



Unacceptable Behaviour

Policy

NYCH recognises that we serve a diverse community, where interests may be in conflict, or difficult circumstances may generate anger or other emotional disturbance. NYCH believes that such conflict in the workplace or community be resolved through peaceful negotiation. It is the view of NYCH that the use of violence is at no time an acceptable way of resolving problems. Violence in the workplace of NYCH will not be tolerated.

NYCH believes in the prevention of violence as the preferred solution. NYCH will aim to prevent violent incidents as far as is practicable through:

- fostering a culture of no violence in its workplaces
- the use of a risk management approach giving consideration to both environmental and behavioural factors in the workplace;
- provision of relevant staff information, instruction, training, and supervision, and
- effective early intervention with clients demonstrating challenging behaviours.

Where incidents do occur, NYCH will seek to minimise the potential harm to affected people through effective response systems and incident follow-up. Affected people will be provided with support to enhance their recovery and rapid return of staff to normal work duties.

Definitions

Occupational Violence is defined by WorkSafe Victoria as any incident where an employee is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace (WorkSafe 2003 Guidance Note on the Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work).

Examples of occupational violence include:

- Incidents of verbal abuse,
- Threats, harassment and/or intimidation including racist, sexist or otherwise offensive comments
- Physical attacks and assault (including throwing objects)
- Property damage, and
- Threats of any kind to do harm to self or others (including reference to weapons).

There are three main types of workplace violence that are generally recognised:

- a) Client-initiated violence is inflicted on an employee by an individual who is or was the recipient of a service provided by the victim or the victim's organisation. This recipient of a service includes current or former clients and their friends or family.
- b) External violence is when the agent has no legitimate business relationship to the workplace and enters the affected workplace to commit a robbery or other criminal act.
- c) Internal Violence involves incidents where violence occurs between members of staff. This can include bullying and assault between staff members.

Procedures

The following procedures apply to client-initiated and external forms of workplace violence, and cover prevention, response and post-incident management of violent incidents.

The procedure for violence between staff is contained in NYCH's Bullying Policy and Procedure.

Prevention

Incidents of inappropriate behaviour in individual clients have been demonstrated to be difficult to predict. Nevertheless, in order to prevent incidents of a violent nature occurring, early intervention is required for those clients with a known history of inappropriate behaviour, or demonstrating difficult behaviours. The impact of the physical environment on clients, including personal space and client flow systems, is also recognised as an important factor for prevention.

The following strategies will be employed to minimise the likelihood of incidents of violence occurring:

No-violence Culture

NYCH will employ the following measures to promote a no-violence culture in its workplaces:

- Senior management will demonstrate their commitment to safe and violence-free workplaces by communicating messages that support a violence-free workplace, and seeing that policies and procedures are adhered to;
- Ensuring that new employees are aware of the organisation's policy and procedures for Occupational Violence;
- Ensuring that clients are aware of the expectations of NYCH regarding their behaviour through the distribution of client rights and responsibilities (see Client Rights and Responsibilities policy).
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the Code of Conduct for employees which describes the professional conduct expected and required of NYCH staff (see Code of Conduct)
- Use of signage to increase clients' awareness of their rights and responsibilities, and that NYCH is a non-violent workplace and unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated by the organisation.