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1A Identify behaviours of concern in line with work role and organisational policies and procedures

Everyone who works with people should have a basic understanding of how to identify and respond to behaviours of concern. This applies to community services workers as well as people working in a range of other roles.

In the past, behaviours of concern were often referred to as difficult or challenging behaviours. They can include a range of behaviours that are not appropriate in a particular situation or indicate that an individual is experiencing problems related to their physical or mental health, the environment or how they communicate with or relate to others.



Behaviours of concern

There are several main behaviours of concern that you may observe in people you work with.

Some behaviours of concern that you may encounter are shown below.

Aggression

- ▶ Aggression is any behaviour or action that another person finds offensive or intimidating. It can be either physical or verbal.
- ▶ Physical aggression may cause physical harm and may occur because an individual is angry, frustrated or attempting to meet specific needs through aggressive behaviour. It includes pushing, shoving, hitting, biting and other physically intimidating or aggressive acts.
- ▶ Verbal aggression may stem from anger or an attempt to control others through belittling, frightening or insulting them (see verbal offensiveness).

Confusion

- ▶ People experiencing confusion or other cognitive impairments may have difficulty thinking clearly and understanding what is happening around them.
- ▶ Confusion or cognitive impairment may be associated with dementia, but can also be a result of other conditions such as dehydration, infections or reactions to medications. People experiencing confusion may appear to be forgetful, puzzled, bewildered, uncertain, angry, upset or distressed.

individuals in your care, ensuring their needs are being addressed and that they are comfortable and relaxed. If a person suddenly starts behaving in a difficult manner, you need to think and act quickly.

Actions for diverting aggressive behaviour include:

- ▶ Remaining calm
- ▶ Requesting that others who are present move away
- ▶ Showing a willingness to listen
- ▶ Giving the person the time and space to calm down

Procedures for responding appropriately

Organisational policies and procedures will provide guidance on how to respond appropriately to potential instances of behaviours of concern.

Below are some suggested responses.

Stay calm

The person's behaviour may escalate if you appear anxious, frightened, angry or upset and the situation may worsen.

When you are calm you can more easily help calm someone who is confused, angry or upset.

Avoid quick movements or gestures that may seem threatening to the individual.

Observe the situation

Observing the situation will help you understand what is happening.

Avoid jumping to conclusions that may be incorrect and unfair.

Remain objective and, if possible, gather information.

Respond appropriately

Past experience and knowledge of an individual will help you respond to their individual needs and de-escalate or divert any characteristic behaviours of concern.

Be prepared

If the person is unknown to you, be prepared for unpredictable behaviour.

Reassure the person you are there to help.

Be observant and note their body language.

Make security a priority and do not approach closely until you are sure it is safe to do so.

Stay safe

Keeping yourself, the person and others safe is a priority.

Clear the area of other people if the behaviour is disruptive or could cause harm.

If possible, take the individual to a quiet, safe room, but leave the door open and ensure a clear exit path.

Addressing your duty-of-care obligations

- ▶ Follow planned responses to behaviours of concern so they are addressed in an appropriate and safe manner.
- ▶ Make the safety of yourself and others a priority.
- ▶ Report and record any incidents or behaviours of concern in line with organisation guidelines; for example, filling in incident reports and noting them in person case notes.
- ▶ Report and record any changes in person behaviour immediately so the behaviour can be monitored and planned responses can be developed if necessary.

Human rights

Human rights recognise the value of every person, regardless of background, where we live, what we look like, what we think or what we believe. They are based on principles of equality and respect, shared across cultures, religions and philosophies. They are about being treated fairly, treating others fairly and having the ability to make genuine choices in our daily lives. Respect for human rights underpins the values and principles of the community services and should be applied by all workers when supporting people including those with behaviours of concern.

The Australian Government supports and respects many of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights developed by the United Nations.

Human rights Treaties supported by Australia:

- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- ▶ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- ▶ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ▶ Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- ▶ Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Example

Identify appropriate response to potential instances of behaviours of concern

Joel is 18 years old and is in a wheelchair due to a physical disability. He attends a living skills program so he can learn to live independently in his own unit. Joel engages in some behaviour that makes it difficult for him to get along with others; for example, he becomes very angry and shouts at people if he does not get his own way.

One day, Joel throws a plate of spaghetti bolognese at Ali, a worker, because he wants something else for lunch. Other people are upset by Joel's behaviour and frightened that he might hurt them. Ali is annoyed at having spaghetti all over him but he calmly explains to Joel that this is not appropriate behaviour, that he needs to consider other people's feelings and to tell staff if something is upsetting him, rather than just shouting or throwing things.

continued ...

Availability of appropriate staff and resources

It is important to be aware of the resources available to support you when managing behaviours of concern. Always draw on the help and support of other appropriate people when necessary.

Human resources include your supervisor, team members and co-workers, health professionals, security officers, the police, other residents and neighbours, and family members and friends.

For example, if a person has wandered away, you must inform your supervisor immediately and alert other staff, security personnel and possibly the police. You should also contact family members to obtain any information and assistance you can from them.



Resources available to assist

People who are agitated, angry or distressed usually feel more comfortable if they are taken to a quiet room where any external stimulation is reduced and they have a chance to regain a sense of calm. Those whose behaviour may be a result of lack of stimulation or boredom may prefer to have other people around and to be offered activities to keep them occupied and engaged.

Listed below is a range of other resources that may help when responding to incidents or behaviours of concern.

Resources that may help when responding to incidents or behaviours of concern include:

- ▶ a quiet room or space where the individual can be away from others
- ▶ medical supplies such as bandages if someone is injured
- ▶ equipment to clean up broken glass or other rubbish
- ▶ personal items such as photos that can help distract people and calm them down
- ▶ cards or games to distract and occupy the person
- ▶ preferred music
- ▶ cups of tea/coffee and snacks
- ▶ family contact details
- ▶ the person's care or support plan.

Issues requiring referrals to health professionals

Some people may require referral to health professionals to address changing needs or emerging health concerns. Always try to be alert to any changes in a person's general health, sensory function, habits, mental alertness and moods that may require professional assessment and treatment.

Once the person has been referred to a health professional for specialist assessment or treatment, make sure you understand and follow the instructions and guidance they have provided for the person's care.

Summary

1. It is important to keep in mind that behaviours of concern are often a form of communication.
2. Community services workers must be able to identify and plan appropriate responses to behaviours of concern in line with organisational policies and procedures and their own level of authority.
3. A clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your job role reduces the risk of misunderstandings.
4. Responding appropriately to behaviours of concern requires knowledge of what is expected of you based on your organisation's policies and procedures and your job description.
5. Remain alert at all times to possible instances of behaviours of concern.
6. You must take reasonable steps to avoid acts or omissions that may cause harm to others, especially people in your care.
7. It is important to know who you can call on for help and what resources are most appropriate.
8. As you gain experience, you will find you can more easily identify what a person is attempting to communicate through their behaviour and prevent the escalation of behaviour through appropriate planned responses.
9. People may require referral to health professionals to address changing needs or emerging health concerns.
10. Workers also have responsibilities under legislation for workplace health and safety.
11. When you observe behaviour that may cause harm or disturb and upset people, you have a responsibility to take action.

Procedures

Procedures provide step-by-step instructions for carrying out specific tasks. They ensure that tasks are carried out in a consistent way and to a specified standard, that workers have specific guidelines to follow and that everyone knows what to do in cases of emergency.

Common procedures include grievance or complaints procedures, evacuation procedures, manual-handling procedures, report-writing procedures, incident-reporting procedures and specific responses to different types of behaviours of concern.

Principles of community service

When responding to behaviours of concern, you also need to keep in mind a range of workplace policies and procedures, such as adhering to WHS laws and policies for safeguarding the safety of yourself and others. In addition to this, respecting people rights as outlined in legislation, industry standards and organisation rights statements and policies is also important. Other things to keep in mind include maintaining people's confidentiality and privacy as required by privacy legislation, principles and policies, avoiding any form of discrimination as required by anti-discrimination legislation and organisation policies, and reporting incidents clearly and accurately.

Other community services principles relevant to managing incidents of behaviours of concern are described below.

Community services principles relevant to managing incidents of behaviours of concern

Be respectful and avoid embarrassing or humiliating a person because of a particular behaviour.

Show empathy and try to see things from the perspective of the people engaging in the behaviour and those affected by it.

Be aware that the people may be trying to express a particular need or problem through their behaviour.

Be non-judgmental and do not form negative opinions of people because of their behaviour or expect them to conform to your own values and beliefs.

Specific policies and procedures

A typical policy for managing behaviours of concern provides an overview of how the organisation addresses these behaviours and the values and standards they adhere to in developing planned responses.

You will find many examples of policies and procedures for responding to behaviours of concern on the internet. You may need to search for terms such as 'challenging behaviour' or 'difficult behaviour' as well as 'behaviours of concern' to find relevant policies.

Example

Ensure response reflects organisational policies and procedures

Here is an example of an organisational procedure for responding to verbal aggression.

Observe

- ▶ Determine whether the behaviour is actually verbal aggression or if the people is simply talking loudly, colourfully or in a somewhat angry way.
- ▶ Verbal aggression is characterised by an attempt to threaten, control or frighten others. It may include yelling, shouting, abusive and threatening language and name-calling.

Take action if necessary

- ▶ Remember that all interventions must take the individual into account and treat them with respect and dignity.
- ▶ Stay calm and do not argue with the individual.
- ▶ Take the people to a quiet area or alternatively ask others to leave the immediate area.
- ▶ Allow the people time and space to calm down. You may do this by encouraging them to talk calmly about what has happened and listening with attention, and offering diversional activities such as a cup of tea, quiet music or other activities that may help them settle down.
- ▶ Call your supervisor or seek another person's help if the aggression continues or escalates.

Document what has taken place

It is important to note:

- ▶ what happened
- ▶ when it happened
- ▶ who was involved
- ▶ why you think it happened
- ▶ if there were any specific triggers involved.

Practice task 5

1. Why is it important to follow an organisation's policies and procedures?

Use problem-solving skills

When you see someone engaged in a behaviour of concern, you should immediately think of what resources you can draw on to manage the situation. Part of responding promptly and thinking strategically involves having the ability to use problem-solving skills. In a crisis situation or an incident involving behaviours of concern, this involves thinking quickly to decide what you should do first. Always keep in mind that your first priority in any situation that may result in harm to people is your own safety and that of others. If a person is being very noisy and disrupting others, you should quickly think of people, resources and activities to help you divert the behaviour and minimise the noise. If a person is acting in an aggressive or threatening way towards you or other people, request that others leave the area and make sure you have a way of exiting the situation quickly if necessary.



Stay calm and positive

As mentioned, it is very important to remain calm and act in a positive and confident way when responding to behaviours of concern.

When you are calm, you can more easily think clearly and assess the situation, calm others, remember what you should do and act decisively and confidently.

You act in a positive way when you refuse to be upset or intimidated by a particular behaviour or situation. Your posture and speech should convey confidence and a focus on what can be done to resolve the issue rather than concentrating on the problems or negatives of a particular situation.

You can help yourself remain calm by:

- ▶ taking deep breaths
- ▶ speaking slowly and clearly
- ▶ focusing on the people involved and the situation at hand
- ▶ being confident in your knowledge and ability to implement planned responses.

Be firm and diplomatic

The way you present yourself and how you speak is very important when dealing with behaviours of concern. By being firm, you show you are in control of the situation and know what needs to be done to manage the behaviour, including making it clear why the behaviour is inappropriate. However, it is also necessary to be diplomatic so you do not humiliate or embarrass the people concerned. Many people may not be aware that their behaviour is offensive to others. If you are not diplomatic, you may alienate the individual, which could cause upset and further behavioural problems.

tone of voice and posture should reflect your words. If you seem tense or frightened, the individual may interpret this to mean you are not sure what you are doing and lack confidence. This is likely to further unsettle them.

Below are some nonverbal behaviours to be aware of that may block communication.

Nonverbal behaviours that may block communication

- ▶ Frowning or appearing tense and angry
- ▶ Using gestures that may appear threatening, such as raising your hand or shaking your fist
- ▶ Crossing your arms in front of you, as this creates a physical or postural barrier
- ▶ Maintaining eye contact in a way that is intense or threatening
- ▶ Turning your back on the person as this may seem like lack of interest or rejection

Impacts of nonverbal communication

When communicating with someone who is engaging in a behaviour of concern, observe the effects of what you are saying and doing on them.

Being able to interpret other people's body language can help you decide how to manage behaviours of concern. Learn to know the types of body language displayed by the people you work with. You may be able to resolve the behaviour more quickly once you recognise the signs.

Below are examples of how a person's nonverbal communication may reflect their response to what you are communicating; that is, whether it is having a positive or negative impact on them.

Positive impact

- ▶ Facial expression and posture are relaxed
- ▶ Any gestures are non-threatening and low-key
- ▶ Arms and shoulders appear relaxed
- ▶ Eyes are relaxed and they are able to maintain eye contact without intensity
- ▶ Person may be seated

Negative impact

- ▶ General appearance may be agitated and tense
- ▶ Gestures are threatening, such as shaking a fist, leaning toward you and shouting
- ▶ Arms may be in front of the body and shoulders tensed
- ▶ Eyes are downcast or staring with fixed eye contact
- ▶ Person may be pacing and showing signs of anger or agitation



A flame to indicate flammable material



A fire extinguisher next to a flame to indicate the location of a fire extinguisher



A phone handset to indicate an emergency telephone



A person losing their balance and falling backwards to indicate a wet or slippery surface



A cigarette surrounded by a red circle and a diagonal red line to indicate a no-smoking area

Numeracy skills

Basic numeracy skills will help you record numerical information, report how many times a person has engaged in a particular behaviour within a given time frame, work out whether reported incidents of behaviours of concern have decreased or increased over a month or other time frame and allow you to estimate or predict how many times a person may engage in a behaviour such as wandering within a particular time frame.



If you do not think you have the literacy and numeracy skills to carry out these tasks, there are a number of ways you can improve your competence. These include asking

2E Select appropriate strategies to suit particular instances of behaviours of concern

You need to use appropriate strategies to respond effectively to behaviours of concern. The strategy you use will depend on the type of behaviour the people is engaged in, the person's individual needs and the organisation's recommended approaches.

Appropriate strategies for responding to behaviours of concern include diversional activities, emergency response procedures and referring to appropriate personnel.



Diversional activities

Diversional activities are designed to distract or divert a person from engaging in a particular behaviour. They offer something else to do that may help the individual calm down or become engaged in an activity they enjoy. Many organisations employ diversional therapists who are trained in selecting and providing activities to engage and occupy people, especially in residential, day and respite care services.

Your organisation may recommend a range of diversional activities that you can use in general incidents and with particular people. These will be found in relevant policies and procedures and in the person's own care or support plan.

Below are some examples of diversional activities.

Music

Music can be used to calm people and to help lift their mood.

Activities

It is important to know a person's preferred activities so you can offer these when the person needs distracting and calming. Activities may include playing cards or games, drawing or painting, singing, gardening, looking at their favourite photos or talking with a friend or relative.

Walking

Walking with a staff member or trusted companion may help to remove an individual from a noisy environment and provide an opportunity to talk in a more relaxing environment.

Snack

Many people associate tea in particular with relaxation and a chance to unwind. A favourite snack can give them something to enjoy when they are feeling stressed, upset or confused.

Intoxication

An intoxicated person may harm themselves or others. Their behaviour can also be very annoying or frightening for people nearby. You need to handle these situations carefully because an intoxicated person's behaviour can be very unpredictable.

You should:

- ▶ approach them slowly and try to maintain eye contact
- ▶ observe the situation and see whether you need someone else's assistance
- ▶ try to get the individual to a quiet space, but avoid touching them or getting too close
- ▶ speak calmly and let them know what you want them to do
- ▶ use an alarm if the situation looks as if it is getting out of control or the person becomes aggressive.

Intrusive behaviour

A person who is intrusive can cause other people offence. You need to handle the situation sensitively because they may not be aware that they are being intrusive and acting in an inappropriate way. Intrusive behaviour includes going through other people's things or being too interested in their personal lives.

You should:

- ▶ gently steer the people away from the situation where they are engaging in intrusive behaviour
- ▶ change the topic of conversation if the people asks someone else too many personal questions or gossips about others
- ▶ provide diversional activities so the people will not be bored
- ▶ explain why their behaviour causes upset and offence.

Manipulation

Manipulative behaviour is not as noticeable as some other behaviours of concern. You may need to observe this over a period of time. Once you are aware that someone is engaging in manipulative behaviour, monitor what is happening and intervene if necessary to prevent others being manipulated.

You should:

- ▶ learn to recognise an individual's preferred type of manipulative behaviour; for example, getting others to do things for them or spreading false information
- ▶ observe the impact the behaviour has on others
- ▶ be firm but gentle when refusing requests or when intervening and explaining why their behaviour is inappropriate and hurtful to others.

Wandering

Wandering can be dangerous, especially if the people wanders off in the evening. You need to act as soon as you see them start to wander and then apply strategies to minimise the wandering.

You should:

- ▶ search for the people in all the places they might be
- ▶ notify your supervisor, other staff, security, the police and family members if it is clear the people has disappeared
- ▶ if you find the people about to wander, speak calmly to them and gently guide them back to where they should be
- ▶ offer diversional activities they enjoy
- ▶ monitor them closely
- ▶ ensure the people has regular health checks for their health.

Example

Select appropriate strategies to suit particular instances of behaviours of concern

The following is a summary of the general strategies a worker may use to respond to instances of behaviours of concern:

- ▶ Recognise the behaviour.
- ▶ Take action to minimise or stop the behaviour.
- ▶ Clear the area of onlookers or, if possible, take the people to a quiet area.
- ▶ Calm the situation down by speaking calmly, offering emotional support and, if appropriate, offering diversional activities.
- ▶ Use a duress or personal alarm to obtain assistance if necessary.
- ▶ Notify your supervisor if the situation escalates.
- ▶ Continue attempts to defuse the situation and protect the safety of all concerned.
- ▶ Ring the police if the situation cannot be reasonably controlled by staff.
- ▶ Record what has taken place according to workplace guidelines.
- ▶ Participate in a staff debriefing to talk about what happened and defuse any residual stress.
- ▶ Participate in an incident review.





Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Report incidents according to organisational policies and procedures**
- 3B Review incidents with appropriate staff and offer suggestions appropriate to your area of responsibility**
- 3C Access and participate in available debriefing mechanisms and associated support and/or development activities**
- 3D Seek advice and assistance from legitimate sources as and when appropriate**

Report and review incidents

Your organisation will have specific requirements for reporting incidents involving behaviours of concern. These will include writing relevant information in the person's case or progress notes and filling in incident forms. It is important that you follow your organisation's policies and procedures and use the correct protocols and forms for making reports.

Workplaces will have specific procedures in place to follow after an incident occurs. These include offering a debriefing session to all staff involved in the incident and reviewing what happened to determine whether improvements can be made in the way staff responded to the incident. Staff should be encouraged to seek advice and assistance from people who can help them understand their people better and help them respond to behaviours of concern more appropriately.

The records may be read by supervisors, healthcare professionals and anyone else who is involved in a person's care. The type of form you use and information required may differ between organisations. Your supervisor is the best person to explain the policies and procedures you have to follow.

Below is the information that is commonly recorded when reporting incidents.

Information required when reporting incidents

- ▶ The type of behaviour that has caused concern
- ▶ Known triggers (if observed)
- ▶ Who was involved
- ▶ The place the behaviour occurred
- ▶ The day and time the behaviour occurred
- ▶ How long the behaviour continued for
- ▶ Strategies used to stop or minimise the behaviour
- ▶ The person's response to the intervention
- ▶ The worker's name and signature

Accurate reports

It is important that you accurately document what has taken place and what actions you have taken to manage an incident. Do not try to guess what has happened or what caused a particular behaviour; your job is to record what you saw, what you heard and what you did. It is the role of your supervisor and other healthcare professionals to identify what may be causing the person's behaviour and how best to respond to it.

Here are some common guidelines for how you should write accurate reports.

Be factual

Keep to the facts.

Don't make guesses or report what you think might have happened.

Be accurate

Document what you have observed and important points of what others have told you.

When recording what a person has said, try to quote them directly and use quotation marks.

Be clear

Provide information that is clear and easy for others to understand.

Record what you saw in the order that it happened.

Below are the types of records that you may be required to keep.

Behaviour assessment or observation charts

Sometimes you will need to complete a behaviour assessment chart that allows you to monitor a person's behaviour over a period of time. These charts help define:

- ▶ what behaviour the person is engaging in over a specific period of time
- ▶ how many times they engage in the behaviour
- ▶ if there are any clear triggers
- ▶ what time the behaviour is most likely to occur
- ▶ what strategies or responses seem to work best.

A person's care or support plan may be changed on the basis of what is recorded in the behaviour observation chart.

Progress or care notes

- ▶ Progress notes are used by workers to record day-to-day observations and care needs of the person. They may record information about the person's general wellbeing, any changes in their behaviour or any emerging issues or needs that have been observed.

Incident reports

- ▶ Incident reports are formal documents that are completed when behaviour has resulted in an injury to a person, or a near miss. A near miss is an incident that could have resulted in an injury. WHS laws require that incident reports be completed after an incident occurs.

Example

Report incidents according to organisational policies and procedures

Care note

Date: 13 January 2016

Person receiving care: Cecelia Jackson

Time: 10:30 am

Date of birth: 17 December 1945

Comments:

Visited Mrs Jackson this morning to assist her with personal care and shopping. She appeared to be in a very low mood and did not spend as much time and care with her personal grooming and dress as she usually does. She said she did not feel like shopping today. This is unusual as she usually looks forward to it and especially to having a coffee afterwards.

She mentioned that she didn't sleep well the night before and that she had been feeling very 'depressed' over the last week. She said that she 'can't see the point of continuing to live' and that she often thinks about 'ending it all'. We discussed my concern about her current state of mind and wellbeing and she mentioned that today is the anniversary of her only son's death in a car accident.

continued ...

Cognitive effects

- ▶ Memory changes
- ▶ Disorientation
- ▶ Sleep disturbances
- ▶ Hyper-alertness
- ▶ Nightmares or deficits in concentration
- ▶ Problem-solving and judgment

Behavioural effects

- ▶ Withdrawal
- ▶ Avoidance
- ▶ Blaming
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Outbursts
- ▶ Increased consumption of alcohol
- ▶ Alterations in diet

Spiritual effects

- ▶ Questioning of personal faith
- ▶ Anger at God
- ▶ Denial of spiritual needs
- ▶ Negative thought processes focusing on loss rather than positive aspects

The debriefing process

A debriefing session aims to reduce the possibility of workers experiencing severe stress reactions after an incident. They enable the person conducting the session to identify whether workers may be susceptible to ongoing stress reactions and require further professional assistance.

Depending on the severity of the incident, debriefing may be carried out by a supervisor or another qualified staff member.

The debriefing process aims to assist workers to overcome the emotional stress of an incident by giving them an opportunity to talk and express their feelings about what happened, providing appropriate support and feedback, identifying any individual stress reactions as a result of the incident, referring workers who require it to health professionals for extra care, providing information about how to deal with stress reactions and helping protect workers' rights to work in a safe environment.

A typical group debriefing session is conducted in a structured format that allows the participants to share their thoughts and feelings about the incident.

A typical structured group debriefing session addresses:

- ▶ what happened before, during and after the incident
- ▶ what may have caused the incident

Professional development and training

It is important that workers have the opportunity to participate in regular training sessions to help them respond to serious incidents and behaviours of concern.

Regular training helps workers follow policies and procedures, feel more confident handling incidents, minimise potential injury or harm and understand stress reactions associated with incidents and how to manage these.

Example

Access and participate in available debriefing mechanisms and associated support and/or development activities

Keira is a family support worker who works primarily in the community. One of the people receiving care, Danielle, who has two school-age children, has been struggling with depression. Danielle is receiving treatment and care from her GP, but this does not seem to be working. She often tells Keira that she can't see the point of living and that her children would be better off being adopted by a family who could look after them better than she can. Keira always tries to reassure her that her children love and need her and that she is very important to them.



One day Keira visits Danielle and finds her unconscious. She has slit her wrists. Keira calls for an ambulance immediately and Danielle is taken to hospital. Danielle

survives the incident, but Keira is having difficulty coping. She feels that she has somehow let Danielle down and keeps getting flashbacks of seeing Danielle on the floor unconscious with blood everywhere. Whenever she thinks of this, she feels stressed and agitated, her heart begins to race and she feels dizzy and lightheaded.

After the incident, Keira participates in a debriefing session with her supervisor. The supervisor encourages Keira to talk about how she is feeling and about events surrounding the incident. The supervisor reassures Keira that Danielle's actions had nothing to do with her and that she could not have prevented what happened. She reminds Keira that Danielle was receiving appropriate medical treatment. Keira says she knows all this on one level, but still feels very guilty and anxious. Her supervisor suggests that she see may also benefit from attending counselling or seeing a psychologist who specialises in critical incident stress.



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Health and safety officers

Health and safety officers provide advice on safety issues that staff have concerns about. For example, you may need to talk to them about a piece of equipment that is damaged, a work practice you believe is unsafe or a bullying and harassment issue.

Diversional therapists

Diversional therapists are often employed by residential care facilities. They offer activities that are specifically designed to meet the needs of residents and can suggest activities that may help in managing or diverting behaviours of concern.

External sources

External sources of advice and assistance are usually healthcare or behaviour management specialists who have a relationship with the people or your organisation. Always talk to your supervisor first when you need additional advice, as you may not have the authority to deal directly with some healthcare professionals.

Your supervisor will let you know who you need to discuss a person's behaviour with or who you can seek advice from to improve your skills in managing behaviour. Sometimes you may need to talk to the person's family to obtain additional information about the person. Make sure that in all your interactions with family members you are respectful of their feelings and personal knowledge of a person.

Here are some people who can offer advice or assistance when appropriate.

Family members

A person's family can provide a great deal of information about a person, including the range of behaviours they exhibit, triggers of these behaviours and the most effective ways to deal with them. Family members can also provide information about a person's likes and dislikes and what activities they enjoy.

Doctors

Doctors can provide information on general health and medications, and assist with a range of health concerns such as sleep disturbances and agitated behaviours. They also provide referrals to other services.

Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists or other specialists such as those who specialise in treating dementia. Psychiatrists are medical specialists who specialise in mental health and psychiatric conditions. They can provide advice and information about mental health conditions and psychiatric medications.

Behaviour specialists

Behaviour management specialists are usually psychologists who can provide advice about managing behaviours of concern. Some organisations may employ behaviour management specialists to develop strategies for managing behaviours of concern.