

# Advocacy

"The training Teri received taught social workers how to protect the *client* in a situation, not about *protecting the social worker*." -Matt Zenner

## Worker Safety Links

- NASW has easy access to emailing your legislators at [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org) see: Quick Links/ Advocacy/ Legislative Alerts and Updates/ Protect Our Nation's Social Workers
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees: [www.afscme.org/health/faq-viol.htm](http://www.afscme.org/health/faq-viol.htm)
- American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) [www.aphsa.org](http://www.aphsa.org)
- Adult Protective Services [www.apsnetwork.org](http://www.apsnetwork.org)
- Kentucky Safety Forum [www.utc.eku.edu/safety](http://www.utc.eku.edu/safety)
- Federation of Public Employees: [www.AFT.org](http://www.AFT.org)
- National Alliance for Safe Schools: [www.safeschools.org](http://www.safeschools.org)
- Minnesota Center against Violence and Abuse: [www.mincava.umn.edu](http://www.mincava.umn.edu)
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation: [www.hewlett.org](http://www.hewlett.org)

For further information on SAFETY ON THE JOB, check out these sites:

- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: [www.cdc.gov/injury/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/index.html)
- National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety: [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)
- Office of Personnel Management: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)  
(opm/workplace/index/html-ssi)
- Occupational Safety & Health Administration: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)
- Use keyword: workplace violence for their safety guideline [www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3148.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3148.pdf)
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics: [www.stats.bls.gov](http://www.stats.bls.gov) See Fatalities/ Survey of Workplace Violence Prevention 2005 link
- California OSHA site on Workplace Security: [www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/dosh\\_publications/index.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/dosh_publications/index.html)
- University of Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center: [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iprc](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/iprc)

"Social workers who are prepared with the resources and skills to meet the unexpected are in the best position to protect themselves and, ultimately, to provide the best services for their clients."

--Christina Newhill, Ph.D., author of *Client Violence in Social Work Practice* (2003).

(This first page is now a handout I use, 7/09)

In 1996, the NASW Massachusetts Chapter's Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence against Social Workers revised and published *Safety Guidelines for Social Workers*. They recommended that every agency and individual practitioner develop safety guidelines addressing prevention, intervention and aftermath procedures. Schools of social work were encouraged to incorporate these issues as well. (See [www.naswma.org](http://www.naswma.org))

Food for Thought...

Given the fact that over a decade has passed since the both 1996 OSHA and NASW-Massachusetts guidelines were published, ask yourself this: Have these recommendations been enacted in your agency or practice? Is your local school of social work offering any training in personal safety for social work practitioners or students? How many more professionals in your state will be victimized before your state enacts protection laws? What are we going to do about it? See "ESD for SOW" pg. 37-39 for more.

Other links to blogs, articles...

Teri Zenner Social Worker Safety Act:

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h111-1490>

Kentucky 2007 Safety Forum: [www.utc.eku.edu/safety](http://www.utc.eku.edu/safety)

North Carolina Family and Children's Resources:

[http://www.practicenotes.org/vol3\\_no2.htm](http://www.practicenotes.org/vol3_no2.htm)

Social Worker prn: <http://blog.swprn.com/blog/?Tag=social+worker+safety>

The New Social Worker Online: <http://blog.socialworker.com/> . See also the following safety articles:

[http://www.socialworker.com/home/Feature\\_Articles/General/Safety\\_First : Paying Heed to and Preventing Professional Risks/](http://www.socialworker.com/home/Feature_Articles/General/Safety_First_Paying_Heed_to_and_Preventing_Professional_Risks/) and

[http://www.socialworker.com/home/Feature\\_Articles/General/Protecting\\_t he Protectors: Am I Really Safe?/](http://www.socialworker.com/home/Feature_Articles/General/Protecting_the_Protectors:_Am_I_Really_Safe?/) .

AASECT Newsletter:

<http://www.aasect.org/PDFs/Aug%2006%20FINAL.pdf>

Herald Dispatch, West Virginia:

<http://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/x1724959940/Dangers-of-social-work-gain-attention>

NASW West Virginia Legislative Statement :

<http://www.socialworkblog.org/pressroom/index.php/2008/08/04/nasw-wv-statement-social-worker-brenda-lee-yeagers-murder/>

"In combining the two fields of personal safety instruction and social work practice my goal is simple—diminish fear and increase confidence for social workers by providing personal safety and wellness training so that we may better serve our clients, our communities, and ourselves." Janet Nelson, MSW, LCSW, 2003. Everyday Self Defense: [www.everydayselfdefense.com](http://www.everydayselfdefense.com)

### **Advocacy Ideas-**

- Develop your own risk assessment tool for your workplace given your specific demographics.
- Develop a model to predict violence: Assess before initial visit and post-initial visit.
- Ask yourself: What do I need for adequate safety on the job? Develop a plan.
- Check the laws in your state. Do a legal review of self-defense laws.
- Email your representatives and let them know your concern. [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org) makes it easy!
- Amend **legal penalties** for assault
- "**Hazardous pay**" for case and social workers
- Engage local and state NASW chapters to take up this issue
- State workers and local employee unions combine efforts
- Promoting partnerships between the Sheriff, Police, State Troopers
- Partnering with law enforcement
- Letters to the Editor
- Blogging, twittering
- Social service agencies' backing
- Grass roots efforts