

Training Program - A Safer Place to Work: Preventing/Managing Violent Behaviour - NSW Health

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Functional Sub group Personnel/Workforce - Learning and Development
Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health & Safety

Summary Specifies the minimum standard to be introduced in providing staff with the most up to date knowledge, skills, strategies etc to assist them in preventing and managing workplace violence.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Community Health Centres, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Dept of Health

Distributed to Public Health System, Community Health Centres, Health Associations Unions, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Department of Health

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Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory.

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NSW Health Training Program
A Safer Place to Work: Preventing and Managing
Violent Behaviour in the Health Workplace

This circular should be read in conjunction with circular 03/48 'Zero Tolerance Response to Violence in the Health Workplace'.

In support of the 'zero tolerance' response and in line with key recommendations from the NSW Health 'Taskforce on Prevention and Management of Violence in the Health Workplace', NSW Health has developed an accredited, modular violence prevention and management education program.

Full ownership of the education program and associated materials is vested with the NSW Department of Health.

Program Development:

The program content and related materials were developed under the direction and guidance of several NSW Health steering committees. The committees included representatives from emergency departments, aged care, neurosciences, security, general nursing, Corrections Health, learning and development, risk management, consumer groups, Ethnic Communities Council, AMA, HREA and NSW Nurses' Association. All modules were piloted within an Area Health Service prior to completion.

The education program was developed to:

- Help keep NSW Health staff, patients and visitors safe
- Support the NSW Health zero tolerance to violence policy
- Assist Health Services meet their OHS information, instruction and training obligations
- Provide an accredited, consistent minimum standard of training across NSW Health
- Help ensure that workplace violence is managed as a significant workplace hazard, within a risk management framework and
- Communicate other key Taskforce violence prevention strategies to NSW Health staff.

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

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In accordance with the provisions incorporated in the Accounts and Audit Determination, the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers and their equivalents, within a public health organisation, shall be held responsible for ensuring the observance of Departmental policy (including circulars and procedure manuals) as issued by the Minister and the Director-General of the Department of Health.

Program Scope:

The focus of the program is to provide staff with the most up to date knowledge, skills, strategies and techniques, consistent with Taskforce recommendations and the risk management approach, to assist them in preventing and managing workplace violence.

The education program plays a particular role in supporting implementation of the NSW Health zero tolerance response to violence policy. If the zero tolerance response is to be successful in sending a strong message that violence is not part of the job, then staff need to know what zero tolerance means, why it is a key initiative and how it applies to them, as well as having access to practical information and training on its implementation.

Other relevant Taskforce initiatives eg the clinical risk assessment tools and violence response options for staff developed by the Clinical Issues Working Group have been incorporated into the program.

Program Content:

Module 1: HLTCS6A Responding Effectively to Difficult or Challenging Behaviour

This 8 hour module is designed for all staff identified via the risk assessment process as being at risk of workplace violence. It is designed to meet the Health Training Package competency HLTCS6A *Responding effectively to difficult or challenging behaviour*. Attending the module and successfully completing the module assessment exercise will lead to achievement of the relevant qualification.

Module 2: AMT002 Aggression Minimisation in High Risk Environments

This 8 hour module is designed for staff working in higher risk areas and includes, but is not limited to, security, mental health, emergency department, admissions, drug and alcohol, disability services, community health, brain injury and aged care staff. Successful completion of Module 1 (or its equivalent) is a pre-requisite for attending Module 2.

Module 3: 90405NSW Aggression Minimisation for Managers

This 4 hour module is designed for managers or prospective managers of Health Service staff at risk of violence. It provides the participant with information and practical strategies for promoting a violence free environment, and effectively supporting staff who have been victims of violence. It is recommended that attendees, as a minimum, have successfully completed Module 1 or its equivalent, prior to attending this module. Module 3 is a nationally recognised course that is VETAB accredited until February 2006.

Module 4: AMT004 Aggression Minimisation Refresher Training

This 2 hour module is designed to reinforce key training components introduced in Module 1 and to keep staff up to date with policies, practices and procedures for the minimisation and management of aggression in the health workplace. It should be repeated at a minimum of every two years after completion of Module 1, though Health Services may choose to provide it more frequently, depending on the circumstances.

All modules include a Facilitator Manual, Participant Manual, PowerPoint slides and relevant Forms. The full program is also contained on a CD ROM.

Program Training Requirements:

The NSW occupational health and safety legislation requires employers to provide their employees with information, instruction and training necessary to ensure their health and safety, and this is particularly important in the context of workplace violence.

All Health Service staff at risk of violence must be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training in how to prevent and manage violence in their workplace. The NSW Health program 'A Safer

Place to Work: Preventing and Managing Violent Behaviour in the Health Workplace' constitutes the minimum standard for this education.

Health Services are required to review their existing violence prevention and management education program to ensure that it covers, as a minimum, the contents and learning outcomes of the above modules. Health Services are encouraged to be flexible in their approach to adopting any additional requirements, as there are a number of options that may be utilised. Depending on the findings of the review, Health Services may choose to update relevant areas of existing training, adopt relevant module/s of the NSW Health program to supplement existing training or adopt the NSW Health program in full.

Program Delivery:

Those delivering the program to NSW Health staff must, as a minimum, meet the following criteria:

- Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training
- Experience in working in violence risk areas and in effectively managing violent incidents
- An ability to relate to staff at all levels of the organisation.

Program Roll Out:

Three metropolitan and three rural trainer orientation sessions are being held to introduce the program to appropriately qualified and experienced Health Service trainers. The sessions are being coordinated in consultation with the NSW Health Learning and Development Managers Forum.

Program Monitoring:

Because of the importance of violence prevention and management education in keeping people safe, complying with legislation, communicating key initiatives from the Violence Taskforce and supporting the zero tolerance response, the Department, in consultation with the NSW Health Learning and Development Managers Forum, will be monitoring delivery of key components of the training over the next 18 months.

Health Services will need to have an implementation plan and local program in place that ensures that as far as is practical, all staff identified as being at risk of violence have attended appropriate training consistent with the Department's minimum standards by December 2004.

All inquiries should be directed in the first instance to your Area Health Service Learning and Development Manager.

Robyn Kruk
Director-General

