



# Staff Rights to a Safe Workplace

The Staff Rights to a Safe Workplace is a resource for staff to understand their rights to a safe workplace, to be able to identify unacceptable behaviours that are not just 'part of the job', and be supported to always report any incident that threatens their health or safety and their ability to deliver quality healthcare services as provided to the community.

## WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE?

Occupational violence is defined as any action, incident or behaviour that departs from reasonable conduct in which a person is assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured in the course of, or as a direct result of his or her work. These behaviours of occupational violence are always unacceptable, some examples are listed below and are not limited to those listed.

In the workplace, there can be many types of unacceptable behaviours towards staff, and it is important that they are **always** reported regardless if the incident is intentionally or unintentionally caused. Some of these situations can be caused from:

- concerned family members or friends who are in emotional distress
- those individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- clinical conditions such as dementia, delirium, post-operative responses, acute mental illness, or head trauma

**These behaviours, while there's no physical contact, are still violent and aggressive. These behaviours are unacceptable and must always be reported**

- Aggressive body language
- Standing in the way
- Rude gestures
- Yelling
- Banging fists on a desk
- Name calling and swearing
- Racist comments
- Threats to physical safety
- Sexual harassment.

**These violent behaviours involve physical contact, make work unsafe and create fear. These behaviours are unacceptable and must always be reported**

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Choking
- Scratching
- Spitting
- Throwing things
- Sexual assault.

## **STAFF HAVE THE RIGHT TO:**

- a safe and healthy workplace, free of violence and aggression
- be respected by others
- be treated fairly and not discriminated against because of our age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability or other characteristics
- feel safe and be free from physical and psychological harm
- report concerns, hazards and incidents in the workplace without fear
- make an attempt to withdraw from a unsafe situation
- ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- have access to organisational policies and procedures relating to occupational violence, including reporting
- participate in consultation relating to work health safety matters in the workplace
- be provided with information, training and education programs relating to occupational violence
- a workplace with control measures in place to protect us from risk and adverse outcomes
- receive information and timely feedback on reported risks, hazards, incidents and near misses and on investigations in the workplace, including outcomes and recommendations
- receive immediate and ongoing support from peers, managers and the organisation if confronted with violence
- facilitation and support from my managers and organisation in reporting criminal offences to police.

## **SUPPORT FOR STAFF**

**Working in health care can be highly demanding and very rewarding. It can be a challenging, intense and stressful time that challenges you both personally and professionally. If you are experiencing issues in your personal or professional life, seek help early. You are not alone. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a 24-hour free, professional, independent and confidential counselling service available to help resolve issues related to work or of a personal nature.**

**In the first instance you should seek support and advice from your managers, health and safety representatives (HSRs) and People Strategy.**

**By reporting all incidents in the Riskman system this gives your organisation the opportunity to take steps to eliminate, prevent, manage and minimise work health safety risks.**

Support	Email/phone contact
<b>Wellbeing</b> Staff and wellbeing resources, services, programs and training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee Assistance Program (EAP)</li><li>• Managers Hotline</li><li>• Respect Equity Diversity (RED) Contact Officers</li><li>• Workplace Resolution and Support Service.</li></ul>	Information about access to this support is available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HeathHQ; and</li><li>• People Strategy at HDHR@act.gov.au or 5124 9201.</li></ul>
<b>People Strategy</b> Provides advice, support for on employment conditions, work health and safety, recruitment, leave, workplace issues, learning, performance development, values and the code of conduct.	HeathHQ; and People Strategy at HDHR@act.gov.au or 5124 9201.

## YOUR UNION

Support staff to resolve workplace issues by advocating and being a voice for employees. More information is available at HeathHQ.

