

## Prevention of Workplace Aggression Policy

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### Objective:

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide a framework for the prevention and management of workplace aggression
- Promote a *zero tolerance* to workplace aggressive behaviour and aggressive violence
- Promote a safe working environment for all workers
- Promote strategies for the management of workplace aggression.

### Policy Statement:

The Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH) workforce has the right to work in a safe and healthy work environment free from violence and aggression. Workplace aggression and violence is recognised as a significant workplace hazard. Aggressive and violent behaviour towards NMH workers will not be tolerated.

NMH is committed to preventing and managing risks associated with aggression to ensure a safe environment for workers, patients (clients, service users) and visitors.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all locations where work is undertaken by NMH workers, contractors (excluding Planning and Funding Contracts), volunteers and students whether on site or off site. This also encompasses patients, members of the public, volunteers and others who have accessed NMH services and support: or are visiting/supporting a patient, service user or client.

### Definitions:

**Zero tolerance:** a complete refusal to tolerate aggressive behaviours. It is important to differentiate unacceptable workplace aggressive behaviour from that of behaviour demonstrated as a result of a medical condition such as dementia, hypoxia or brain injury, for example.

**Workplace aggressive behaviour:** incidents, perceived or real to individuals, when they are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of their employment, involving an implicit challenge to their safety, health or wellbeing.

**Workplace violence:** an action or incident that physically or psychologically harms another person. It includes situations where workers and other people are threatened, attacked or physically assaulted at work.

**Non-physical violence** such as verbal abuse, intimidation and threatening behaviour, may also significantly affect a person's health and wellbeing. Threats may be perceived or real and there does not have to be physical injury for the violence to be a workplace hazard. Workers may be affected by workplace violence even if they are not directly involved.

**Physical violence:** the use of physical force against another person or group that results in physical harm. It includes, but is not limited to, pinching, biting, pushing, spitting, slapping, kicking, and beating, shooting and stabbing.

**Psychological violence:** the use of power against another person or group that results in psychological harm or an inability to develop professionally. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, suggestive behaviour, threats of physical abuse, intimidation and bullying.

## Procedures:

NMH will achieve the elimination/minimisation of workplace violence or aggression by implementing the following:

1. The promotion of a policy and framework supporting a risk management approach to workplace violence/aggression;
2. Ensure compliance of obligations/duties owed, as stated in Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 and the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2016 in ensuring a safe work environment/ for the workforce.
3. Review and update integrated systems to prevent and manage occupational violence and aggression based on a risk management framework, involving the proactive identification, assessment and implementation of appropriate risk controls, with timely review and evaluation of risk controls;
4. Provide a secure and safe physical environment, including buildings, grounds and car parking areas;
5. Provide information, training and education to workers on the Policy and procedures, including capacity and capability to respond to incidents; measures to prevent and control risk of violence and aggression; and to respond to , de-escalate and defuse situations;
6. Ensure appropriate equipment for summoning assistance in an emergency: an audit of all equipment; alarm testing, maintenance and replacement where appropriate of emergency equipment; and adequate training/refresher for those who will activate equipment.
7. Provide accessible and supportive information and resources for demobilising, defusing and debriefing for all NMH workers;
8. Ensure adequate emergency response systems are available, known to all workers, relevant to the work environment, work tasks and work undertaken; and are tested in a timely manner to ensure effectiveness and allow continual improvement.
9. Ensure workers are aware of and encouraged to report all incidents/injuries/events; and all incidents/injuries and events are investigated to ensure the effectiveness of risk controls and in consideration and application of continual improvement.

## Responsibilities:

### Officers (NMH Board Members, CEO, ELT)

- To ensure that NMH meets its' obligations under the HSWA (2015) to provide, a safe and healthy work environment.
- To take reasonably practicable steps to:
  - Check that NMH has processes in place to communicate and consider information about workplace aggression and to respond to that information;
  - Check that NMH has appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise workplace aggression risks, and that these are used
  - Understand the work of the organisation and the workplace aggression risks that workers and volunteers may face when working for the organisation;
- To ensure that there is an organisation-wide systematic approach to the risk management actions for the prevention of workplace aggression.
- To ensure that there are reasonable resources available to the PCBU's to implement the Prevention of Workplace Aggression

## PCBU (Persons Conducting Business or Undertaking) General Managers

- To provide leadership and support for zero tolerance of workplace aggression.
- To ensure compliance with policies and procedures which eliminate/minimises the risk of workplace aggression/violence?
- Ensure there is adequate information, training, instruction or supervision provided for work tasks/activities with an assessed risk of workplace aggression.
- Ensure appropriate monitoring of the health and wellbeing of workers, where there is a high risk of workplace aggression – for the purpose of preventing physical or psychological injury/impact.
- Provide and maintain a work environment without risks; and has considered physical and psychological work environments.

## Managers, Team Leaders, and Supervisors (Those who have control or influence over work: environment, task, equipment and workers)

- To promote a workplace that is free of workplace aggression
- Ensure all workers are aware of and have access to: procedures, resources, appropriate training and relevant information regarding the prevention of workplace aggression.
- To implement the Prevention of Workplace Aggression Policy in the workplace.
- To provide a supportive process for workers to discuss workplace aggression concerns either in relation to themselves, regarding another worker or involving client/patient/service users or their relevant support persons.
- To ensure that workers complete an online reportable event in Safety 1<sup>st</sup> for all workplace aggression related incidents/injuries/PTCH (potential to cause harm) events.
- To investigate all reported incidents of workplace aggression; ensure significant learnings are communicated in a timely manner to the relevant workgroup; provide adequate feedback to individual workers and relevant workgroup/s; and consult with workers when developing/implementing additional risk controls.

## Workers (Includes contractors, volunteers and students)

- To comply with and promote the Prevention of Workplace Aggression Policy and procedures to maintain a safe and healthy workplace
- To participate in training/education opportunities about the impact and signs workplace aggression
- To participate and contribute to workplace audits, review of policy and procedures regarding workplace aggression
- To inform the designated Manager if they have any concerns regarding workplace aggression
- Report all incidents, injuries or PTCH (Potential to Cause Harm) events on Safety 1<sup>st</sup>.
- To participate and contribute in the development and implementation of risk controls applicable both organisation-wide and within a designated work area.

## References:

**Health and Safety at Work Act 2015**

**Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2016**

**Nelson Marlborough Health – policies and procedures**

**Staying Safe at Work Policy**