

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre

Section 3

Human Resources

Critical Incident Procedure

Policy:	Critical Incident Procedure
Sub heading:	Human Resources
Status:	Operational
Approval date:	27 th June 2006
Reviewed:	6 th October 2009
Approved By:	Management Committee
Review Date:	October 2012
Staff Training Date/s:	19/7/06

Purpose:

To set out guidelines that must be followed for Staff, Volunteers and Students to be known as Team Members requiring critical incident support

This procedure will apply to all staff, volunteers and students who are exposed to stress or other traumatic events in the course of the activities at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre Inc. (NNC).

References:

1. NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
2. Stress, the workplace and the individual (Work Cover Authority of NSW April 1996)
3. The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre's OHS Policies and Procedures:

Definition:

Critical Incident: An event that is outside of normal day-to-day working life and of such a nature that significant stress is created. It usually involves some threat to life or physical well-being or trauma. Examples include:

- Death of a person receiving a service
- Serious injury or loss of a Team Member
- A robbery
- Motor Vehicle Accident
- Incidents which attract a lot of media attention to the organization
- Violence in the workplace
- Emergency at the workplace
- Sexual or other harassment

A critical incident can create a variety of psychological symptoms than can vary in their nature and intensity with each individual. Some common reactions include:

- Agitation
- Poor Concentration
- Flashbacks
- Guilt
- A sense of vulnerability

Procedure

Responsibilities

The Executive Officer, Managers and Project Coordinators are required to identify possible major traumatic events that Team Members with NNC may be exposed to and develop appropriate

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systems including an action plan to ensure that when Team Members are exposed to critical incidents appropriate support and assistance are given promptly.

All critical incidents must be taken seriously and procedures that are implemented must be followed every time an incident occurs.

All Team Members must be advised to personally diarise any incidents they are exposed to while working for NNC to ensure full recall of the incident.

NNC will contact, develop and maintain a working relationship with the nominated counselling and support services in order to implement an incident management following a critical incident. The counselling service designated will be nominated by NNC.

The costs associated with critical incident debriefing and counselling are to be borne by NNC and where applicable, by the Workers Compensation Insurer.

Counselling and support should be commenced as soon as possible following a critical incident and overseen by Project Coordinator/s Managers or Executive Officer.

Ensuring Personal Safety

The first step is to ensure the immediate safety of all Team Members and render First Aid as required.

Reporting Incidents

The incident must be reported immediately in person or by telephone to the Project Coordinator, Manager or Executive Officer. It must also be reported as soon as possible in the appropriate written format, which is the Hazard/Incident or Accident Form.

Critical Incident Debriefing

Any critical incident debriefing that may be required should occur as soon as possible after the incident and the timeframe will be within twenty four [24] to seventy two hours [72]. The Executive Officer can instruct staff to attend debriefing sessions.

Ongoing Support

Methods to support staff member may include internal support such as:

- Organising team member training
- Encouraging a sense of cohesion and morale through informal or social discussions.
- Involving team member in reviewing day to day tasks and duties.

Methods to support staff members may include external support such as:

- Team member seeing a qualified counsellor
- Organising team member training

Post-Incident Review

Following all incidents, reviews will be implemented to ensure the appropriateness of all steps taken to identify areas where improvements are required and implementation of those improvements. This process must be documented and any changes made communicated to relevant team members.

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