

Workplace Assessment & Violence Education (WAVE)

Approach

The following information is intended to be used as a reference document once you've completed the program.

In addition to the elements in WAVE, knowing the client is critical:

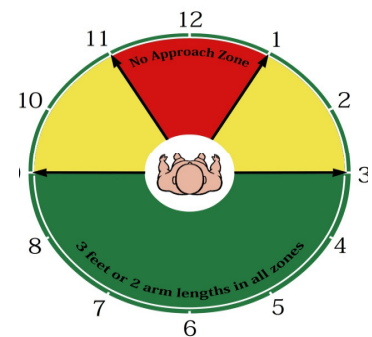
- access to client chart if possible – know what the client's "triggers" are that may initiate or even escalate a situation – know the care plan for that individual
- communication from other workers/supervisor on client status
- can the client see and hear adequately
- are any changes in the client's behaviour documented and are changes communicated effectively to the circle of care

WAVE Approach Zones

Green = You can approach me as I had a good sleep, I'm in a good mood and feeling pretty good. It is safe to approach me.

Yellow = I am feeling a little bit off today but it still may be safe to approach keeping in mind you are keeping your guard up. Be cautious.

Red = Do not approach me as I am having pain I did not sleep well. I don't want anyone to come any closer. Your safety is at risk!!!!



6 Steps to Safety

1. make eye contact with the individual (if appropriate)
2. choose which yellow zone of the individual you will be approaching on – remember the dominant side for you and non-dominant for the individual
3. determine safe distance – stay away 3 feet minimum or 2 arms lengths of a person until you have taken the time to do a proper assessment and you have determined that it is safe for you to approach
4. angle your body to the side – this will minimize target areas in the event the individual strikes out
5. talk with your hands - keep your hands visible so the individual knows you're not hiding anything
6. use assessment process of the individual – before you start your task as well as while you are performing your task

Key principles

- Three P's may also greatly decrease the possible chances that a person would be involved in a physical confrontation:
 - Positive - having a positive attitude toward our job and the people we work with, clients and co-workers, will help to properly and objectively assess our clients and those we work with.
 - Professional - taking responsibility for our actions.
 - Productive - at work we are being paid to do a job. We should do it well and to the best of our ability so we can go home at the end of the day and be proud of what we did.

Number one rule...whether you are at work, at the mall, on a busy street - always be aware of your surroundings. That means be aware of what is within your immediate area that could cause you direct harm. This could be an item, a person, a vehicle, etc.

Trust your instincts: if you have a sense that something is not quite right, it usually is an indication something is wrong. This requires a constant awareness of your surroundings.

Watch out for complacency (familiarity): over time we may lose our sense of awareness when we become so used to our actions that they're automatic. We stop thinking about associated risks and therefore become complacent – we let our guard down – we may not be as concerned about a risk as we should be.

Your safety is 100% your responsibility and only you can keep yourself safe.

5 Safety Scans for Community Workers**1. While driving to a location**

- When close to the area, if any threats are seen you have the due diligence and/or right to drive away.

2. Before exiting the safety of your vehicle

- While still in the safety of your running vehicle you should complete another scan of the area.

3. Exiting vehicle and before closing door

- Standing by the open door to your vehicle, perform another scan of the immediate area. When standing, your height and angle provides a different visual perspective than when sitting in your vehicle. This process continues to provide protection and a safe exit if required.

4. Walking in to meet client

- Use your senses to determine if it is safe to proceed. Are there any unusual noises, such as dogs barking, people yelling, items being broken? Perhaps unusual smells are present.

5. While meeting and assessing client

- Complete an assessment of the client and the environment prior to entering the dwelling, and continue to assess during the time you are there as things could change rapidly.

Technique Tips

Techniques are taught during the classroom portion of WAVE and require a return demonstration from each participant. The intended use of these tips is to provide a basic reminder of the techniques that are taught in WAVE. Review and practice the techniques to ensure a good understanding. Perfect practice makes perfect.

WAVE techniques need to be performed with smooth, fluid movement to be effective. The individual assaulting you would have less of a chance to react and assault you again if you're motions are smooth and fluid when breaking away. Practice the techniques until you're very comfortable using them.

In addition to WAVE techniques:

- communicate with the individual who may be pinching or have a hold of your arm. Calmly and assertively say "let go". Depending upon the individual, this direct order could be enough to have them release their grip on you.
- maintain your self-control and keep breathing. Don't give in to your sense to panic – stay focused. When you stop breathing you may stop thinking – your brain needs oxygen to function properly.
- only **match the level of response to the level of assault** to adequately break away – do not use excessive force.

Technique Summary

Release from pinch

- if pinched on your arm, use your free arm to release the pinch by sliding it quickly up your arm toward your shoulder
- if pinched in an area where you're not able to use the "sliding" technique (such as your chest), use the back of your wrist to forcefully raise up the individual's wrist

Release from arm grab

- one hand of the individual is grabbing your arm: make a fist to tighten your arm muscle, note where the gap/open area is between the individual's thumb and pointer finger, then with a quick inward twisting motion of your hand and arm, go through the gap/open area to release the grab
- two hands of the individual are on your arm:
 - if both the individual's hands are **facing the same way** (i.e. both thumbs are pointing in the same direction), the technique above should be adequate. If more force is necessary to break away, use your free hand to give you more leverage (by placing it on your other hand), plus your backward weight transfer, to pull away.
 - if each of the individual's hands are **facing opposite directions** (i.e. thumbs are pointing in the opposite direction), the technique above should be adequate.
- giving the individual a short, quick push prior to pulling away may also assist with releasing a grab

Release from hair pull

- the individual is **facing you**: place both your hands on top of the individual's hand(s), use enough pressure (it may not take much pressure) on the individual's hand(s) to release the grasp of your hair; take a step back while bending forward. As the individual's hand(s) release their grip, push your hands down and away, straighten up and shift your weight to your back foot – allowing you to turn and escape if the situation warrants. This action is done in a smooth, fluid movement.
- the individual is **behind you**: place both your hands on top of the individual's hand(s), use enough pressure (it may not take much pressure) on the individual's hand(s) to release the grasp of your hair; take a step forward while bending around to face them. This move will turn their hand(s) upside down and will help to release their grasp of your hair. With your hands still on theirs, raise your body up and this should release their grasp of your hair. Care must be taken during this technique as it is likely to cause pain in the wrist of the individual. This action is done in a smooth, fluid movement.

Release from two-handed choke

- **choked from the front**: put your palms together like you were praying, keep your forearms at a 45 degree angle (elbows out). Quickly raise your forearms up between the individual's arms to start to break the choke. At the same time your hands should be coming apart, starting with the fingers, and then spread your arms apart to release the client's hands from your neck. This action is done in a smooth, fluid movement.
- **choked from behind**: raise your arms up high above your head; turn to face the client while bringing your arms down, across the individual's arms, to release the grasp. This action is done in a smooth, fluid movement.

Cover up

Protect your vital organs during an assault:

- use your hands/forearms to cover the side/front/back of your head or any part of your body that you can
- turn your body away while raising your knee (closest to the individual) toward your chest. Use your thigh to provide protection. This action is done in a smooth, fluid movement. Use of this technique could put you off balance and result in injury to yourself – use this technique with caution.