inclusionmelbourne

P83-v1-HR	Occupational Violence Policy & Procedure

Applies to: All staff and volunteers of Inclusion Melbourne, including sub-contracted staff.	**Version**: 01
Specific responsibility: Overseen by the Manager, People, Performance and Culture.	**Date approved**: 05/04/2017
	Next review date: 05/04/2019

Policy context:	
Standards or other external requirements	Human Service Standards: 3.1, 3.5 ISO 9001:2015: 7.1.2; 7.1.5; 7.1.6; 8.2.3; 8.3.4; 10.2; 10.3
Legislation or other requirements	Occupational and Safety Act 2004
Contractual obligations	Inclusion Melbourne Service contract Employee Code of Conduct

OBJECTIVE
The aim of this policy is to ensure staff and volunteers work in an environment that is free from violence and the threat of violence.

POLICY STATEMENT
Inclusion Melbourne complies with the Occupational and Safety Act 2004 and takes all reasonable measures to ensure staff and volunteers are working in a safe environment and to raise awareness of the definition of occupational violence and the protocols for managing risk, navigating incidents and reporting.

Inclusion Melbourne is committed to providing support in line with evidence based positive behaviour support practices and will in all cases of violent behavior, seek to respond in ways that adhere to this practice framework.

DEFINITION
Occupational Violence and Aggression is defined as: "Any incident, in which employees are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of their employment. It includes:
● Verbal, physical or psychological abuse;
● Threats or other intimidating behaviours;
● Intentional physical attack, such as hitting, pinching or scratching;
● Aggravated assault;
● Threats with a weapon or objects; and
● Sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Violence and aggression may involve an actual or implied threat to safety, health or wellbeing and may arise from behavior such as:

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- Threats with no clear intent from people under the influence of drugs, alcohol or with psychological disturbances;
- Threats related to religious, gender or cultural differences;
- Anger expressed in an unreasonable manner (e.g. throwing, spitting, profanity);
- Intimidation used to achieve faster service; and
- Anger from past encounters related to the issue at hand.

PROCEDURES
1. Identifying Hazards
While some violence cannot be foreseen, management have a responsibility to take all reasonable, practicable steps to protect employees, volunteers and the people we support from violent incidents which may cause injury or harm.

Violent situations may be identified through:
- Providing information to staff to increase awareness of violence as a hazard and to help them recognise incidents that should be reported;
- Encouraging the formal reporting of all incidents;
- Reviewing accident and incident reports to identify the nature and extent of the problem, and to identify areas of particular risk;
- Verbal aggression and threats by a anyone being supported by, or representing the organisation must be documented/flagged in case notes;
- Employees and volunteers must report all potential or actual incidents to management as part of their responsibility to reduce occupational violence.

2. Risk Assessment
Inclusion Melbourne will assess the nature and extent of possible occupational violence in the workplace. This applies to the obvious high profile threats and risk of physical attack, as well as the lower level form of threat and intimidation. This may be achieved by:
- Analysing information gathered on violent incidents to assess the underlying causes of violent behaviour;
- Completion of an Occupational Violence Risk Assessment Management Tool
- Ensuring regular reviews of support plans including any changes in behaviour.

3. Risk Control: Find ways of preventing the types of violent incidents that have been identified in each work area. This will include:
- That people we support are assessed appropriately during the access and entry process and that Inclusion Melbourne can meet the individual's needs. If it is determined during the intake process that Inclusion Melbourne cannot provide appropriate support, or does not have staff with the relevant skills and qualifications to provide the specific support required, the individual should be referred to a more appropriate service. If difficulties arise in referring an individual, the Support Coordinator must contact the Department of Health & Human Services, the Local Area Coordinator or NDIS Support Coordinator to arrange a referral to a more appropriate support provider;

- Ensuring that 'Consistent approach' documentation is kept current and accurate to ensure effective staff/volunteer handover takes place;

- That staff have the appropriate skills and qualifications according to the needs of the people we support;

- Support coordinators engaging with allied health professionals (where necessary) to ensure other additional needs (eg: diet, communication, pain management) are met where relevant;

- Support coordinators making themselves available to support staff/volunteers following communication from a member of staff/volunteer of unsafe/concerning behaviour,

3. Staff Support
All new and existing staff members will receive support in:
- The ability to identify potentially violent situations and people; and
- Interpersonal and communication skills to allow them to diffuse and prevent a potentially threatening situation.

4. Physical Environment:
The majority of work Inclusion Melbourne provides is in the community in a largely uncontrolled environment, however, where the work environment can be controlled by support coordinators and management, conditions should be reviewed to maximise the comfort of the people we support, in regard to:
- Waiting/commute times;
- Privacy;
- Layout and general environment;
- Taking precautions e.g. employees should be able to access emergency exists
- Noise levels in the area;
- Minimising the work undertaken in isolated areas

These considerations should be made whilst setting up an activity/completing a Job Site Analysis.

Where the work environment cannot be controlled by management, consideration will need to address relevant issues, which may include staff/volunteer training, differing staff support ratios, communication protocols and devices, &/or accessing alternative forms of support from the community setting, etc.

5. Employee Responsibilities
Employees have a responsibility to themselves and to their colleagues and the people we support to follow safe work practices and to ensure they implement practice frameworks and training to perform their duties. All staff who experience violence in the workplace are to report this at the first available opportunity. Employees who feel they are inadequately trained to perform their duties should request training through their manager.

6. Violence Response Plan
It may not be possible to eliminate all circumstances in which abusive, threatening and violent behavior may occur, so procedures to ensure the safety of employees in these situations are vital. These will include:
- Provision of immediate support to a colleague
- Involvement of Police: Inclusion Melbourne supports staff in making the decision to contact police for any violent events. Employees have the right to contact the police in the event of a violent occurrence.

- The person in-charge must contact Police in any violent occurrence where they believe this is appropriate
- Provision of post incident support via Inclusion Melbourne's Employee Assistance program.
- Consultation on what forms of protection are required;
- Development of tailored guidelines in addressing threatening situations;
- Provision of personal protection e.g. duress alarms;
- Specialist and / or further training for staff;

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	• Service Access and Entry • Emergency Management and Evacuation • Occupational Health and Safety • Employee Assistance Program • Positive Behaviour Support • Occupational Violence Risk Assessment Management Tool •
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	• Working Safely in Community Services Handbook