

## EMPLOYEE WELLBEING PROCEDURES

### INTRODUCTION

#### is committed to doing all possible to support the wellbeing of all group employees and volunteers. In so doing it is recognised that employees and volunteers often are required to work in stressful situations and #### has an obligation to do all possible to minimise the impact thereof on the wellbeing of all employees and volunteers.

Therefore, the following Procedures are to be implemented to enable #### to meet the policy objective of ensuring the effective management within all service streams of the group of doing all possible to support the wellbeing of all group employees and volunteers.

These Procedures should be read in conjunction with all relevant #### Policies and Procedures and, in particular, the Employee Wellbeing Policy.

### DEFINITIONS

#### TERM DEFINITION

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Confidentiality</b>	means that employees and volunteers have a right to expect that confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible regarding any suspected or actual mental health issues they may have.
<b>Critical Incident</b>	any event that has a stressful impact sufficient enough to overwhelm your usual coping strategies. <b>Critical</b> incidents can be sudden, shocking and outside the range of ordinary human experience. However, it may also be an event that has a specific personal significance to the individual and may result in strong emotional and/or physical reactions.
<b>Duty of Care</b>	requires all employees and volunteers to take reasonable care in view of reasonably foreseeable circumstances that may arise. The safety of service users, employees, volunteers and visitors is the first priority in any situation.
<b>Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</b>	an employee benefit program that assists employees with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional well-being.
<b>Mental Disorder</b>	is a diagnosable illness which causes major changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupts the person's ability to work and carry on their usual personal relationships.
<b>Mental Health</b>	is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises their abilities, can work productively while coping with the normal stresses of life, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

### PROCEDURES

The Procedures will be addressed under three broad headings:

[a] Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

[b] Mental Health

[c] Critical Incidents

[a] Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

##### is committed to supporting employees and their immediate family to resolve work related and personal challenges which can impact their quality of life and their performance, safety and effectiveness at work. Such challenges may include, but are not limited to the following.

- Alcoholism
- Anger management
- Anxiety
- Conflict resolution
- Coping with loss and grief
- Coping with depression
- Dealing with change
- Dealing with stress
- Dealing with relationship difficulties • Domestic violence
- Driving under the influence
- Family dynamics and illness
- Financial management and legal issues
- Growing self esteem
- Health and lifestyle issues
- Managing difficult people
- Managing post-traumatic stress
- Narcotic addiction
- Overcoming eating disorders
- Problem drinking
- Problem gambling
- Single parenting
- Stimulant dependence
- Stress and pressure in the workplace and life in general

- Tobacco dependence
- Understanding step-families
- Work and family life balance issues Counsellors from the EAP organisation normally meet employees off site for confidential counselling and, if appropriate, can advise about referrals to specialist agencies for particular problems or ongoing assistance. Job security and promotional opportunities are not affected by referral to the EAP and visits are not recorded on personnel files. No one need know that an employee has sought assistance.

Access to the EAP service can be through the following.

- Self-Referral – by the employee contacting the service directly or
- Management Referral – where an issue is impacting on the employee’s work an Executive Director can make a referral with the employee’s consent.

Although ##### may recommend that an employee seek support from the EAP, attendance by the individual is always voluntary.

All employees will be informed of the EAP and provided with all relevant contact information as part of the usual induction process.

## **[b] Mental Health**

While people often know a lot about common physical health problems, there is generally less understanding of mental health issues. This lack of information and understanding adds to attitudes that can serve to stigmatise people and deter them from seeking the best form of assistance and support in a timely way. It also prevents people from providing appropriate support to family members, simply because they do not know how to.

##### will provide services, information and training that can assist employees and volunteers to maintain their own mental health and increase their mental health literacy.

### **When Mental Health Problems impact on work**

##### has a duty of care to its employees, volunteers, visitors and, of course, the people the group supports. There will be times when a mental health problem can impede an employee’s ability to function effectively in the workplace

##### is committed to assisting employees to break down barriers and to support full participation in the workplace, and will take all reasonable steps to accommodate a mental health condition

### **Duty of Care**

Duty of care obligations require all employees and volunteers to exercise care in view of reasonably foreseeable circumstances that may arise. The safety of employees, volunteers, visitors and the people the group supports is the first priority in any situation.

**Information Sharing** When an individual discloses a mental health illness, confidentiality should be respected unless there is immediate danger to the person or others by withholding that information. When possible, it is best to ask them for permission before discussing their situation with others. Consulting others about a situation can be done without identifying the individual. The emphasis is on discussing the situation to provide the best outcome for the individual.

## **Sources of Assistance and Professional Help**

##### encourages all employees and volunteers to seek assistance and professional help, whether for themselves, a peer, friend or family member by consulting their GP, local mental health services or the ##### EAP

### **[c] Critical Incident**

Critical Incidents in the workplace can include, but are not limited to the following.

- Aggravated Assaults, Murder, Robbery, Hostage or Siege situations, Discharge of Firearms.
- Suicide, Attempted Suicide, Acts of Self Harm by persons in the care of others.
- Industrial Accidents involving serious physical trauma or fatality.
- Vehicle Accidents involving serious physical trauma or fatality.
- Sudden or unexpected death at work.

It is very common, and in fact quite normal, for people to experience emotional or stress reactions following exposure to a critical incident. The reaction may be immediate or delayed and will vary in intensity from person to person.

The duration for which a stress reaction may persist (from days, to weeks or even months) will be dependent upon factors such as the severity of the incident and the frequency with which the individual experiences critical incidents.

The level of understanding and support shown to the affected individual will also affect their ability to resolve any stress reaction. Professional assistance, including access to the EAP, understanding and working through a range of emotional responses, will significantly assist the healing process

### **Action required following advice of a Critical Incident**

1. Appropriate personnel will be advised of all critical incidents.
2. Upon receipt of a notification report that indicates that the incident is 'critical', the relevant Executive Director will immediately make contact with the EAP provider.
3. The relevant Executive Director will advise the EAP provider of the nature of the incident, the number and gender of employees exposed to the incident, and the estimated times at which these employees will be available for defusing and /or debriefing. A counsellor may be requested to attend the site in question.
4. An appropriate venue will be made available on the relevant site, to afford the necessary degree of privacy and comfort.
5. Where reasonable, employees who have been exposed to the critical incident will be requested to remain on site until such time as they have discussed the incident with the on-site counsellor. This initial counselling is to be strongly recommended to each individual employee.

Dependent upon the outcomes achieved under (5) above, the relevant Executive Director will make arrangements for a formal debriefing to be held for all persons exposed to the critical incident,

within the next 48 hours. Attendance at this debriefing by all personnel directly involved in the incident will be strongly encouraged.

### **Work Absence following Critical Incidents**

Failure to attend for work, non-participation in defusing/debriefing and avoidance of situations which invite recall of the incident are possible indications of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and should be regarded with caution.

Where an employee fails to attend for work following a critical incident, the relevant Executive Director will:

1. provide details of EAP to the individual and encourage utilisation of services;
2. request immediate assistance in contacting the employee to ascertain their wellbeing and promote their involvement in the formal debriefing process.
- 3, Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate

### **BREACHES OF THE POLICY PROCEDURES**

Any breaches of the Employee Wellbeing Policy Procedures could constitute a possible act of misconduct. Reference is accordingly made to ### Employee Discipline and Termination Policy which outlines the relevant processes that may be followed if misconduct is suspected.