

# UNC-CH, School of Social Work

## Safety Policy and Procedures

### Introduction

The Field Education Program oversees the students' experiences in their field placements and their safety in the field. The following safety policy and procedures were created in recognition of the fact that physical vulnerability of professional social workers and violence in the lives of clients/consumers/communities are current realities. This document clarifies the respective roles of the School, the agency and the student with the goal of collaboration to maximize safe practice.

### Roles and Responsibilities

*UNC School of Social Work will:*

- Provide to students and agencies a Workplace Safety Practice discussion guide
- Provide training on assessing and intervening in potentially dangerous situations

*Field Placement Agencies will:*

- Orient students to the safety policies and procedures of the agency. Such orientation should include, but not be limited to, discussion of safety issues in the community, within the agency building(s), and with particular clients. Security of personal belongings should be included. Students should also be informed of and trained in health precautions and protocols appropriate for the setting. Procedures for the student(s) to follow in the event of a safety or security problem should be reviewed.
- Include in the learning agreement information about the agency's orientation to safety and the training opportunities it provides to students to develop skills and knowledge that will maximize safe social work practice.
- Make the same accommodations to ensure students' safety as they make for staff.
- Contact the assigned field faculty member if the student's concerns about safety interfere with the learning process. In consultation with the field faculty member develop a plan that addresses the student's educational needs and the agency's requirement to provide services.

*Social Work Students will:*

- Read and be familiar with the safety policy and procedures of the agency where they are placed and abide by health precautions and protocols related to the specific agency setting.
- Attend orientation, workshops and training programs related to the safety and safe social work practice offered at the School and at their agency.

- Not engage in assignments in which they feel physically at risk. If a student is concerned about his/her safety, the student should inform the field instructor. The field faculty member and field instructor should consult to determine the best course of action to support the student's education.

#### Procedures for Reporting an Incident

- If an incident occurs in which a student is threatened or hurt, the field instructor or their assigned field faculty member should contact the Assistant Dean for Field Education immediately to discuss what actions the agency and School should take to ensure the student's physical and emotional well-being.
- The Assistant Dean for Field Education will document the incident and the steps taken to address it. The Assistant Dean of Field Education will meet with the student and field faculty member to discuss the situation, assess the immediate and ongoing risk, and find a resolution that promotes the student's sense of well-being and the learning process.

#### After Hours Reporting

- Field Education students who experience an emergency after regular business hours or on the weekends should contact the University Public Safety Office at 919-962-8100.