

INSIGHT

Personal Safety Australia Newsletter

Oct - Nov 2007

FEATURES

PSA: A Champion for Children

Workplace Safety Made Simple

Communication During Conflict:

Child protection and empowerment series No.2

OUR MISSION

Personal Safety Australia is a Brisbane-based personal safety consultancy with a mission to equip, empower and inspire individuals, organisations and their clients to maximise their safety, enhance their wellbeing and advocate for the safety and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable groups.

OUR COMMITMENT

As part of *Personal Safety Australia's* commitment to equipping, empowering and inspiring those most vulnerable, 10% of all course and presentation fees are donated to charities supporting children living in extreme poverty.

PSA: A CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN

Personal Safety Australia is excited to announce we have recently become a **Corporate Champion for Children** with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. This development comes as part of *Personal Safety Australia's* commitment to equipping, empowering and inspiring those most vulnerable with 10% of all income donated to charities supporting children living in extreme poverty.

Did you know?

- Nearly 11 million children die each year before their fifth birthday - about 30,000 children a day – mostly from preventable causes
- 121 million primary school-age children are not in school
- An estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year
- Malaria kills an African child every 30 seconds

For the past 60 years UNICEF has helped improve the lives of children in developing countries, ensuring they survive and thrive all the way to adulthood. Examples of their work include:

- Providing education and protection for children against the spread and effects of HIV/AIDS
- The purchase and distribution of vaccines and inoculation of children around the world against diseases such as polio and measles.
- Getting children into school
- Creating a protective environment for children that fortifies them against abuse and exploitation including child labour and prostitution
- Ensuring pregnant women have access to proper nutrition, prenatal and delivery care

UNICEF Australia relies entirely on voluntary donations. Worldwide, 93% of funds raised go directly to the field where over 84% of UNICEF staff work. Donate online: www.unicef.org.au/partners.asp

In the words of Nelson Mandela, 'Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made, and can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings'. Is there something you can do to help those in need?

SAFETY SNIPPET: BODY LANGUAGE

Offenders target vulnerability, in other words those lacking confidence and least likely to resist an attack. Body language goes a long way to portraying our vulnerability or strength. By adopting strong, confident body language, such as walking with a purpose, head up, shoulders back and meeting the gaze of passers-by, you are far less likely to be targeted by a would-be attacker.

OUR SERVICES

Children's Safety:

Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshops:

Equipping parents, carers and those working with children with key information to empower and maximise the safety of children. Topics include: awareness of risks; indicators of abuse; and essential safety and empowerment messages.

Protective Behaviours Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Equipping participants with communication, problem-solving and networking skills to relay to their children and clients to enable them to feel safe and to take effective action in any threatening situation.

Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Workshops:

Increasing awareness and enhancing understanding of the surrounding issues to enable participants to recognise and report child abuse and to implement preventative measures to protect children in their care.

Child Protection Policy Development:

Maximising the safety of children in care and providing a supportive work environment for staff and volunteers by implementing policies and procedures that: minimise access for child abuse offenders; and deal appropriately with abuse or suspicion of abuse that may occur.

WORKPLACE SAFETY MADE SIMPLE

Dealing with difficult and aggressive customers is a primary safety concern facing many Australian workers. These people have the potential to anger, upset, depress and stress us, not to mention pose a significant safety threat to ourselves, our colleagues and other clients. This article will outline some of the contributing factors to people becoming difficult or aggressive. It will identify a range of high risk work environments and suggest a range of security measures to consider.

It is important to acknowledge the various contributing factors which impact on whether someone is likely to behave in a difficult or aggressive manner. These include **client factors** such as a client's individual expectations of our service, their personal background, including history of violence and any past experiences with our organisation. **Organisational factors** include staffing levels, the induction and ongoing training of staff and the extent of clear aims, rules and regulations outlined for those seeking service. **External influences** include labour shortages, the reputation of our organisation in the community and perhaps a worsening financial situation of clients using our service.

While each of these factors impact on the likelihood a client will become difficult or aggressive, arguably the greatest influence is the **staff member** they deal with and the level of service provided. A skilled worker can diffuse a potentially explosive situation by tactically responding to the client using a range of risk assessment, communication and safety awareness skills while providing an excellent standard of customer service.

Those who work in a '**higher risk**' **environment** are particularly vulnerable and may require additional safety measures. These workers include those who deal directly with the public, lone workers, people who work at night or early mornings, off-site workers, those dealing with cash and workplaces located in a high crime area.

Depending on the particular workplace environment and the level of risk, **security measures** include duress alarms, a secure room to retreat to in an emergency, CCTV, drop safes or time delay safes, security personnel, mobile phones and two-way radios. Workplace procedures also play a vital part to ensuring worker safety including the use of code words, an awareness of escape routes, visual checks of off-site workers, known difficult client lists, phoning in after off-site appointments, and a range of cash management procedures.

Personal Safety Australia provides a one day '**Dealing with Difficult and Aggressive Clients Workshop**' designed to provide staff working in customer service roles with a range of risk assessment, communication and safety awareness skills to assist in maintaining their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and to provide an excellent standard of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients.

Workshop topics include tactical communication principles, risk assessments, key communication and problem-solving skills and handling specific customer profiles and incidents. Workshops are tailor-made to complement organisational policies and procedures at no extra cost.

For further information contact us via the details listed on page 4.

Women's Safety:

Women's Self Defence Courses:

Incorporating practical, non-strength related, physical self defence techniques and preventative and responsive safety strategies to gain defensive skills, maximise safety and increase confidence.

Workplace Safety:

Workplace Bullying Prevention Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Raising awareness of the workplace bully and dynamics of bullying in the workplace to address this behaviour appropriately and prevent it from occurring.

Dealing with Aggressive and Difficult Clients Workshops:

Equipping clients in customer service roles with a range of communication and problem-solving skills to maintain their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and provide an excellent standard of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients.

Safety for Everyone:

Personal Safety Seminars:

Incorporating preventative and reactive strategies to deal with any threat to one's safety including: at home, in the workplace, out and about, in the social scene, on public transport and in the car.

CHILD PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT SERIES COMMUNICATION DURING CONFLICT

The last edition of *Insight* featured the first of the Child Protection and Empowerment Series addressing the importance of effective communication with children. This edition will continue to explore this important topic, specifically addressing communication with children during conflict and how to avoid negative communication.

All families and relationships have conflicts at one time or another. While conflict can be upsetting, it need not be too disruptive. There are a number of things parents and teachers can do to smoothly navigate their way through conflict and to keep the lines of communication open with children. Here are some suggestions:

Work on one problem at a time: Bringing up a number of different issues at once can be very confusing and can cause all parties to lose sight of the real issues. Instead, focus on solving one problem at a time.

Look for creative ways to solve problems: There is usually more than one solution to any problem. Adults and children are encouraged to work together to find solutions that are agreeable to both parties. Learning to be flexible when solving a problem is a great tool for children.

Be polite: At times during the heat of an argument adults may say things to children that they would never say to another person. Hurtful comments are not quickly forgotten and can lower a child's self esteem. It is important for adults to treat children with the same amount of respect that they would show to any other person, even during times of conflict.

Use "I" messages: Expressing ourselves in terms of how we feel, in other words through "I" messages, is extremely beneficial - particularly during conflict. "I" messages are less threatening to children than using blame or accusations. For example, "I feel frustrated when you don't pick up your clothes" is less likely to meet resistance than "You never pick up after yourself". "I" messages show children how to express themselves assertively and to take responsibility for their actions.

Be willing to forgive: A golden opportunity to teach children to be forgiving is by doing so yourself.

Avoiding Negative Communication

Negative communication plants seeds of mistrust and low self-esteem in children. In order to promote good relationships, it is important for parents and teachers to be aware of and correct any negative forms of communication they may use, including:

Nagging and lecturing: This negative communication can cause children to stop listening or become defensive and resentful. Instead of repeating instructions or warnings, adults should use a consequence if children do what they have been told not to (e.g. timeout).

Interrupting: It is common courtesy to allow an adult OR child to finish what they are saying before speaking. Children who feel they can't get a word in may stop communicating altogether.

Criticising: Children often see criticisms of their thoughts, feelings, ideas or of themselves as direct attacks, often resulting in lowered self-esteem. When necessary, adults should criticise the behaviour rather than the child.

Words of Wisdom



Henry Ford

(1863 – 1947)

Inventor, entrepreneur,
visionary, leader

"Enthusiasm is the yeast that makes your hopes shine to the stars. Enthusiasm is the sparkle in your eyes, the swing in your gait. The grip of your hand, the irresistible surge of will and energy to execute your ideas."

"Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs."

"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

Dwelling on the past: Once a problem or conflict is resolved, it should not be mentioned again. Adults who constantly bring up past mistakes are teaching children to hold grudges.

Trying to control children through guilt: This involves trying to make a child feel guilty because of their thoughts, feelings and/or actions. Adults who use guilt to control children may do great harm to their relationship with them.

Sarcasm: The use of sarcasm hurts children and is never a useful tool for adults trying to effectively communicate with children.

Telling your children how to solve problems: Adults who tell children how to solve their problems, without allowing them to at least have input into solutions, can lead children to believe that they have no control over their lives. They may also believe that their parents/teachers don't trust them and may resent and resist what they are told to do.

Putting children down: Put downs come in many different forms such as name calling, ridiculing, judging and blaming. All are detrimental to effective communication and often result in children feeling rejected, unloved and inadequate.

Using threats: Threats are rarely effective and often make a child feel powerless and resentful.

Lying: Adults should try to be open and honest with children, which will encourage openness and honesty in return. Lying to a child, for whatever reason, can breed mistrust.

Denying children's feelings: Children need to have their feelings supported and understood by significant adults in their life, even when they may seem trivial or unnecessary. For example, a parent who feels their child shouldn't feel sad about losing a soccer game shouldn't say so. A more supportive comment would be "I know you really wanted to win. It's hard to lose sometimes."

The importance of open relationships with children is one of the key strategies to maximise children's safety outlined in *Personal Safety Australia* 'Empowering Children to Stay Safe Workshops'. For more information or to make a booking please contact us.

Source: Addison County Parent/Child Centre 20076, Parent/Child Communication



CONTACT US

Please contact us if you:

- would like further information regarding PSA services;
- wish to subscribe or unsubscribe to *Insight*;
- have a personal safety question or topic of interest you would like included in a future edition of *Insight*.

Tel/Fax: (07) 3379 4475

Email: admin@personalsafetyaust.com

www.personalsafetyaust.com