

Keeping Field Staff Safe

*Preparedness, Effective
Communication, Situational Awareness
and Emotional Intelligence*

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Jacksonville, FL

Identification & Recruitment Conference

October 29, 2014



What's Wrong With This?



Agenda

- Activity: Safety of Community Workers' When Visiting Farms and Homes
 - Communication
 - Plan Ahead: Be Prepared
 - Situational Awareness and Emotional Intelligence
- Breaking Down the Topics Above
 - Safety of Community Workers Handout
 - De-escalation
- The Importance of Wellness

Field Safety

Preparedness

- Thinking through scenarios
- Having a plan to respond

Communication

- Verbal, Para Verbal, Nonverbal
- Importance of Debriefing

Awareness/Emotional Intelligence

- Constant observation

Safety is

PREPARED

thinking

Acting Safely is

REHEARSING

safe thinking

COMMUNICATION

IS KEY TO

STAFF SAFETY

With whom do we communicate?

How do we communicate?

Shout out answers!

COMMUNICATION

Awareness of ALL communication

- Verbal
- Para verbal (Rate, Tone, Pitch, Volume)
- Nonverbal

BODY LANGUAGE

- Pay attention to:
 - Eye contact
 - Facial Expressions
 - Signs of Nervousness / Anxiety / Anger
 - Clenching of fists
 - Position of hands
 - Sweating
 - Aggressive posturing & stance
 - Gross Motor Activity (**ACT 0 – 5 min.**)



HOW AND WHAT YOU COMMUNICATE

Be trustworthy and professional

Be visible in the community

Keep an open line of communication

Do not distribute personal phone numbers

Male voice on outgoing message?

Pay attention to your own behavior and of those around you

Preparedness = Planning Ahead

Always wear your seatbelt while driving

Prepare car with an all-weather emergency kit and make sure your car is up for the trip

Carry a charged cell phone, program your speed dial and memorize emergency numbers!

Consider carrying mace or pepper spray

Carry county and/or city maps, know your route, USE your GPS

Know the population that you work with

Take advantage of professional development opportunities

Awareness

Be aware of your surroundings

Lock your vehicles at all times; keep computer and confidential work documents in the trunk

Be aware of dangerous animals (i.e. dogs) that can attack without warning

Use common sense and pay attention to your instincts

If you identify imminent danger to self or others call 911 and leave the area

In the case of dangerous activities leave and then call your supervisor

PRACTICE SELF-AWARENESS

- What am I feeling?
- Be selective about personal disclosure
- Jewelry? Should I wear it?
- Displaying photos (by wallet / phone, etc.)
- Technological Safety – Cell phones & Laptops
 - (Passwords ; Stolen Identification)
- Social Networking
 - (FaceBook, Twitter, School Alumni Sites, etc.)

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DISCLOSURE

Intuition

- Gut Feelings
- Suspicion
- Apprehension
- Hunches
- Hesitation
- Persistent thoughts
- Wonder
- Curiosity
- Nagging Feelings

INSTINCTS

- Pay attention to your intuition (gut feeling)
- Pay attention to your feelings
- Pay attention to your thoughts
- What do you know about the client?
- What do you think the client is thinking?
- What do you think the client is feeling?

FIELD & HOME VISIT SAFETY



BE PREPARED

Prepare for what you are doing and know why you are doing it.

Pre-schedule home visits; verify individual(s) will be present same day

Arrive at home having prepared all paperwork, lesson plans etc.

No home visits after dark (unless prescheduled and accompanied)

Dress appropriately for the situation (clothes and footwear)

When possible, pre-determine any safety/risk factors for particular visit

Develop a personal plan of how you will react in a risky situation at a home

Phone charged & gas tank filled

Don't assume you are safe

COMMUNICATE

Be aware of any religious or political symbols that you may be wearing

Have pre-determined “code words” that can be used to indicate danger (also part of planning ahead)

Notify farm employer or manager of your presence

Knock and announce (non-threatening manner)

Be respectful at all times (even when you don't agree)

Be aware of cultural norms and non-verbal behavior
Understand impact of gender

Set behavioral limits: dress, attitude, language
Identify how and when communication should occur

Avoid providing personal information

Incident reports!

BE AWARE

Be aware of the areas in the neighborhood where help could be obtained if an emergency occurred

**Park in well-lit unobstructed area – beware farm vehicles!
Park in the direction you will be leaving**

Trust your instincts

Never enter a house with yelling, screaming, fire arms, drugs etc

**Doorsteps or awareness of nearest exit
keys and phone on hand**

No sitting on upholstered couches or furniture!!

Minimize distractions (i.e. cell phones)

Do not confront suspected drug activity – make a plan and leave!

If at all threatened - leave

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Approaching a Residence

Make note of unusual activity or people

Lock your vehicle

Walk in direct and safest path (lighting)

Keep eye on windows (noting movement)

Step to the side of the door when you knock

Stand away from windows

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Entering Residence

Make Note of unusual activity or people

Note animals and request dog(s) be put into another room with door closed or hitched outside away from exit path

Note weapons or potential weapons

Ask if there is anyone else in the residence

Pay Attention

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Exiting Residence

Make note of unusual activity or people

Note presence and location of animals

Maintain awareness of activity coming from the residence. Use your senses.

Take direct route to vehicle have car keys in hand

Observe vehicle (tires, etc.) for any hazards

Leave immediately – write notes in safe location

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

WHEN TO ABORT VISIT

If the purpose of the visit has been concluded

If you are being or feeling threatened

If your instincts and/or intuition prompts danger

REMEMBER YOU MUST REMAIN SAFE

YOU CAN

Request to meet elsewhere

Outside (weather permitting) Barn office

How to Deal with Anger

- Maintain good eye contact
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Speak softly
- Breathe deeply
- Listen
- Be patient, allow them time to express themselves
- Respect their opinion
- Be flexible, offer alternatives
- Be firm, if no alternatives

Know and Pay Attention to YOUR REACTIONS

- How do you feel, mentally and physically, when you know a person is angry?
- Recognize your reactions and prepare a response
 - To their anger
 - And to your reactions to that anger

WHAT IS ESCALATION?

- to increase in intensity, magnitude, etc.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF ESCALATION?

How to DE-ESCALATE

- Affect first, acknowledge their feelings in a calm voice
 - “I can see you are upset”
- Use supportive eye contact
- Don’t crowd the person
- Use supportive body gestures
- Don’t advise the individual to “relax”

How to DE-ESCALATE

- Use active listening
- Allow the person to vent – within reason
- Redirect frustration/anger by stating “process, system, policy” rather than at YOU
- Give clear directions
- Set behavioral limits
- Use person’s name
- Use “defensive” hands posturing

EVADE & ESCAPE

Your safety is Vital

If you find yourself in a situation that you feel your safety is in jeopardy :

Terminate the Visit and Leave

Know When and How to Abort

- How to disengage
 - Simply state that it appears that now is not a good time to work on whatever you are doing with the individual and schedule to meet with them at another time.
- When to ask for help
- **The importance of debriefing**
 - Its intent is to consider **why something may have happened**, brainstorm **how it could have been managed differently** and **reflect on the emotional impact** it may have had on participants. It is something that should not be skipped.

KEY INDICATORS OF VIOLENCE

- HISTORY = FUTURE
- If there is a Change in Behavior i.e. ANGER
 - 0 to 60 minutes prior to violent act
- If there is an increase in GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITY (GMA) throwing, kicking...
 - 0 to 5 minutes prior to violent act

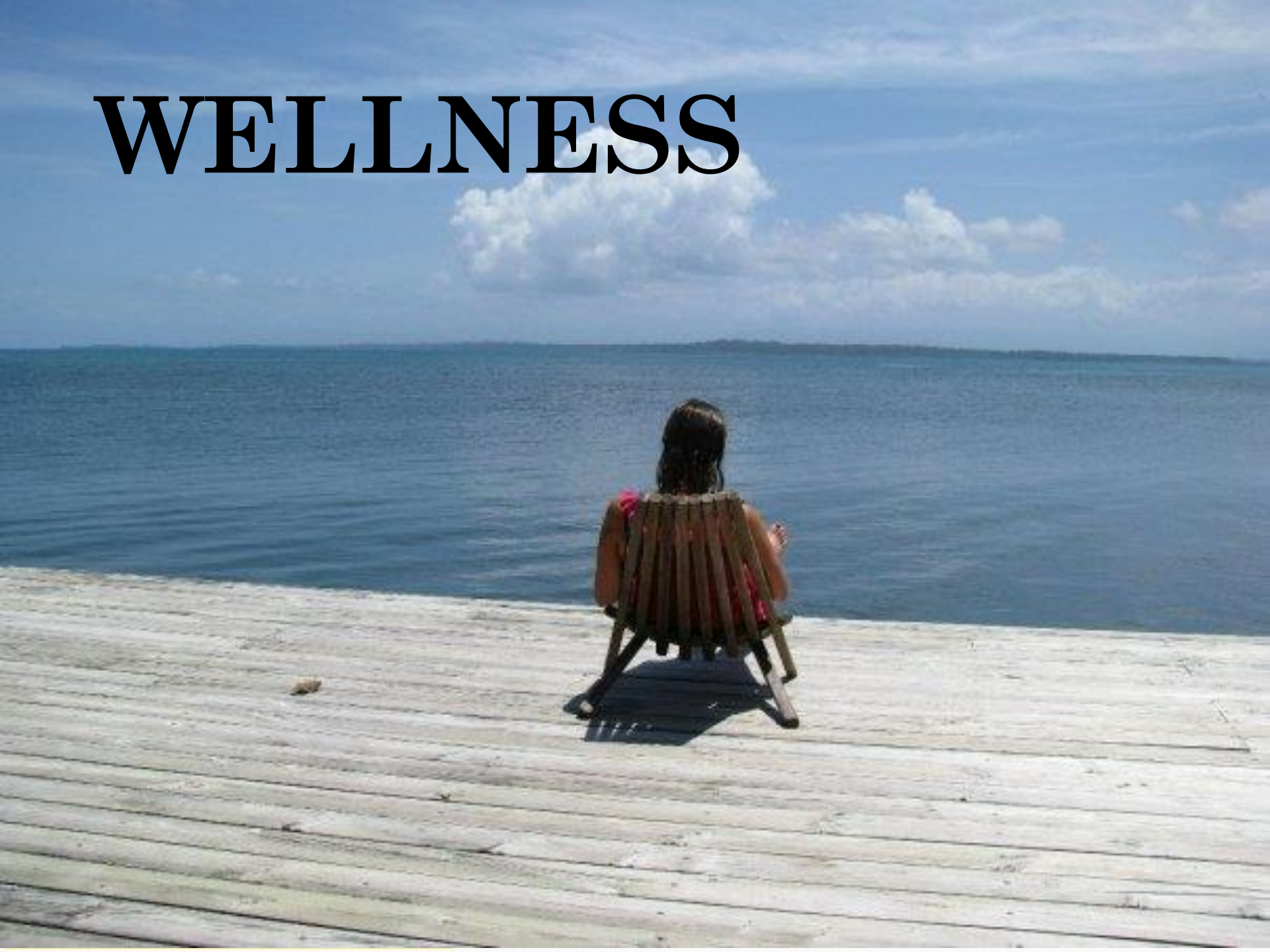
Most stressful part of your job?

Decompression techniques

One thing you do well

One thing you could do better

WELLNESS



What do we mean by “Wellness” ?

Keeping one self in good to excellent –

- Physical Condition
- Emotional/Psychological Condition
- Spiritual Condition

Physical, Emotional & Psychological Risks to Field Staff

- Field risks (uneven terrain, faulty stairs, human assaults, animal bites, etc.)
- Secondary Trauma / psychological
 - How others traumatic events impact you
- Routine pressure & stresses of the job
 - Deadlines and Commitments
 - Client Issues
 - Office Relationships
- Deaths of staff members and/or clients
- Stress on Personal Family Members

Basic Pathways to Wellness

1. Sleep
2. Complete Relaxation (while awake)
3. Aerobic Activity
4. Play (one hour each day)
5. Hugs - positive, physical touch or contact
6. Something meaningful and exciting
7. Good nutrition
8. Debriefing/Collegueship

The Importance of Debriefing

- Gets the information out
- Staff Support
- Team approach
- Solution Oriented

Best Practices in the Field

Decision to transport

Evaluate:

Need

Inherent risk

Ask yourself:

Medical emergency?

Function of my job?

Do you need to get authorization from supervisor?

Thank you & Stay Safe!

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