



SESSION 3: Housing

OBJECTIVES

1. To familiarize clients with their new home.
2. To provide an understanding of how to use household appliances.
3. To provide an overview of home safety.
4. To teach clients how to prepare for and handle emergency situations.
5. To identify the roles and responsibilities of both landlord and tenant.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Flipchart

Markers

Lease agreement, or "Sample Lease Agreement" (attachment 6)

Copies of *Welcome to your New Home!* Mercy Housing publication

New Neighbors: A Place to Live Whittier Neighbors Video (optional)

Child proofing items (if applicable) including:

- Electrical outlet safety plugs
- Child proof gates
- Cabinet locks

NOTE to CO Facilitator

This session is best conducted at the clients' home or apartment

HOW TO DO IT

DISCUSSION

Discuss, using the following questions:

What type of house did you have in Somalia/Kenya?

Did you own/pay rent on this home?

Who were your neighbors?

What relationship did you have with your neighbors?

What do you know about housing in the United States?

HOME ORIENTATION

- Give a tour of the house, and identify:

Sink and garbage disposal: Identify dish soap, if applicable demonstrate garbage disposal, explain danger of putting hand into the garbage disposal while it is running.

Toilet: Explain how to use, identify toilet cleaner and demonstrate how to clean.

Bathtub and shower: Explain how to use, identify shower cleaner and demonstrate how to clean.

Refrigerator: Explain use of fridge and freezer, and necessity of proper food storage.

Stove: Explain how to use stovetop and oven, how to clean up spills, danger to children.

Washer/dryer: Demonstrate how to use the washer and dryer, identify laundry soap, explain not to overload.

Thermometer: Show how to adjust temperature, if applicable explain how using heat and air can cause an increase in utility bill.

Door and window locks: Demonstrate how to lock doors and windows, explain that locks will protect the clients' family.

Electrical outlets: Explain the use of electrical outlets and danger of touching the outlets. Give the clients child proof safety plugs.

Also identify any other appliances or items of importance. Particularly focus on identifying items that may be of danger to the clients' young children.

- Identify trash cans in the house, and identify where to put trash bags when they are full (on the curb, in a dumpster, etc.)
- Write down the clients' address and telephone number, and post it on the fridge or close to the telephone. Explain that it is important for everyone in the family to memorize the address and phone number.

HOME SAFETY

- Explain the danger of household cleaners—many household cleaners are dangerous or even fatal if ingested or if they come into contact with skin. Explain the importance of storing the cleaners properly, and explain they must be kept away from children. Cleaners and food should never be kept in the same place. With clients, find an appropriate place to store the household cleaning supplies.
- Go through the list of contact numbers – explain when it is appropriate to call the police, when to contact the health center, when to call neighbors, and when, in the case of a serious emergency, to dial 911.
- Identify the smoke alarm, and explain its function, and the importance of not removing the battery.
- Identify the fire extinguisher, and explain when and how to use it.

TENANT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read and explain the lease, or go through a sample lease (attachment 6) with your clients – explain both the rights and responsibilities of the tenant and landlord.
- Walk through the home and the grounds with the clients, identifying any damaged items or property. Ensure that the landlord is aware of these damages, to avoid liability down the line.
- Explain monthly rent, any additional utility bills – use a calendar to explain when the rent is due, and how to pay it (i.e. write a check, put in an envelope, send it to what address).

NEIGHBORHOOD

- Take the clients for a walk around the neighborhood. Point out any grocery stores, parks, or other locations of note.
- Discuss with the clients whether it is safe for their children to play outside unsupervised, and what time they may want the children to come home in the evening.
- Explain any noises they may hear in the neighborhood, such as fire trucks, police cars, etc. Explain what noises are normal, and what noises may be cause for concern.
- Explain the importance of being respectful of neighbors. Making a lot of noise after a certain hour will not be appreciated by neighbors.

VIDEO

- Show clients “New Neighbors: A Place to Live” video. (Optional)