RAISING TACTICAL DAUGHTERS

Strong. Prepared. Confident.

READY AT WORK.

THE WORKPLACE SAFETY FIELD GUIDE

15 real-world exercises. Five situations nobody trains you for.
One goal: going to work ready for whatever walks in.

TALK IT THROUGH. PRACTICE IT OUT LOUD.

Space to think, write, and build a plan of your own.

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A practical companion to the Ready at Work online guide

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Practice beats a lecture.

A companion workbook, not a summary of the online guide.

This field guide is built for real situations at work. Use it on your own, with someone you trust, or in a workshop group. Pick the situation that fits your life right now. Most exercises take 10 to 15 minutes.

1 / Read the scenario

Answer honestly before you read the coaching notes. You are learning how you actually respond, not how you think you should.

2 / Practice out loud

Say the actual words, standing up, more than once. A sentence you have said out loud is much easier to find under pressure.

3 / Write down a plan

Use the space on each page to capture your own words, a name, or one thing you will do differently.

4 / Revisit it

Repeat exercises when work changes: a new job, a new manager, a work trip, or a role with more travel or later hours.

Your rule

Your safety comes before your job, your reputation, and anyone else's feelings. You can sort out everything else afterward.

A note on what comes up

Some of these scenarios may be close to something that has already happened to you. If one hits hard, stop and come back later. Your Employee Assistance Program, a counselor, or someone you trust can help.

What to bring

A pen, ten quiet minutes, and some honesty with yourself. That is enough.

EXERCISE 01 / THE GRAY ZONE

THE ONE SENTENCE

SET A BOUNDARY WITHOUT A SCENE | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

In a team meeting, a coworker comments on your outfit and a few people laugh. It is the second time this month.

DO THIS

Write one calm sentence you could say in the moment and one you could say privately afterward. Say both out loud three times, standing up, until they sound like your own voice. If you have a partner, have them play the coworker and laugh it off.

ASK YOURSELF

- What would I actually say?
- What if he says, "Relax, it's a joke"?
- Who in that room might back me up?

COACHING NOTES

Short beats clever. You are not trying to win the exchange or embarrass anyone. You are making it clear, once, that it is not welcome. Then write it down.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can say one clear sentence out loud without apologizing or laughing.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 02 / THE GRAY ZONE

THE PATTERN CHECK

SEE WHEN SMALL THINGS ADD UP | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Over eight weeks, a coworker compliments your body, texts you on a Saturday about nothing, stands behind your chair to "see your screen," asks if your partner gets jealous, offers you a ride home twice, and tells you to keep a comment "just between us."

DO THIS

Read the list in order. Circle the moment it stopped feeling like nothing. Mark which items you would write down, and what you would do differently at that point.

ASK YOURSELF

- Which one changed it for me?
- What would I have told myself to explain it away?
- What would I do at that point now?

COACHING NOTES

There is no right answer for where the line is. The point is noticing that you already had one, and that you are allowed to act at the first feeling, not the fifth.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can name the point where you would have started writing things down.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 03 / THE GRAY ZONE

YOUR TWO PEOPLE

KNOW WHO YOU WOULD TELL | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Something happens at work that bothers you, and you cannot stop thinking about it on the drive home. You are not sure it is "reportable."

DO THIS

Write down one person at work and one person outside of work you would tell. For each, write how you would reach them and the first sentence you would say. If no one at work comes to mind, write who you could build that trust with.

ASK YOURSELF

- Who at work would believe me?
- Who outside work would I call tonight?
- What would I need from each of them?

COACHING NOTES

Telling someone is not the same as reporting. It gives you someone who knew at the time, and someone to help you think. Choose people who listen before they advise.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have two names, two ways to reach them, and a first sentence for each.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 04 / THE PERSON WITH POWER

THE CLOSED DOOR

CHANGE THE SETTING WITHOUT AN ACCUSATION | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Your manager, who has made you uncomfortable before, asks you to come by his office at 6:30 "to go over your review." Most of the office will be gone.

DO THIS

Write two replies: one that moves the meeting to an earlier time or a shared space, and one that asks for the feedback in writing first. Practice the first one out loud. Then practice a firmer second version for when he pushes back.

ASK YOURSELF

- What reason could I give that is true and ordinary?
- What if he says it has to be tonight?
- Who would I tell about this request?

COACHING NOTES

You do not have to accuse anyone to protect yourself. "Can we do 3:00 in the conference room?" is a normal sentence. Save his reply. If he refuses a reasonable alternative, write that down too.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have a reply you could send today that keeps you out of an empty office.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 05 / THE PERSON WITH POWER

THE BIG CLIENT

HANDLE IT WHEN THE ROOM LAUGHS | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

At a client dinner, the client keeps touching your arm and commenting on your looks. Your manager laughs and says, "He's just friendly." The account is worth a lot to your company.

DO THIS

Plan three moves: what you do at the table (change seats, step away, one sentence), how you leave if it continues, and what you send your manager or HR in writing the next morning.

ASK YOURSELF

- What can I do at the table without a scene?
- How am I getting home?
- Who do I tell tomorrow, and how?

COACHING NOTES

The size of the account does not change what is acceptable. A company's responsibility can extend to how clients treat its employees. Leaving the dinner early is a reasonable choice, not a career mistake.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have a plan for the table, the exit, and the next morning.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 06 / THE PERSON WITH POWER

FIND YOUR OTHER DOORS

MAP EVERY WAY TO REPORT | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

The person causing the problem is your manager, or someone your manager protects.

DO THIS

Using your employee handbook or intranet, find every reporting route that does not go through your manager. Write each one down with a name, an email or phone number, and how to reach it after hours. Do this on a normal day, when nothing is wrong.

ASK YOURSELF

- Who is above my manager?
- Who in HR handles this?
- Is there an ethics or anonymous hotline?

COACHING NOTES

Most people only look for these when they are upset and someone is watching. Knowing the doors in advance makes it far more likely you will use one. If your company has none, write that down too.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have at least two routes written down that do not include your manager.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 07 / SPEAKING UP

THE FACT RECORD

WRITE IT SO IT HOLDS UP | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Read this note: "He was being creepy again today and everyone saw it. I'm so done with this."

DO THIS

Rewrite it as a clean record: date, time, place, his exact words or actions, who saw it, and what you said or did. Replace labels like "creepy" with what actually happened. Then practice the format once on any ordinary workday event.

ASK YOURSELF

- What exactly happened?
- What would someone who was not there need to know?
- Where will I keep this?

COACHING NOTES

Facts hold up better than feelings on paper, even though the feelings are real. Write as soon as you can. Keep notes on your own device, and talk to an employment attorney before copying company files.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can write an entry someone else could understand without you there.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 08 / SPEAKING UP

THE WRITTEN REPORT

PUT IT ON THE RECORD | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

You decided to report. You told HR in person this morning, and they said they would "look into it."

DO THIS

Draft a follow-up email: "I'm writing to confirm the concern I raised today about [name]. On [date], [what happened]. I'm asking that this be addressed, and I'd like to know the next steps." Keep it short and factual. Save a copy for yourself.

ASK YOURSELF

- What dates and facts belong in it?
- Who should receive it?
- What am I asking them to do?

COACHING NOTES

A conversation can be forgotten or retold differently. An email creates a date and a record. The first message does not need every incident, just enough that it cannot be misunderstood.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have a draft you could send, with a copy saved somewhere you control.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 09 / SPEAKING UP

SPOT THE RETALIATION

KNOW WHAT TO LOG AFTER YOU REPORT | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Six weeks after reporting, an employee notices her schedule changed, she was dropped from a weekly meeting, a client was reassigned, her manager stopped answering messages, and a "performance concern" came up for the first time in three years.

DO THIS

Circle every change that belongs in her log. For each one, write what she should record: the date, what changed, and who made the decision.

ASK YOURSELF

- Which changes might be coincidence?
- Which ones form a pattern?
- Who could she tell, inside or outside the company?

COACHING NOTES

Retaliation rarely announces itself. One change might mean nothing. A timeline is what shows the pattern, which is why the record keeps going after the report. Outside agencies have filing deadlines, so do not wait to learn yours.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can name five quiet forms of retaliation and what to record for each.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 10 / AFTER HOURS

THE LAST ONE OUT

PLAN THE WALK TO YOUR CAR | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

It is 9 p.m. and you are the last one leaving. The parking garage is quiet, and someone you do not recognize is standing near your car.

DO THIS

Write your plan before it happens: where you park on late nights, who you can call for an escort, what you do if someone is near your car (go back inside, call security, wait somewhere staffed and lit), and who knows when you leave.

ASK YOURSELF

- Does my building have security or an escort?
- Where is the nearest staffed, lit place?
- Who would I call?

COACHING NOTES

Going back inside is not overreacting. It costs a few minutes. Have your keys ready and skip checking your phone in the car. If it keeps happening, tell facilities about the parking and lighting.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You know what you would do, and who you would call, before you reach the garage.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 11 / AFTER HOURS

THE LOBBY RULE

REDIRECT A HOTEL ROOM INVITATION | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

On a work trip, a senior colleague says, "Let's finish the deck in my room. It's quieter."

DO THIS

Practice the redirect out loud: "Let's grab a table in the lobby. I'll meet you downstairs." Then write what you would say if he pushes ("It'll only take a minute"), and who you would text where you are.

ASK YOURSELF

- What is my one line?
- What if he insists?
- Who knows where I am on this trip?

COACHING NOTES

Anyone with a legitimate reason to meet will be fine with the lobby. Someone who gets irritated or keeps pushing has told you something. Write it down afterward either way.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can redirect without apologizing, and someone knows your travel plans.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 12 / AFTER HOURS

THE AFTER-PARTY MOVES

DECIDE BEFORE THE NIGHT DOES | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

The company event winds down and a group heads to someone's hotel suite to keep going. You have had two drinks. Home is a 30-minute ride away.

DO THIS

Identify three decision points: whether to go, how you would leave if you did, and how you are getting home. Write your ride plan and the one person you would check in with before leaving.

ASK YOURSELF

- What changed when the event moved?
- What would make me leave?
- How am I getting home, and who knows?

COACHING NOTES

The after-party is still a work event, but the supervision is gone. Leaving early is a choice, not a failure. Get your own drinks and keep them with you.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have a ride plan and a check-in person before the event starts.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 13 / WHEN HOME FOLLOWS YOU

THE FRONT DESK CALL

KEEP YOUR SCHEDULE PRIVATE | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Someone calls the front desk, says they are your cousin, and asks what time you usually leave. You have been dealing with an ex who will not stop contacting you.

DO THIS

Write what you want the front desk to say ("I can't confirm that information"). Then write a short note for security: a photo or description, the car if you know it, and what they should do if that person shows up.

ASK YOURSELF

- Who at work needs to know?
- What do I want them to do?
- What can I share without telling the whole story?

COACHING NOTES

You do not owe anyone at work the full story to get help with your safety. Front desk staff are often never told what to do. A short, clear instruction protects you more than a long explanation.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You have the words for the front desk and a note ready for security.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 14 / WHEN HOME FOLLOWS YOU

THE SAFETY CONVERSATION

ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

Someone from home has started showing up near your work. You need to tell HR or your manager, and you are worried it will make you look like a problem.

DO THIS

Practice the opening line: "I'm dealing with something at home that might show up here. I need security to know, and I'd like to talk about a few changes." Then list what you would ask for: schedule, parking, call screening, removal from the website or directory.

ASK YOURSELF

- What do I want them to change?
- What do I want kept private?
- What if their first question is about attendance?

COACHING NOTES

If you have a protective order, ask whether it can include your workplace, and give a copy to security. Lead with safety. Logistics can come after.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

You can say your opening line and name at least three changes to ask for.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

EXERCISE 15 / WHEN HOME FOLLOWS YOU

IF A COWORKER TELLS YOU

RECEIVE IT WITHOUT MAKING IT WORSE | 10-15 MINUTES

THE SITUATION

A coworker pulls you aside and says her manager has been texting her at night. She does not know what to do.

DO THIS

With a partner, role-play receiving it. Practice: "Thank you for telling me. I believe you. What would help right now?" Then practice offering to go with her to HR. Do not ask why she did not say something sooner.

ASK YOURSELF

- What would I say first?
- What should I not say?
- Who could I help her reach?

COACHING NOTES

Listen more than you talk. Do not promise secrecy you cannot keep, and do not share what she told you with anyone who does not need to know. If you are her manager, you may be required to escalate. Tell her that honestly.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Your first words are belief and support, not questions or advice.

MY ANSWER / MY PLAN

ONE THING I WILL PRACTICE AGAIN:

TAKE-HOME TOOL / 01

My Workplace Safety Plan

Fill this in on a normal day. Keep a copy somewhere that is not a work device.

My person at work, and how to reach them:

My person outside work, and how to reach them:

My other doors (HR, my manager's manager, an ethics hotline):

Security or facilities contact:

My plan for late nights and getting to my car:

Who knows where I am when I travel:

Where I keep my private record:

Numbers worth saving

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: 1-800-669-4000 (eeoc.gov)

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788

If you are in immediate danger: call 911

What I agree to

I will trust the feeling before I have proof. I will keep a record. I will use my voice, and I know I can always leave.

I will review this plan when my job, manager, schedule, or location changes.

Date reviewed: _____

CONVERSATION DECK / 1

Questions to ask yourself

Choose two or three. Answer honestly. Nobody else has to see this.

01. What does my body do when something feels off?

02. When have I talked myself out of a gut feeling at work?

03. What would make something "bad enough" for me to report?

04. Who at work would I trust with something difficult?

05. What am I most afraid would happen if I spoke up?

06. What is the difference between being polite and going along?

07. What would I tell a friend in my situation?

08. Where am I alone at work, and could that change?

09. How do I get home from work events?

10. What would I want a coworker to do if they saw it happen?

11. Who knows my schedule, and who should not?

12. What would I want my manager to say if I told them?

13. What is one boundary I want to hold this year?

A conversation I want to have

Questions for managers and teams

Use these in a team meeting or manager session. Listen longer than you talk.

14. Would people on this team feel safe telling me something was wrong?

15. Who can employees go to here besides their manager?

16. What happened to the last person who raised a concern?

17. Are our top performers held to the same standard as everyone else?

18. What do I say when someone reports something to me?

19. What promises about confidentiality can I actually keep?

20. How do our people get home from late shifts and events?

21. What would we do if someone's ex showed up in the lobby?

22. Does our front desk know what not to share?

23. How do we handle a client who crosses a line?

24. What would make someone on this team stay quiet?

25. How would I notice if someone was avoiding a coworker?

26. What is one thing we will change this quarter?

One change we will make

TAKE-HOME TOOL / 02

The Incident Log

Write it as soon as you can. Facts, not labels. Keep it on your own device or on paper.

Date & time	Where	What was said or done	Who saw it	What I did

What changed after I reported

Schedule, assignments, reviews, meetings, who stopped talking to me.

Date	What changed	Who decided

KEEP BUILDING

You can't control every room.

But you can walk into every one of them ready.

This workbook is not about being afraid of your job, your coworkers, or your clients. It is about giving you choices: the confidence to say no, the judgment to notice when something changes, and the certainty that you can ask for help.

You do not need to be fearless. You need to have practiced enough that the right words are there when you need them.

Use the full guide

The companion Ready at Work webpage explains the principles behind these exercises. Return to it when your work changes.

About Raising Tactical Daughters

Founded by Kevin M. Coles, Raising Tactical Daughters teaches confidence, awareness, boundaries, and practical preparation, built on three ideas: trust your gut, use your voice, and know you can always leave.

Speaking and workplace programs

For companies, HR teams, and employee groups:
calendly.com/kevinmcoles/speaking

GENERAL EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

This guide is not legal, clinical, emergency, or individualized safety advice, and it does not replace your employer's policies. Laws and filing deadlines vary by state. For immediate danger, call 911. For harassment, retaliation, or domestic violence concerns, seek qualified support, including an employment attorney or the resources listed in this guide.