STANDARD

Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) has a policy of zero tolerance to threatening behaviour, bullying, harassment and violence.

1. All workers have a right to a safe workplace
2. All acts of violence / threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment (including sexual harassment) will be dealt with in a consistent manner.
3. All staff are expected to act in a manner that protects the safety and security of others and the property of the BOPDHB.
4. No staff member is expected to ever put themselves at risk (actual or potential) when dealing with people threatening violence or carrying out a violent act.
5. There is never an excuse for aggressive behaviour.
6. Perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their behaviour.

STANDARDS TO BE MET

1. Responsibilities

1.1 Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors must ensure that:

a) All instances of violent and / or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment exhibited by employees are appropriately addressed
b) 'At risk' employees are provided with effective controls to prevent and minimise exposure to violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment
c) Employees who encounter violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment know what to do and are provided with adequate support and counselling
d) Any violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment exhibited by, and / or as a result of, employee behaviour is addressed through BOPDHB policy 3.50.02 protocol 9 Investigation Process.

1.2 Employees

Employees must ensure that they:

a) Do not exhibit violent behaviour, provoke violence or threatening behaviour, intimidate / bully, or harass fellow employees
b) Co-operate with their manager(s) to identify areas of work where the potential for violence or threatening behaviour / bullying is likely
c) Work in accordance with the procedures and policies put in place by BOPDHB to prevent or reduce the incidence of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment, including any work practices, methods and instructions
d) Report all incidences of violence / threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment on a Reportable Event Form (electronic)
e) Sexual harassment complaints can to be directed to Employee Health and Safety Speciality Nurse. You can also make complaints of sexual harassment to the Police and the Humans Rights Commission. If complaining externally please notify the HR Services Manager.
f) Give support to fellow employee(s) who may have been victims of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment.
g) Take reasonable steps to ensure their safety when working alone.

h) Park in, and keep to, well-lit areas within as close a proximity to main exits as possible if working at night.
i) Follow the Emergency Procedure (flipcharts) if involved in any of the following:
   i. Hold up
   ii. Aggression
   iii. Bomb Threat / Suspicious Object
   iv. Abduction / Hostage

2. Management of Violence or Threatening Behaviour / Bullying / Harassment

2.1 Identification of problems / potential problems

a) Managers should use a consultation process to identify situations where employees may be exposed to violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment.
b) Managers should feed back to employees regarding any issues identified.
c) Ongoing assessment should be carried out to identify new issues.
d) Patients / clients exhibiting violent behaviour should, wherever practicable, be assessed by an appropriate qualified health professional and their behaviour monitored.
e) Records should be kept of any patients with suspected or known violent behaviour and appropriate preventive actions / management plans recorded.

2.2 Recording and classification of incidents

a) Employees should be encouraged to report all incidents of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment, using the REF reporting form.
b) Incidents of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment should be classified and grouped. Types may range from 'death' through to 'serious and / or persistent threats of verbal abuse'.
c) Collated data should be analysed by the OHSM Team to establish patterns, commonalities, underlying causes and the extent and nature of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment issues in the workplace.

2.3 Preventive measures

a) Managers should actively involve employees in the process of finding solutions to minimise / eliminate violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment from the workplace.
b) Work practices should be evaluated and modified, if required, to lessen risks and exposure to violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment.
c) All cash and drugs should be held in secure, controlled environments.
d) A robust visitor-credentialling process should be in place to ensure only authorised visitors access appropriate areas.
e) Appropriate induction, training and supervision should be provided for new and existing employees in relation to management of workplace violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment.
f) Wherever practicable, elimination / minimisation of violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment or potential threatening behaviour should be taken into account in the design of facilities and equipment.
g) All employee-only areas should be appropriately secured.
h) Employees should undergo regular customer service training updates to maximise the interpersonal skills required to defuse potentially violent situations.
i) High-risk areas should be fitted with employee alert / alarm systems.

2.4 Employee support

a) Managers should ensure that appropriate support systems are in place for any employee involved in a workplace violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment incident, prior to there being a need for such support.

2.5 Monitoring

a) Regular monitoring of workplace violence or threatening behaviour / bullying / harassment incidents should occur through the incident reporting process and the employee health and safety process.
b) Trends unable to be addressed through individual incident follow-up may need to be reviewed by a joint employer-employee forum.

3. Investigate / Gather the facts

3.1 Investigate

It is crucial that a complete investigation of the incident is carried out by the employer. The investigation will involve obtaining a statement / version of events from the complainant as well as any witnesses to the event(s), if applicable. A key element in the investigation process is the inclusion of the employee concerned - they must know at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the allegation; the consequences if it is proven; and must be given full opportunity for an explanation. Both the complainant and the person who has allegedly exhibited behaviour that constitutes violence / harassment as defined by this policy are entitled to have representation at the investigation meeting(s).

3.2 Decision to continue

a) Having completed an investigation, the employer must decide on the basis of the facts gathered as to whether there is a need to proceed with a further investigation interview or address the issue in another way.
b) If there is no evidence of any incident warranting discipline the case should be dropped, and the employee informed (very occasionally the employer may discover the complaint was malicious and the action is then with the “complainant”).
c) It is crucial that a complete investigation of the incident is carried out by the employer. The investigation will involve obtaining a statement/ version of events from the complainant as well as any witnesses to the event(s), if applicable. A key element in the investigation process is the inclusion of the employee concerned - they must be informed at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the allegation; the consequences if it is proven; and must be given full opportunity for an explanation.

3.3 Representation

Both the complainant and the person who has allegedly exhibited behaviour that constitutes violence / harassment as defined by this policy are entitled to have representation at the investigation meeting(s).

REFERENCES

- Worksafe New Zealand. Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying. Best Practice Guidelines. February 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and Regulations 2016

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.4.7 Threatening Behaviour, Bullying, Harassment & Violence in the Workplace – Management Of
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 1.2.4 Restraint Minimisation and Safe Practice
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 2.1.1 Risk Management
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 2.1.3 Hazard Management
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 2.1.4 Incident Management
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 3.50.02 protocol 9 Investigation Process
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 3.50.02 protocol 15 - Disciplinary Process
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.4.5 Impairment - Management of Impaired Employee
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.3.1 Employee Health and Safety
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 5.3.1 protocol 4 EHS Management for Contractors, Visitors and Volunteers
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 3.50.02 protocol 7 Supporting Staff
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 6.9.4 Visitors and Lead Support Persons
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board policy 7.104.1 protocol 3 Observing Patients
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board Emergency Department Protocol ED.V2.1 Violence - Management of Potentially Violent Patients
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board Emergency Department Protocol ED.V3.1 Violence - Short Term Management of Acute Behaviour Disturbance in Adults
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board Reportable Event Form (electronic)
- Bay of Plenty District Health Board Emergency Flipcharts