



## **Home Safety & Environmental Hazards – Stay Calm & Trust Your Instincts**

### **Scenario**

Maria, a newly certified clinician, is scheduled for an in-home session with a family living in an older apartment. Upon arrival, she notices several environmental hazards: clutter in the entryway, exposed wires near the living room, and signs of pest issues. Maria feels uneasy but knows she must approach the situation professionally.

### **How to Handle It**

- Take a deep breath and ground yourself—stay calm before reacting.
- Differentiate between feeling uncomfortable vs. actual safety risks.
- Observe the home environment with curiosity, not judgment—this may reflect systemic challenges the family faces.
- Assess safety concerns discreetly and follow agency protocols if necessary.
- If hazards are significant, consult supervision and discuss next steps after the session.

### **Sample Scripts for Clinicians**

- If feeling uncomfortable but not in immediate danger: 'I appreciate you welcoming me into your home. Where would you feel most comfortable for us to talk today?'
- If a clear safety hazard is present: 'I noticed there might be a safety concern here. Would it be okay if we found a different space for today's session?'
- If a conversation about environmental risks is needed: 'I want to make sure our sessions feel as comfortable as possible for you. How have things been at home lately? Are there any challenges you're facing with the living situation?'

### **Reflection Questions**

- How do I differentiate between feeling uncomfortable vs. being in actual danger?
- What assumptions might I be making about the client's home environment?

- How can I balance professionalism with personal comfort when working in unfamiliar environments?