Please note that page 2 of your handouts has room to take notes on what you hear if you would like to do that.”



Ask for a volunteer to begin, and then have that participant invite a person to his or her right or left to continue. People can add their dots to parts that have already been marked by others. Keep the pace moving to complete introductions within 10 minutes, as needed, by calling on the next person to speak, recalling the questions you’ve asked them to answer, and encouraging them to post their dots quickly.

You may note the years all participants have worked in homecare as they introduce themselves. After introductions, add the years up, share the total, and highlight that there is a great deal of experience in the room, which will make for a great discussion. Note (if true) that it is wonderful that some participants currently do not experience pains, but that they can occur at any time while working.

Wrap up by thanking everyone for their contributions, and highlight that there are many possible health and safety impacts from working in homecare—along with the rewards of caring for people. Next, we will discuss what tasks might be causing these health symptoms.

### Tips for Trainers

Participants likely will want to share stories of how these pains and strains started.

Explain that they will have the chance to do this in the next activity but to focus for now on where they feel them.

### Activity 2: Exploring Health and Safety Risks in Homes

**Materials:** Prepared flip chart pages posted around room, handouts

**Time required:** 35 minutes

#### 1. Introduce and conduct small group activity (12 minutes).

**Say:**

“Now we’re going to explore some of the risks or hazards that you might come across when working in homecare. You’ll see around the room some flip chart pages posted that are labeled with the rooms of the homes you go in. I’d like you to break into small groups, one group by each flip chart. I’d like your groups to quickly come up with ideas for the tasks you might do in those rooms, and the possible health and safety risks you might face while working.

“For example, in the living room, you might trip on an electrical cord while vacuuming. In the kitchen, you might burn yourself while cooking. In the bedroom, you might strain yourself while transferring a client. You might take a misstep on the stairs carrying laundry to the basement. Or you may work in a neighborhood where you are worried about your safety walking from your car to the house.

“Share actual strains, sprains, and exposures you’ve experienced doing tasks. You’ll find a marker on the floor beneath the page. Please have someone agree to record your group’s ideas on the page. You’ll just have a couple minutes to come up with your ideas, and then I’ll have you rotate to a new room. Please start!”



#### Additional flip charts:

- Kitchens/Dining Rooms.
- Bathrooms.
- Bedrooms.
- Laundry Rooms/Basements.
- Outside the Home.

Circulate among the groups, answering questions and giving more examples if necessary to support them in coming up with ideas. After 3 minutes, ask the groups to move to the flip chart pages to their right and come up with ideas for that room or area. After 2 minutes, have them move again. Repeat until they have visited all the charts and added to the lists for each room and area, or stop at 12 minutes.

### 2. Facilitate small group reports (18 minutes).

**Say:**

“Can I have everyone’s attention! I’d like to begin with a group that volunteers to report all that’s listed on the pages you are standing at. We need you to quickly report—we have about 3 minutes per chart. Again, feel free to take notes on pages 3 and 4 of your handouts. Can someone please start? Thanks!”

Facilitate the reports, moving quickly from group-to-group to hear the reports.

### 3. Debrief the reports and share information on risks (5 minutes).

**Say:**

“Thanks very much for all of your good ideas. Your experience reflects what the research has shown about the risks in what you do. There are a lot, and to help you keep them in mind so that you can identify risks and help reduce them, we’ve gathered them into four categories.”

Display the prepared flip chart and present the four categories, illustrating each with examples from the group’s idea sessions. Invite questions and comments.



Quickly show slides 4 through 8, noting any risks not already mentioned. Invite comments and discuss. Wrap up by encouraging participants to keep the four areas in mind so that they can be alert to potential risks and take action to prevent themselves from being injured, sickened, stressed, or strained.

### Activity 3: Why Our Health and Safety is So Important

**Materials:** Prepared flip chart pages, handouts

**Time required:** 10 minutes

Facilitate large group idea session (10 minutes).

**Say:**

“Now that we’ve identified many of the risks you face when working in homecare, it’s important to think a bit more deeply about two things—first, why is it so important to maintain your own health and safety? Who has ideas? Let’s come up with a lot of ideas, and I’ll capture all your answers. You might also want to write them down in your handouts on page 4, so you can refer back to the ideas and refresh your memory later.”



Tape the last flip chart page with risk areas onto the wall of the room so that the new flip chart page is displayed. Begin with a volunteer and give each person a chance to contribute. Prompt participants to contribute as necessary by giving examples, such as “having to miss work and pay.” After 5 minutes, or when the list seems complete, turn to slides 9 and 10, and note any additional points. Then, transition to the second topic.

**Say:**

“Given how important it is to maintain your own health and safety, both for your own sake and for the good of clients and others in your life, why are we sometimes unable to take the steps we need to stay safe and healthy? For example, not having proper equipment, or

being so busy that you don't have time to do the job safely. For instance, I remember a time when I ... [share an example from your own work experience and note it on the flip chart]. Let's try to explore all the reasons we might not do what we need to do in order to maintain our own safety and health."

Tape the last flip chart page with the reasons why health and safety is so important onto the wall of the room so that the new flip chart page is displayed. Begin with a volunteer and give each person a chance to contribute. Prompt participants as necessary by giving examples. Share examples of situations you've faced or heard about to help participants feel comfortable about sharing their own stories.



Wrap up by thanking participants for contributing great ideas, and add any key points that haven't been mentioned, referring to slides 11 and 12. Affirm that, given the demands of their jobs and their lives, it can be challenging to stay safe on the job. Emphasize that it's a lifelong effort to keep in mind what's best in the long run and to make choices to make themselves and those around them as safe and healthy as they can be.

### Tips for Trainers

In this activity, it is especially important for you to convey your faith that participants have the best of intentions.

You may need to reassure them that this is not about blaming them for the health and safety problems they encounter, but to encourage them to be aware of the circumstances that may cause them to put themselves at risk.

Note that this is especially important because they are on their own in other people's homes. That makes it even more important for them to anticipate when they might be at risk and to identify strategies that will help them reduce or eliminate risks.

### Activity 4: Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe

**Materials:** Handbook: *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others*

**Time required:** 35 minutes

#### 1. Overview of handbook (5 minutes).

- a. Make sure each participant has a handbook.
- b. Point out that the checklist on pages 4 and 5 serves as an outline of the homecare tasks described in the handbook.

#### Say:

“We’ve been looking at risks that might occur in various rooms of the house. This handbook takes the approach of looking at the tasks you do—which might occur in a number of different rooms. Take a look at the checklist on pages 4 and 5 to see some of the tasks that the handbook covers. Each task has a tip sheet that provides information on risks associated with a task and ways to do the task safely. Let’s look one over together. Please turn to Tip Sheet 1 on page 10. Each tip sheet has the following sections:

- a. “Common symptoms to watch out for.
- b. “Suggestions for tools and tips you can use to be safer while doing the task.
- c. “A section called ‘talk it over’ with examples of words you can use to ask for what you need. We know that to get many solutions in place in the home you’ll need to communicate with the client or with the client’s family. The handbook also has a special section on page 6 with tips for how to talk to your client about safety.
- d. “Suggestions for where you can go to find some of the items you might need or where to go for help.
- e. “Finally, there is a to-do list you can complete after you’ve reviewed the information.

“In the next activities we will look at these sections more closely.”

### 2. Using the Handbook to Solve Problems (30 Minutes).

a. Introduce activity.

**Say:**

“As we’ve discussed, the first step in staying safe on the job is to identify possible risks. The second step is to find out what to do about them. The handbook is a tool for doing just that. Now we are going to have a chance to use the handbook. You’ll work in small groups to review information on particular tasks and identify ways to do those tasks safely.”

b. Distribute the “Safety Tip Activity Worksheet.” Tell participants they will be split into four groups, and each group will read one of the tip sheets.

**Go over the following instructions:**

- “I will divide you into groups, and in your group you will work together on one of the tip sheets.
- “In your group you will read the tip sheet and think about what you could do to make the task you’ve been assigned safer for you.
- “Then write down the changes you might need on the ‘to do list’ on your worksheet. Feel free to add your own ideas even if they are not in the handbook.” Ideas could include using new tools, doing the task differently, or calling or talking to a resource person.
- “Pick one person in your group to report back to the whole class.
- “You will have 15 minutes to work in your small groups.”

c. Break the group into four small groups.

**Assign each group one of the following tip sheets:**

Safety tip 1—Mopping, scrubbing, and other housecleaning tasks.

Safety tip 2—Working with cleaning products.

Safety tip 4—Helping the client move from place to place.

Safety tip 8—Preventing trips and falls.

d. Visit each group to see if they understand the directions.

- e. After 15 minutes, ask the participants to stop working on the worksheet and come together to discuss their work.
- f. Report: Give each group 2–3 minutes to report on what they learned.

**Ask each group's spokesperson this question:**

**“What was your task? Please share two or three of the most useful solutions you identified to prevent injuries or symptoms.”**

**After each group reports, ask this question to the class as a whole:**

**“Do you have any other suggestions to share for making the task safer?”**

### Activity 5: Communicating Effectively About Safety

**Materials:** Handouts  
**Time required:** 25 minutes

#### 1. Role-playing (24 minutes).

- a. Introduce activity.

**Say:**

“Now let’s talk more about how to discuss these issues with clients. We know that sometimes it can be hard to find the right words to express concerns or to ask for what we need. To get us thinking about this, we are going seek volunteers to read a skit demonstrating a conversation between a homecare worker and her client. As you listen to the skit, try to identify any communication problems you might hear.”

- b. Make sure participants have “A Difficult Conversation,” which is printed on page 8 of the participant handout.
- c. Ask for two volunteers to read the skit aloud. Give them a few minutes to review the script and have them come to the front of the room and read it aloud.
- d. After they are done reading, ask the following question.

**Say:**

“Let’s now discuss how we think this conversation went. What problems did you see with how Carla handled the conversation?”

**After participants respond, add any missing points. You might hear responses like these:**

- She seemed angry and pushy.
- She interrupted Mrs. Jones.
- She insisted on talking about it right then even though Mrs. Jones was tired and busy.
- She insisted on only one particular solution: the mop from the store down the street. This limited the options she and Mrs. Jones could discuss.

e. Ask the following question.

**“How did Mrs. Jones react?”**

**After participants respond, add any points that might be missing. You might hear responses like these:**

- She was distracted and tired; didn’t seem to want to discuss it.
- She expected Carla to work just like her last homecare worker did.
- She was low on funds and resistant to spending money.
- She wasn’t interested in how the task was done; just that it gets done.
- She was quick to want to fire Carla.

f. Talk about how these problems might have been avoided.

**Ask:**

**“What could Carla have said or done differently that could have improved the communication and led to a better result?”**

g. Review general tips for communicating effectively.

**Ask:**

**“Do you have other ideas about to communicate effectively in general to add to our list of suggestions?”**

**Conclude by reviewing the following points:**

**Say:**

- “Plan what you want to say.
- “Think of how the solution might benefit both the client and the worker. ‘If I can get a better mop, I can keep the floor cleaner. And I can be sure to stay healthy so I can continue to come and care for you.’
- “Try to see the situation from the client’s point of view: ‘I know you want to keep the floor as clean as possible. It’s hard to do that with this broken mop.’

- “Be calm and respectful but clear on why you are asking for that solution.
- “Listen without interrupting.
- “Try to offer more than one solution. Ask the client for his or her ideas.”

**Add the following point:**

**Say:**

“We know that sometimes it might not be possible to discuss these issues with your client. These are good suggestions for talking to a family member or any other person you might need to involve if the client is not able to have this conversation with you. You should also contact your agency for assistance.”

**If participants have the handbook, add the following suggestion:**

**Say:**

“Remember, you can look at the ‘talk it over’ section in each tip sheet and the ‘How to talk to each other about safety’ information on pages 6–9 for more ideas.”

- 2. Close the session by thanking participants for being so engaged in the discussion, wishing them the best in their work in the future, and telling them you hope they found the session helpful (1 minute).**

Offer any additional assistance you have available, and give details of any additional sessions you plan to offer.

