

Domestic Violence Policy for Employees

1. Introduction

Domestic violence can have a serious impact on the safety and security of our workforce. The effects of domestic violence may extend outside the home, affecting the health, safety and well-being of staff. Domestic violence can also enter the worksite, compromising the safety of all staff. As such, Providence Health Care (PHC) is dedicated to providing non-judgmental support and assistance to staff by increasing awareness of this issue, offering support to victims of abuse, and assistance to abusers to cease the violence.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy to promote a healthy, safe environment where all staff are encouraged to report any concerns, seek assistance when necessary, and help foster a respectful and understanding environment.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all [Staff](#) at all PHC sites.

1.3. Exceptions

There are no exceptions to this policy.

2. Policy

PHC will make every effort to provide non-judgmental support and assistance to staff who are victims or survivors of domestic violence and also to offer assistance to staff who are perpetrators of domestic violence.

PHC will not tolerate behaviour that constitutes workplace domestic violence. Staff found to have violated this policy will be subject to employment related consequences.

2.1. PHC's Commitment

- Provide a supportive, non-judgmental environment for staff and encourage staff experiencing domestic violence to access available supports. Accessing services must be voluntary and support must not be dependent on the victim or survivor's decisions regarding the abusive relationship.
- Assist in the development and implementation of a safety plan for the victim or survivor as required.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Supervisors/Leaders

- Maintain and assist in the implementation of the written policies and procedures related to domestic violence in the workplace.

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- Ensure all Staff, are aware that staff information is personal and must keep confidential. Ensure all staff follow the Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and refer requests for employee information to Human Resources.
- Access all domestic violence prevention and awareness training offered to leaders/supervisors.
- Ensure all staff have access to appropriate resources and training.
- Ensure that appropriate, non-judgmental support is offered to victims or survivors of domestic violence and abusers in an environment that is highly respectful of subject sensitivity and confidentiality. Seek assistance from Occupational Health and Safety to support Staff with accessing resources.
- Contact the Violence Prevention team to conduct a risk assessment in conjunction with Security, Integrated Protection Services and other appropriate resources.
- Ensure that a safety plan has been developed in conjunction with the victim or survivor to increase personal and work safety.
- Review the security measures that are put in place and assist with developing other safety protocols as needed.
- Contact Human Resources in the event a staff member is reasonably believed to be a perpetrator of workplace domestic violence so that an investigation is conducted and corrective action, as appropriate, can be taken.
- For staff experiencing domestic violence that are transferring to another unit/facility, encourage a confidential meeting with the new leader and other appropriate individuals including security (where applicable) to maintain staff and worksite safety/protection.
- With the employee's permission, keep a copy of the existing Peace Bond or Restraining Order and provide security with relevant information (such as a photograph of the perpetrator) where applicable.

3.2. Staff

- Be familiar with and follow all domestic violence in the workplace policies and procedures to ensure personal and co-worker safety.
- Be aware that staff information is personal information and must be kept confidential as per the Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. Requests for employee information must be referred to Human Resources.
- Notify Management and Security (where applicable) when made aware of any threat to the workplace. If the threat is imminent, notify security (where applicable) and/or call 911.

- Access staff domestic violence resources through the Occupational Health and Safety Team.
- Staff that are victims or survivors of domestic violence, including situations where another staff member is the perpetrator, are strongly encouraged to disclose to their leader, the Occupational Health Advisor, the Violence Prevention Advisor, their Union representative, or HR.
- If staff is transferring to another unit or facility due to domestic violence issues, it is strongly encouraged that staff notify, in strict confidence, the new leader, Human Resources, their Union Representative, or the Violence Prevention Advisor, to discuss the safety plan and available protective measures.

3.3. Physicians, Volunteers, Consultants, and Others Engaged in Work at PHC

- Keep personal staff information confidential as per the Information Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- Be familiar with and follow all domestic violence in the workplace policies and procedures to ensure personal and co-worker safety.
- Develop safety plans for non-PHC Staff experiencing domestic violence in collaboration with PHC, contracted agencies and others..

3.4. Human Resources

- Participate in prevention and awareness training programs appropriate to the level of responsibility to all Staff.
- Notify and consult with the Violence Prevention team of all staff domestic violence situations.
- Assist in the development and maintenance of an implementation plan for the effective management of domestic violence cases as required. Management strategies include: voluntary relocation of staff, Security escorts (where available), tracking and blocking/redirecting harassing communication, and reasonable time off to deal with legal assistance and remedies, child custody issues and medical treatments.
- Investigate potential staff perpetrators of workplace domestic violence and taking corrective actions, as appropriate.
- Be familiar with internal and external resources available to assist victims or survivors and/or perpetrators of domestic violence for referral purposes.

3.5. Occupational Health and Safety

- Work with the victim or survivor, Leader, and Human Resources as appropriate to develop and maintain a safety plan.
- Conduct a risk assessment in conjunction with victim or survivor and others as requested.
- Assist with providing prevention and awareness training programs appropriate to the level of responsibility of all Staff.
- Assist in developing workplace domestic violence procedures.
- Connect staff with domestic violence resources.

4. Compliance

All staff members are responsible for adhering to this policy and monitoring their activities in accordance with the policy. Staff members may warn others if they observe a violation of this policy. Failure by staff to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services or privileges.

5. Supporting Documents

5.1. Related Policies

[Information Privacy and Confidentiality](#)
[Respect at Work](#)
[Safe Reporting](#)
[Violence Prevention in the Workplace](#)

5.2. Guidelines/Procedures/Forms/Resources

- **Homewood Health (Employee and Family Assistance Program)** is a confidential counseling and referral program for PHC staff and their families. For more information, go to homeweb.ca or call 1-800-663-1142.
- **Violence Prevention Team** is staffed by a team of Violence Prevention Advisors, dedicated to reducing the risk of violence in the workplace and assisting staff and teams to respond to violent incidents. Contact violenceprevention@providencehealth.bc.ca for more information.
- **Ministry of Justice** - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/bc-criminal-justice-system/if-victim/publications/hsh-english-stalking.pdf>
- **Vancouver Police Department** - <https://vpd.ca/report-a-crime/domestic-violence/>
- **BC Housing Transition Houses and Safe Homes List** - <https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/women-fleeing-violence/transition-houses-safe-homes>
- **WorkSafeBC** - <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/domestic-violence-resources?lang=en>

6. Definitions

“Batterer, Perpetrator, or Abuser” means the individual who commits an act of domestic violence as defined above.

“Domestic Violence” is a pattern of coercive behaviour that is used by one person to gain power and control over another. This may include physical violence, emotional, verbal, financial, spiritual or sexual abuse or psychological intimidation as well as actions such as stalking, use of electronic devices to harass, threats, intimidation, isolation, and/or financial control. Domestic violence occurs in current or former intimate partners and/or family relationships between people of all racial, economic, educational, religious backgrounds in same sex or heterosexual relationships, living together or separately, married or unmarried, in short or long term relationships.

“Prevention and Awareness Training” refers to training opportunities for staff to increase awareness of the issues of domestic violence, demonstrate how to respond to potential cases, identify support resources, and describe community resources.

“Staff” means all employees (including management and leadership), medical staff (including physicians, midwives, dentists, and nurses), residents, fellows and trainees, health care professionals, students, volunteers, contractors, researchers and other service providers engaged by PHC.

“Victims or survivors” means the individual who is the subject or target of an act of domestic violence.

7. References

WorkSafeBC. (2012). Addressing Domestic Violence in the Workplace: A Handbook for Employers. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/addressing-domestic-violence-in-the-workplace-a-handbook-for-employers?lang=en>

8. Appendices

There are no appendices to include with this policy.

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