



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

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October 13, 2017

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF CHILD PLACING AGENCIES**

ATTENTION: SOCIAL SERVICE STAFF

SUBJECT: STAFF SAFETY – WORKING SAFE, WORKING SMART CURRICULUM

Every day, thousands of talented social services' staff across our state interact with families during the family's time of need. The overwhelming majority of these interactions do not create safety issues for our workforce. Nevertheless, we must be diligent in our safety practices and take necessary precautions to protect the men and women who are performing this difficult and vital work.

NC DSS is keenly aware of the risk each social worker faces while dedicating themselves to improving the lives of children and families. The personal safety for our workforce is of paramount concern and we are pleased to offer you additional tools to help mitigate safety risks.

Working Safe, Working Smart is a new online curriculum available to all social service staff with access to ncswLearn.org. This five-part training is designed to help staff working with adults and children as well as administrative staff learn how to better prepare themselves around personal safety issues. The course is based on several core beliefs:

- Awareness of safety issues is a primary concern for all areas of front-line human service agency operations.
- Consistency is needed in the application of safety procedures at all levels of an agency.
- Communication on safety issues must be developed between management and staff at all levels.
- Safety must be a part of an agency's planning process, included in staff orientation and training, physical space development, crisis response and post-victimization and trauma.

While this online course is available for individual learners, agencies are encouraged to download the Facilitators' Guide from ncswLearn.org and provide blended online and in-person training around safety. Staff face-to-face training around safety can help increase the impact of the course material.

WWW.NCDHHS.GOV

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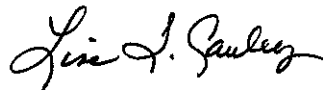
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

In addition to the online course, NC DSS is pleased to offer county social service agencies complementary copies of a companion guide, *Personal Safety Handbook: Targeting Safety in Human Services*. These small handbooks provide practical safety tips that staff can keep on their person to help focus their awareness on safety.

NC DSS will distribute these books on October 18-19, 2017 (one package to each of the 100 county departments of social services) at the upcoming NCACDSS Social Services Institute in Hickory, North Carolina. Counties should select one representative to pick up these books from the NC DSS table. If counties are not planning on sending a representative to Social Services Institute, NC DSS will make other distribution arrangements.

Attached is a flyer that can be posted in your agencies to help promote the course. We encourage you to utilize the Working Safe, Working Smart resource to strengthen your safety programming in your agency.

Sincerely,



Lisa T. Cauley, Deputy Director

Attachment (1): Working Safe, Working Smart Course Flyer

CWS-36-2017

NEW COURSE on ncswLearn.org



STAFF SAFETY

*Address personal safety in the workplace
before you experience an incident.*

Modules Include:

- Introduction to Personal and Workplace Safety
- Field Safety
- Office Safety
- Interviewing and Behaviors
- Post-Incident Trauma

Each county is being provided complimentary copies of a “Personal Safety Handbook” courtesy of NC DSS. These books are designed to be a companion tool to the online course. Additional Personal Safety Handbooks can be purchased through Independent Living Resources, Inc. www.ilrinc.com