



INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZERS™

Presenter:

Anne Blumer, CPO®

Institute for Professional Organizers

www.instituteprofessionalorganizers.com

anne@instituteprofessionalorganizers.com

Course Description

This presentation will help you to become aware of and prepare for the potential personal safety issues and hazards that you might encounter working as an organizer.

Course Objectives

1. Understand potential hazards working with clients
2. Increase personal safety awareness
3. Gain insight into how to work safely with your clients and in their environment

Presenter Information

Anne has decades of training experience including teaching hundreds of participants to become professional organizer business owners and business professionals on merger and acquisition procedures in the high-tech industry. Her experience as a business owner and founder of SolutionsForYou, Inc. Organizing Services has given her skills, knowledge, and the ability to provide complete and *comprehensive* training for individuals that will enable them to successfully operate their professional organizer business. Anne is among the inaugural 200 Professional Organizers in the world to receive the Certified Professional Organizer CPO® Designation from the Board of Certification for Professional Organizers (BCPO). Additionally, Anne holds a certificate of training from the Coach Approach for Organizers™ and from the ICD a Level II ADD Specialist Certificate and Level II Chronic Disorganization Specialist Certificate.

NAPO's Safety Position Statement

[excerpt]

If a NAPO member encounters a situation deemed to involve *unlawful* conduct, an appropriate course of action would be to contact the authorities.

If a NAPO member encounters a situation deemed to be *unsafe but not unlawful* and desires to share certain information one-on-one with another organizers, the following should be considered:

- Information shared should be objective (not subjective).
- Information shared should be factual (true and complete).
- Sharing untruthful information puts the reporting individual at risk of a claim of defamation.
- Sharing even truthful information could put the reporting individual at risk of a claim of invasion of privacy.

Personal Safety

Case Study - What hazards do you see and don't see?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Dangers/Hazards

- Back and neck injury from lifting
- Falling down stairs, especially when carrying objects
- Falling off a ladder
- Tripping
- Objects [stacked] falling on you/client
- Mold
- Dust
- Temperature-related illnesses such as heat stroke
- Bug bites – fleas and spiders
- Bugs – bed bugs, cock roaches
- Rodents - Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) transmitted from rodents (deer mice)
- Aggressive animals
- Infectious Diseases
- Needle sticks
- Compassion fatigue

Personal Safety Points

(Resource: Let Me Show You the Basement by Debbie Stanley)

- Consider taking a self-defense class
- Use a separate phone number for your business if you work out of your home and a post office box instead of your home address.
- Have your cell phone turned on and, on your body
- Familiarize yourself with the client's location and surroundings
- Be able to leave your bag/purse (have your keys on your body)
- Wear clothing and shoes you can run easily in
- Always let someone know where you are by sharing your calendar either online or paper copy at your home office
- Have safety buddies – who are yours? _____
- Debbie Stanley's your likely story
 - Make it believable but not too personal, so don't mention family members or names
 - Make it something that does not make you appear more vulnerable; for example, don't fake an asthma attack
 - Don't make it something your client could help you with such as giving you Tums or aspirin

- Avoid an excuse that refers to the client’s discomfort such as, “you seem unfocused today”
- Make it urgent
- Keep it simple and uncomplicated
- Leave something by the entry door
- Always walk behind your client and locate exits
- Do not reveal too much personal information
- Do not accept food or beverages from clients
- Carry dog treats
- Do not wear excessive jewelry
- Consider wearing your hair up if it is long
- Trust your instincts “Intuition is knowing without knowing why”

Working Safely with Clients

- Know your own and your client’s physical limitations when lifting, reaching, bending, climbing stairs, or working in extreme heat/cold environments
- Eat and take medications before session (both you and your client)
- Take breaks (both you and your client)
- Stay hydrated (both you and your client)
- First aid kit (include Benadryl and other items for your personal allergies/conditions)
- Keep area clear of tripping hazards
- Wear protective clothing (both you and your client)

Protective Gear for Your Workbag

- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Disposable shoe covers | ✓ Benadryl |
| ✓ Medical mask or N95 mask | ✓ Inhaler if you have asthma |
| ✓ Gloves – latex and heavy work gloves | ✓ Flashlight |
| ✓ Goggles or protective eye gear | ✓ Sunscreen and cooling wraps– if you are working outside in the heat |
| ✓ Hand sanitizer | ✓ In case of Emergency Contact Information |
| ✓ Hat (think cobwebs and spiders) | |
| ✓ Hazmat suit or painter’s coveralls | |
| ✓ Insect Repellent DEET-based | |

Next Steps

1. Equip your work bag with protective gear
2. Identify three safety buddies and discuss their role with them
3. Create and practice your “likely story”
4. Take a self-defense course
5. Learn how to lift properly

Resources

Books

DeBecker, Gavin, *The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence*. Little, Brown & Co., 1997

Institute for Challenging Disorganization, *The ICD Guide to Challenging Disorganization: For Professional Organizers*. Institute for Challenging Disorganization, 2012

Puls, Chris. *Safe Home Visits*. Powerful information you can use immediately to make your work inside the client’s home much safer, 2006

Stanley, Debbie. *Let Me Show You the Basement*. Thoughts In Order Counseling and Consulting, 2011

Educational Opportunities

Institute For Professional Organizers

www.instituteprofessionalorganizers.com

