Policies and Procedures Manual

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Personal Safety Policy and Procedures

1.0 Background

Workplace Violence is defined as any incident where an employee or employer is abused, threatened or assaulted in situations related to their work. Client-related violence is described as violence or aggression displayed by a client receiving a service, towards Workers. The employer, the employee and clients have ethical and legal responsibilities to ensure each other's Personal Safety.

2.0 Purpose

To document the Policy and Procedures for Personal Safety work practices to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all employees and clients.

3.0 Definitions and key points

Workplace violence includes acts such as physical assault, including spitting, verbal abuse or threats, threats with a weapon, sexual assault, robbery and vandalism. Workplace Violence can take many forms including;
- client-related violence
- violence that is internal to the organisation involving violence between employees, managers, employers or volunteers
- violence to people in the workplace from the general public, eg, assault or robberies. In the community services sector, the main threat of violence is from clients or residents.

Your workplace has a commitment to violence prevention and Personal Safety. Violence should be viewed in the same way as other work health and safety risks. Employees have a duty to report incidents and to comply with organisational procedures to control the risk of violence. Community services workplaces have a high potential for violent incidents because they are often working with higher risk client groups and much of the work is carried out in the less predictable environments of home and community settings.

- The following factors may be associated with elevated risk of client aggression:
  - poor management of mental illness
  - antisocial/borderline personality traits
  - delirium
  - neurological disorders, head injuries
  - confusion, disorientation or dementia
  - hypoglycaemia
  - epilepsy
  - drug and alcohol withdrawal.
  - frustration
  - feeling powerless or ignored (eg perceived delays or poor-quality service)
  - concerns or requests not adequately handled
  - difficulty communicating
  - h
  - marginalisation.
  - anxiety

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- o homophobia
- o racism

These factors should be considered when conducting any assessment of Personal Safety.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all work areas and all work activities to maintain a safe working environment by removing or reducing Personal Safety risks.

5.0 Associated documents

Work Health and Safety State and Territory regulations

6.0 Personal safety procedures

Hazard and risk assessment prior to service provision

6.1 Prior to undertaking any client-service you must first assess the risk of person safety. A client or relative that has a history of violence to carers should be first considered. Then access and egress, proximity of the service to the client and all other factors. A judgement of hazard and risk must be made prior to entering an environment for service provision.

6.2 If you feel that the potential for harm is high do not continue and start to perform the service provision.

6.3 Report the hazard as soon as practically possible. It is your responsibility to report the hazard so that it may be investigated, and others are not inadvertently exposed to the potential harm.

6.4 Seek a solution with the assistance of your supervisor of colleagues so that the service can be delivered safely. These may include, a buddy system, removal of the client from an environment, rearranging schedules so that relative can be present.

What to do if your personal safety is compromised

6.5 Immediately stop the service provision to the client.

6.6 Remove yourself from any environment where your personal safety is compromised. This may be as simple as taking a few steps away from the client.

6.7 Use your communication device to immediately signal that your personal safety is at risk.

6.8 Report the incident as soon as practical.

6.9 Consider ways in which the service may be provided in future without a high likelihood of harm. Communicate this with your WHS meeting and colleagues as you will likely know the environment and client.

Additional factors for consideration

6.10 The health status and needs of a client may change over time, or they may have injuries or illnesses that must be managed in the short term.

6.11 Service providers need to respond to these changes and reassess their activities to ensure the risks are controlled.

- Regular r EXCERPT SAMPLE ONLY. FOR A FULL SAMPLE CONTACT: admin@supportbysdl.com ging change.
- Where change is required, negotiate the changes with the client and their families.

- Early reporting of concerns to the service provider's manager/coordinator can initiate the need for a review of the care plan.
- Document the concerns raised for future reference and communication.

6.12 The home a client's home can change between visits. Changes may include:

- positioning of furniture
- inoperable electrical equipment
- people or animals are now present
- altered storage patterns
- spills or leaks
- new equipment or furniture
- obstructed access.

Additional factors for consideration home care

6.13 Community service workers need to:

- determine at each visit the safety of the client's home as a workplace before commencing duties
- undertake a visual scan of the client's home immediately on arrival, and of the equipment, before use.
- changes in the service required
- requested staff change by client or by worker
- changes in alternate service provider.

6.14 In situations where time does not allow normal assessment and planning, service providers should:

- complete a provisional assessment
- make interim arrangements
- follow up with long-term arrangements.

Workplace stress and fatigue

6.15 Stress responses occur when a worker perceives they are not coping in situations where it is important to them that they do.

6.16 Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion which reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively. It can occur because of prolonged mental or physical activity, sleep loss and/or disruption of the internal body clock.

6.17 Stress and Fatigue often are experienced together. Each Worker must regularly assess stress and fatigue levels.

6.18 If the worker is experiencing high levels of stress or fatigue, the stress or fatigue is ongoing, or the worker feels their stress or fatigue levels are creating a health and safety issue, then they must complete a Hazard Report Form and provide it to their supervisor.

6.19 The supervisor will then conduct a debriefing session, outlined in section 4.6 as soon as practical.

6.20 Controls that Support by SDL CARE implement to manage stress and fatigue related risks include:

- regularly review staffing levels to ensure appropriate staffing skills mix and numbers
- provide clearly defined job descriptions, policies and procedures
- ensure supervisors and managers have the skills required to manage their work team (i.e. able to support worker whilst managing their performance and adherence to policies and procedures.
- review organisational and performance management systems
- have poli~~cies~~ EXCERPT SAMPLE ONLY. FOR A FULL SAMPLE CONTACT: admin@supportbysdl.com
- provide st~~aff training and strategies on how to manage workloads, resolve conflict~~, job rotation, maintaining a balanced relationship and appropriate boundaries with client

- provide counselling services for staff where applicable
- refuse or modify services to the client if an environment is too high risk

Debriefing

6.21   Debriefing session after a serious event or incident

      6.21.1   A debriefing session will be conducted by a qualified counsellor after any serious even or incident.

      6.21.2   The purpose of the debriefing session is to identify staff stress and fatigue levels, find out what went well and what didn't go well and discuss areas for improvement.

6.22   Debriefing session requested by staff

      6.22.1   A debriefing session can also be requested by a Worker who is feeling high levels of stress and /or fatigue. The worker's supervisor or manager with either conduct the debriefing process themselves or arrange for a suitably qualified third party to assist in a timely manner.

      6.22.2   The debriefing session allows the worker to reflect on stress and / or fatigue levels and to consider if these are of a concern to safe working practices.

      6.22.3   The person conducting the debrief will consider the risk to the worker and the wellbeing of the worker. The output of the debrief will include short, medium or long-term strategies and solutions to the stressors.

Driving risks for workers

6.23   Driving motor vehicles is a significant part of a worker's day when providing services in people's homes.

      6.23.1   The hazards when driving and transporting clients may include:

- poor weather or road conditions
- fatigue and driving when tired
- rushing due to tight timeframes and scheduling of work
- distractions within the vehicle (i.e. mobile phones, client behaviour)
- safely operating unfamiliar vehicles
- managing client behaviour when travelling in vehicle
- poorly maintained vehicles (for example tyres, brakes, lights)
- speeding and or not following road rules
- changes to usual route/s taken (i.e. roadworks) and traffic delays
- unrestrained equipment in the vehicle
- remote and isolated work.

      6.23.2   Support by SDL puts the following in place to reduce motor accidents:

- selecting and purchasing safe vehicles
- ensuring vehicles are appropriately insured
- maintaining a safe vehicle by: - use an accredited mechanic for regular maintenance, daily spot checks and ensuring drivers report defective vehicles and all incidents resulting in injuries or damage
- providing workers with information and instruction on how to operate the allocated vehicle safely
- encouraging workers not to drive on roads if visibility or the road conditions are poor
- ensuring drivers are competent and fit to drive
- reviewing nd travel between clients

- reducing driving times by: - planning journeys and sharing driving if required - grouping clients together - using alternatives such as public transport.

Remote and isolated work

6.24   This is work that is undertaken when isolated from the assistance of other people because of the location, time or nature of the work being done.

6.25   Assistance from other people includes rescue, medical assistance and emergency services. A worker may be isolated even if other people may be close by.

6.26   In some situations, a worker may be alone for a short time. In other situations, the worker may be on their own for long periods of time, for example driving in remote locations.

6.27   Support by SDL CARE has a policy that each Worker designated by their supervisor as working is a remote or isolated situation must perform the following:

- Check in by mobile phone at least once per hour
- Notify the supervisor if any situation or location of the support work has changed
- Ensure that before the shift and after the shift the shift supervisor has been notified of the workers status and any hand over notes provided.

Reporting incidents

6.28   Incident reporting is an important part of a good work health and safety system. Standard incident reporting forms should be used for all Personal Safety issues.

6.29   Incidents that should be reported include:

- injuries to clients or workers
- emergency situations
- near-miss incidents where there is no injury but requires preventative action.

6.30   Brief all workers on emergency procedures and reporting requirements. Early reporting of identified hazards, injuries, near misses or concerns or changes in client circumstances by workers is part of normal work duties. Managers/coordinators will document any concerns reported by workers.

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