

## In Home-Based Services

### Advantages

- Patients are seen on their turf – in their real lives
- Opportunity to observe the conditions patients live in
- Can treat or intervene in patient's environment
- Understanding the patient's environment

### Boundaries

- **General**
  - Home visits present a more complex set of boundaries
  - Home visits require more flexibility from facilitator s
- **Space**
  - Where treatment takes place: Living room, bedroom, porch, backyard, nearby park, library, school, church, or trail.
  - Important to consider what is around the treatment area
  - Physical space - What is conducive, what is prohibitive for productive work? For healthy relationships?
- **Role**
  - Interventionist may be viewed not only as a interventionist, but also as a guest or friend: Guest needs to be attended to and served vs. facilitator 's role to attend to client
  - Facilitator s should avoid being perceived as rude if they refuse a snack or drink
  - If one eats with the family or is served coffee or tea, it may look more social than professional
  - More informal conversation (small talk) in home-based therapy in comparison with office-based therapy is normal
- **Time**
  - Ending on time or leaving on time can be tricky
  - Starting when the family is ready
  - Getting to home late due to traffic issues
  - Getting to home before the parents arrive from work
  - Avoiding later in the day visit due to violence in neighborhood
- **Who is Present**
  - Family members
  - Visiting neighbors
  - Neighbors who are curious
  - Unwelcomed intruder
  - It is impossible to predict or to always control who may be present
- **Self-Disclosure**
  - Being asked personal questions in the informal home setting is more common than in traditional medical settings
  - Refusing/accepting certain foods or drinks can be revealing

- Facilitator 's car or other mode of transport can be of interest to the client and can reveal personal information, such as if there is a baby seat in the car or the car is very new and expensive or very old and inexpensive
- **Food**
  - How to respond to clients inviting facilitator for a family meal?
  - How to respond to clients offering drinks?
  - With some cultures (Chinese, Middle-Eastern, Latino, African American) refusing to join a meal might be insulting
- **Alcohol**
  - How to respond when alcohol is being offered or served during meal or at cocktail time
  - How to respond when clients and other people in the home are drinking alcohol during the home visit
- **Gifts**
  - How to respond to gifts offered
  - Appropriate (children's drawings) and inappropriate gifts (expensive or otherwise inappropriate)
  - Refusing a gift can be insulting, diminish trust, and damage the therapeutic alliance
  - Differential between ethical vs. un-ethical and appropriate and inappropriate gifts
- **Interference**
  - Family members interfering
  - Uninvited neighbors, friends, strangers
  - Dogs barking, snarling or attacking
  - Radio, TV, Computers, Cell phones
- **Power**
  - Host (client) may be associated with power
  - Clients have more knowledge, freedom, mobility than the facilitator in the home setting
  - Clients can play the *power card* at home by:
    - Controlling TV, computers
    - Locking doors
    - Allowing children to disrupt or attack the facilitator
    - Ignoring the facilitator
    - Taking a phone call
    - Making the facilitator wait
    - Failing to orient the facilitator
    - Trying to make the facilitator feel uncomfortable or unwelcome

## **Confidentiality**

- **Non-Clients**
  - Non-patient family members may be present or within earshot
  - Neighbors may be in the vicinity
  - When facilitator need to interview the whole family together and individually in the course of one visit, complex issues arise

- **Sound Issues**
  - Normal rooms at home are not as private as professional offices
  - Meeting with clients may also be in a public place
- **General**
  - Confidentiality can easily be compromised in home-based therapy

## Security

- **Presence of Weapon/s**
  - How to respond when weapons (legal or illegal) are visible or displayed at the home?
- **Presence of Threat/s**
  - Threat in the neighborhood
  - Dangerously dirty or un-sanitized conditions
  - Vicious dog
  - Bug, lice, bed-bug infestation
- **Safety Measures**
  - Know your way in and out
  - Screen for weapons, vicious dogs & other safety issues
  - If necessary, park your car nearby & point it in the direction of an escape route rather than toward a dead end cul-de-sac

## Training & Supervision

- **Uniqueness of Home-Based Therapy**
  - This unique modality requires special training and ongoing support
  - Supervision, peer support and debriefing can reduce burnout
- **Debriefing**
  - Important in burnout prevention
  - Can reduce stress and absenteeism
  - Important after extreme or traumatic situations, preferable done on an ongoing (weekly) basis
  - Can be part of peer supervision or peer support group
- **Facilitator s Must Learn To**
  - Be more flexible
  - Increase capacity to be light on their feet and respond appropriately to new, unusual and surprising situations, demands and occurrences
  - Present calm, secured and self-assured
  - Protect against burnout
- **Training**
  - Must prepare new comers for the complexities
  - New workers shadowing experienced ones is an excellent way to introduce the line of work and train new facilitator s
  - Senior and new facilitator s going together as a team is one of the more effective way to train new facilitators
  - Lack of training can put the worker or facilitator in harms way