



**For better  
mental health**

## **MANAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION POLICY**

### **STATEMENT OF POLICY**

Richmond Borough – MIND will promote a safe environment for all persons using the service. There are three basic rules within the association. These are:

- no drinking/drunken behaviour
- no drugs and
- no violence or abusive behaviour

These rules will be enforced at all times.

Staff must receive training and guidance on enforcing these rules and also in dealing with potentially dangerous situations and these guidelines should be discussed, explained and understood by all staff. Volunteers should be given full opportunity to read the policy and receive support and guidance as necessary. More positive ways of expressing anger and difficult feelings will be promoted including the use of outside agencies for specific input where appropriate.

These guidelines should be reviewed regularly to assess effectiveness – problems in implementation should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee and Sub-Committee.

### **MANAGING VIOLENT SITUATIONS**

**All staff have responsibility for the following: -**

1. To be aware of the signs of possible impending violence eg:
  - Mood Changes
  - Restlessness and agitation
  - Friction and arguments between users
  - Previous behavioural patterns which have led to aggressive/violent behaviour.
2. To communicate/discuss any concerns at the earliest stage possible to other staff and volunteers thereby ensuring awareness of the potential dangers. At this stage attempts can then be made to calm the situation in a constructive way.
3. The senior person on duty must ensure that no member of staff/volunteer is left on his or her own without adequate support when violence is anticipated or in progress. Staff should not enter rooms alone with a person who may be potentially dangerous and should make their whereabouts known to staff.



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4. If a user is new to the project initial discussions/interviews must take place in as safe an environment as possible. Other staff should be informed concerning whereabouts. It is better to be in an area where an escape can be made if possible - if other staff can see you they can respond quickly to signals of difficulty.
5. The staff should ensure that the premises are user-friendly, uncluttered and promote a pleasant environment. When people feel unwell or in need they can get frustrated very easily.
6. Ensure that furniture is not blocking exits/main areas etc.
7. Ensure that facilities are maintained to a high standard, eg., toilets/catering facilities etc.

**MANAGING A VIOLENT SITUATION IN PROGRESS**

1. If a violent situation is in progress and a user is physically attacking another user, themselves or property the personal safety of the staff and volunteers and other users is paramount. Staff are not expected to put themselves at personal risk.
2. If people are at risk the police must be summoned by dialling 999. Do not call the local police station. (Before the police arrive it is important that staff try to clear the area where the problem is occurring – this will reduce the anxiety levels of other users).
3. Staff should be aware of potential weapons, eg. furniture, pool balls/cues, glass/crockery etc. Staff should ensure that they do not get themselves in a position from which they cannot escape.
4. Staff should employ strategies and techniques to attempt to defuse the situation – what works in one situation may not work in another. What one worker feels comfortable with may feel alien to another.

**It may be useful to bear in mind the following points:**

- If the incident occurs in a social setting it may help to draw the potentially aggressive person aside to a less stimulating and more private environment where they can ventilate their feelings – however be aware of not isolating yourself from the possibility of obtaining assistance if required.



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- Do not invade the person's intimate or personal space.
- Monitor your own self-control – in the build-up to a potentially aggressive/violent incident people often get frightened by their own potential for violence and thereby respond to fear in others. Aim for:
  - Relaxed body posture
  - A firm, clear, quiet and calm voice.
  - Good eye contact that indicates empathy and genuineness and a willingness to communicate.
  - Short, clear statements.

**LISTENING!**

- Use methods of calming and distracting to calm the person. Listen to what is said and reflect issues back to them as necessary to demonstrate that you are listening. Accept their anger as reasonable – but not their way of expressing it. Offer solutions and ideas if this feels appropriate. A cup of tea, coffee etc. or a cigarette – some fresh air may help.
- Where the abuse is verbal be aware that this can lead to physical violence – be clear what is and what is not acceptable. Ensure that the person is aware of this boundary.

**WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARDS?**

If the situation involves two or more users they should be asked to leave the premises for the rest of the day so that the staff team can fully discuss the matter and decide on the best action forward.

Please see Incident Policy and Procedure.