

Home health care: Violence prevention in the home

Introduction:

Violence refers to any physical force that may cause injury. It also includes threatening statements or behavior that gives reason to believe you may be in danger.

It is important to understand that being exposed to aggression or violent behavior is not OK and isn't "just part of the job."

Risk factors: Clients

Clients may have a history of violent behavior or may feel frustrated or act aggressively because of:

- Their medical conditions, medications or overall dependence on other people.
- Difficulty communicating due to language barriers or physical or cognitive limitations.
- Drug or alcohol addition.

Safe work practices:

- Read the care plan before visiting a client.
- Assess your client's mood before starting your duties.
- Avoid letting your client come between you and a way out of the room or house. Keep space between you and your client.
- Tell your client what you're going to do before doing it.
- Know that a client may become aggressive when you're assisting with personal care.

Risk factors: Family & visitors

Family members and visitors may become violent or argumentative because of:

- Their frustration with the client's condition, other family matters or the care arrangement.

Safe work practices

- If unauthorized visitors are at the home when you arrive, ask that client to have them leave before you provide care.
- Make sure to have easy access from the home.

If the situation with a client, family member or visitor becomes stressful:

- Stay calm. Face the person with your elbows at your side and your arms out.
- Watch for signs the person might strike out. Examples include red face, fast breathing, nervousness, finger pointing, yelling, etc.
- Don't argue or raise your voice.
- Reassure the person that his concerns will be dealt with as soon as possible.
- Tell him how to make a complaint to your supervisor.
- Tell your supervisor about the situation as soon as possible.