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Promoting Safety Awareness

By Caitlin Bootsma

When is the last time you looked at your place of work and assessed it for any safety risks? Whether you're in a home office or in a workplace setting, or, the volunteer environment, it is important to take stock of what could be improved.

The first part of safety awareness seems obvious—to pay attention. A good way to remember to assess safety regularly is to mark your calendar to do so. You can pencil in a time to do a complete annual audit or schedule regular recurring tasks like "check air filter"; "make sure cords aren't a hazard"; and "replace batteries in the fire alarm."



The second step is identifying areas that could potentially be unsafe. If your workplace is in under construction, then the physical hazards are obvious. But if you work in another industry, the safety risks may be more subtle. Here are a few categories to examine:

- **Cleanliness:** Are surfaces and floors kept clean? Are there areas that go unused and need a deeper cleaning more frequently?
- **Structural risks:** Is there mold or mildew in the building? Are there any windows that are stuck?
- **Fire:** Does your workplace meet fire safety codes? Is your fire alarm working? Do you have alternative routes to exit the room or building if one exit is blocked?
- **Physical Obstacles:** Is furniture placed in an unsafe way? Are there better ways to arrange things to avoid injury or lack of access?
- **Vehicles:** Do company cars pass inspection? Are there maintenance issues that need to be addressed?

The third step is, of course, taking the next step to address these issues. This is especially important when children are interacting with us in the workplace, or volunteer environment. These areas may be things you can fix yourself or issues that should be taken to a supervisor. What a great time to ensure that there is a process in place to properly report and address safety issues.

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How can you journey with someone who has experienced abuse?

- By just listening to them.
- Praying for (or with) them.
- Reaching out to spend time with them.
- More than one of the above.
- I'm not sure, or I haven't thought about it.

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