



AGGRESSION PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT
SAFETY DEVELOPMENT FUND
PROJECT UPDATE MAY 2007

The Aggression Prevention and Management Project is a partnership project between Melbourne Health (MH) and Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW), and is funded by the Safety Development Fund (SDF) of WorkSafe Victoria for a period of three years. The Project entered its final year in May 2007.

The purpose of the Project is to develop an integrated, practical, innovative and transferable approach to the prevention and management of client-initiated aggression by the application of an Occupational Health and Safety Risk Management Approach to assessment and intervention that is based upon a "Hierarchy of Controls". The ultimate goal is to eliminate or minimise the incidence and impact of such aggression as well as the associated human and financial cost to staff, the industry and wider community.

In the initial phase of the Project, a Draft Toolkit, which contains templates for a methodology and specific techniques that, based upon experience and research, have proven to reliably lead to the desired result, has been developed. An extensive literature review was conducted. The document includes key elements considered critical for a comprehensive integrated system: policy, procedure and practice development; workplace design principles; training & education; and monitoring & review. And it has been designed to inform organisations about a variety of instruments which can be employed to improve their practice as well as how to use these tools.

Initial development of a Draft Toolkit involved input by many industry stakeholders, and was heavily informed by the detailed work undertaken by three Project Working Parties: "Policy, Procedure & Practice", "Workplace Design" and "Training & Education". [It includes a wide range of Tools, which are now being 'scrutinised' during the Implementation Phase at Melbourne Health and Northeast Health Wangaratta.]

As the 'practice transfer' component is a distinctive feature of the Project, it is intended that Melbourne Health and Northeast Health Wangaratta be developed as working models from which other organisations may learn and adopt positive change.

In the latter part of 2006, the document was widely circulated, and a significant amount of 'structured' feedback was obtained by undertaking personal consultations with key stakeholders. Earlier this year, this was reviewed with the objective of drawing out consistent 'themes' (which will inform the Final Draft to be handed over to WorkSafe Victoria at the Project's conclusion).

In general, everybody who provided feedback commented positively on the broad thrust of the Draft Toolkit, describing it as comprehensive, informative and well interpreted, with the potential to provide strategic consistency and alignment across the Victorian Health Service industry through standardised templates, data management; reporting and competency based training programs.

In particular, the following 'themes' were consistently noted in the feedback:



- “Scope of the Project” / Draft Toolkit is excellent in terms of its usefulness for different industry sector resources and implementation issues;
- An appropriate level of detail and use of examples and case studies in different sections;
- A good range of Tools; and,
- Consistent and appropriate terminology used throughout the document

[The three Project Working Parties will resume their work from September 2007. This will ensure continued buy-in as well as to facilitate the process of knowledge transfer across the industry.]

The main emphasis over recent months has been the review of feedback received from Industry Partners on the Draft Toolkit, and on its implementation within selected areas of Melbourne Health and Northeast Health Wangaratta. Both will inform the revision of the Draft Toolkit by the end of this year.

The organisation of the Fourth Industry Forum was also a significant recent achievement. On Friday 20 April, Melbourne Health hosted this Forum under the theme: “So you think there is an excuse ...”. More than 150 delegates from Victorian health services attended, including 40 from Melbourne Health. It provided an excellent opportunity for “exploring the myths around client-initiated aggression in health services” as well as for industry networking.

Attendees rated the Forum highly, with excellent feedback for both the presenters and event organisers. It was seen as a “good practice example” for genuine collaboration across the industry as well as an opportunity to ‘showcase’ innovative approaches by DHS, Victoria Police, service providers, Unions and WorkSafe Victoria. Special appreciation was made to Graham Dent for ongoing pro bono support from Sparke Helmore Lawyers as well as to the members of Victoria Police for their excellent contribution. Evaluation Form responses compared more than favourably with the three previous Industry Forums.

An overview of the program, including a list of speakers and topics can be found at ([link to the flyer](#)). The various presentations are available at ([links to the PDF documents with the presentations](#)).

Planning for the Fifth Industry Forum is also well underway. It will be held at Geelong Hospital on 16 August and will focus on environmental and design issues ... and an exploration of solutions that could prevent violence and aggression in health services. ([link to the flyer](#))

The next Industry Reference Group Meeting, to be held on 27 June in Benalla, will have a regional emphasis. Regional and Rural Health Services will be invited to attend this meeting as Observers and to receive an update on the Project’s progress.

If you have any questions regarding the SDF Project, please contact us:

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