**Guidance for Home Visit Safety**

The purpose of a home visit safety plan is to increase awareness of safety issues that may arise during home visits with research participants. While most home visits will be routine, there is always potential that safety issues may arise during a home visit. The procedures that follow should be observed for all home visits with families participating in a research project.

Risk Assessment

Where a home visit is the most suitable option for the family and the researcher, risk must be assessed. Whenever possible two members of the researcher team should conduct the home visit together. The following points should be taken into account when considering a home visit:

*Prior to the visit:*

1. Are there any travel issues *(i.e., is the travel to a known/safe area, during daylight hours)*?
2. Has there been any prior, likely threat of violence *(i.e., unpredictable and/or aggressive behaviour)*?
3. Is it likely that the interview topic may produce strong feeling(s) in the respondents?

*When you arrive at the home:*

1. Is the home environment safe and clean *(i.e., there are no aggressive pets, evidence of drug use, accessible firearms)*?
2. Do the participant(s) and the researchers have the necessary space to complete the interview / assessment?

Protocol for Home Visits

1. Before the visit the following information will be reviewed with the researcher conducting the home visit:
   1. Cell number of researcher conducting the home visit and contact information for a member of the research team at the organization.
   2. The name of the participant(s) and/or the parent
   3. The address of the family
   4. Date of the assessment and expected length of time
2. The researcher visiting the home carry as few personal variables as possible (e.g., purse/valuables)
   1. Suggested that a briefcase is used and place any necessary valuables in the briefcase.
3. Dress professionally and functionally for home visits. Make sure that the researcher visiting the home wears clothes and shoes that provide for ease of movement.
4. The researcher visiting the home should always carry their work identification badge and show it to the participant when entering the home.
5. The researcher visiting the home should guard their privacy by ensuring that they do not provide personal information to the participant.
6. Before entering the home, the researcher should text or call a member of the study team (i.e., principal investigator, research coordinator, other staff member) to indicate that they are about to start the home visit.
7. The researcher should leave their phone on and easily accessible during the home visit; however should keep the phone on silent.
8. Once at the home, the researcher should access the environment:
   1. Are there any signs of other people present, pets or animals, evidence of drug use?
   2. Is there is anything that makes them feel unsafe? If so, they should leave immediately and offer to reschedule.
9. The researcher should not remain at a visit where a participant, parent, a family visitor(s) or family member(s) are intoxicated or abusive.
10. The researcher visiting the home should be mindful of others in the home for confidentiality and safety reasons.
11. Always conduct interviews/ assessment(s) in the common areas of the house; best choices are the living room or the dining room, the kitchen should always be a second choice. Interviews and/or assessments should never be conducted in the bedrooms
12. The researcher visiting the home should always be aware of the exit routes.
13. Be sensitive and aware of any signs of a change in the behaviour of a participant, parent, child or other person in the home.

After the visit

The researcher visiting the home should:

1. Notify their research team *(principal investigator, research coordinator, etc.)* that the visit is completed.
2. Have car keys in hand before leaving to avoid delays in entering the car. Car keys should be kept on their person at all times. The researcher may want to carry a second set of keys as backup.