

Service-Learning & Student Safety

General Safety Tips

- Travel to and from the service site with another person, if possible.
- While riding in your car, be aware of your surroundings and keep your doors locked. Avoid parking in dark or isolated areas. Lock your car.
- While walking to and from your car, try to take the safest, most well-lit route.
- Do not leave valuable items unattended in your car. Place expensive items such as cameras, packages, and even text books in the locked trunk.
- Walk confidently and alertly with your keys in your hand and personal items held close to your body.
- Do not bring expensive items or large sums of money into the service site.
- Do not leave personal items unattended.
- Follow any sign-in or other security measures required by the agency when you enter the service site.

Dos & Don'ts

Below are a list of dos and don'ts that are appropriate for most service-learning assignments. Your instructor and/or your community partner might have additional guidelines or rules, so be sure to know what they are and adhere to them.

DO

- Determine the location of the site, where to park, and where to enter before your first visit to the site.
- Know who will be providing initial on-site orientation and ask for this orientation (site rules, etc) when you arrive for your first visit.
- Follow any and all sign-in procedures of the site every time you visit.
- Educate yourself about the agency and the population it serves.
- Know your site supervisor and his or her role.
- Become familiar with the layout of the site, such as the location of the office, restrooms, etc.
- Dress comfortably, neatly, and appropriately. (If your agency has a dress code, follow it.)
- Arrive and leave on time.
- Call if you will be late or absent.
- If you are working regularly with a small number of clients (such as in tutoring), explain to them how frequently you will visit and how long your service will last.
- Be kind, courteous, and helpful.
- Try to be flexible.
- Respect the privacy and boundaries of clients. (Don't ask questions that are too personal; be cautious when displaying affection.)
- Respect the confidentiality of everyone you work with.
- Ask for help when you're in doubt.
- Act as if you are a guest in someone else's home, and learn their rules and traditions.

DON'T

- Offer your home as a shelter to clients.
- Give your phone number or address to clients.
- Leave your personal belongings where others may be tempted to take them.
- Wear excessive or expensive jewelry.
- Exchange money or gifts with a client.
- Talk to or tolerate verbal or non-verbal exchanges of a sexual nature (or that might be perceived as sexual with a client).
- Give a client a ride in a personal vehicle.
- Report to your service site under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Form judgments quickly—you may not know the whole story.