

Post Incident Debrief Guidance

Our aim is to establish structured and effective processes of responding to incidents that staff are involved in at work. We are committed to providing and maintaining safe practice and working environments for staff through guidance and support.

When staff have been involved in an incident there must be a debriefing session by their line manager. Ideally this would take place at least 24hrs after the incident to allow the staff member time to overcome their initial emotional reaction. However, the debrief must take place within 5 working days of the incident as valuable information and learning could be lost which could lead to further risk. The opportunity for debrief should offer the staff member the opportunity to discuss the incident in an environment where they will have time to reflect and discuss, where possible, without interruption. If additional meetings are required, or are requested by a staff member, these will be arranged at an appropriate time to suit all parties.

The nature of our work demands that the needs of the people we support can often have immediate importance in a situation. We recognise the many complex feelings that may emerge from the outset and during a significant incident for the people we support and staff. All involved should have their feelings and needs recognised, understood and supported. Very often staff needs are the same as the person being supported – space, support, reassurance and guidance. Facing and responding to significant situations can bring on feelings, both on a here and now level, as well as re-awakening of those experienced at different stages of the workers lives. Feelings such as fear, anxiety, anger, frustration, helplessness, vulnerability, self-reproach, sorrow and grief etc. are not uncommon should a worker be threatened or injured in any way in an incident. Providing support to address these feelings and the impact from these feelings is a major part of the de-briefing process.

We believe that it is important for any worker who experiences any of the emotions described above to have the opportunity to acknowledge and deal with these feelings. As an organisation, we recognise that enabling our staff to continue to work effectively following incidents and indeed to continue to work proactively in the face of such incidents requires a high level of support, space and ongoing strategic care planning.

In order to feel valued as a worker, it is also necessary to have these feelings acknowledged by colleagues, senior managers and the Organisation at an early opportunity. We see de-briefing as a crucial component in enabling the service and our staff teams to:

- ▶ Respond to incidents and stressful situations in a structured and supportive manner
- ▶ Sit down and talk about what happened in a non-blaming, supportive, caring manner to help the worker return to a normal level of functioning
- ▶ Come to terms with events that may have shocked their systems severely. Allowing them to share and resolve feelings about the incident that may otherwise linger unhelpfully and give them confidence to move on
- ▶ Use a constructive process to air any tensions, conflicts and grievances and explore ways to work to resolve these
- ▶ Use the crisis situation to clarify the underlying causes and issues that caused the incident to occur in the first place

- ▶ Examine the techniques the worker used to de-escalate the situation that worked and what didn't work
- ▶ Develop response strategies for the next time similar situations are encountered and how workers involved contribute to managing challenging incidents
- ▶ Explore any errors of omission or commission identified in a way that allows practice to be improved
- ▶ Provide effective support for staff following incidents
- ▶ Set a tone for the organisation that reflect the philosophy that everyone can grow and learn from crisis situations
- ▶ Reduce the likelihood of crises repeating themselves
- ▶ Seek to develop from experience, acknowledging our learning from both our successes and mistakes
- ▶ Develop our collective ability to cope better in future situations
- ▶

The debriefing protocol adopted by the council is taken from Parkinson's Three Stage Debriefing Model. This model recognises that there are differing levels of de-briefing interventions that can valuably assist workers and teams resolve impacts felt and plan for similar interventions. The three levels are Simple Diffusing, Formal Diffusing and Critical Incident De-briefing. Each stage is progressively more detailed in both its exploration of situations and incidents and in its responses to impacts experienced.

This model recognises that many incidents, whilst generating negative impacts to those involved, can be resolved with Simple diffusing or Formal Diffusing and builds on a progressively more detailed and interconnected supportive process where this is needed. Critical Incident Debriefing is a more in depth supportive process used where greater physical, emotional or psychological impacts are felt and endure.

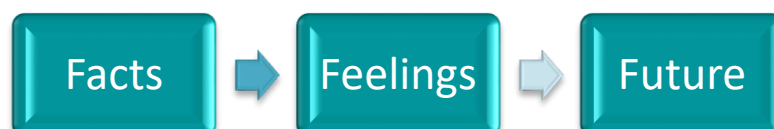
Levels of the model would involve:

- ▶ **Simple Defusing**
- ▶ **Formal Defusing**
- ▶ **Incident De-briefing**

Timescales & Planning

Simple Defusing Meetings will take place as near to the episode as possible

Frequently the demands of the service may require that the employee involved carries on working, this will most often also be the wish of workers, however a short time away, to freshen up, have a cup of tea can allow workers to regain their equilibrium must be offered. A senior member of staff should speak to the employee(s) involved and offer an opportunity for a simple defusing session. At this session the senior member of staff should assess the levels of upset and impact the incident has had on individuals and the staff group. By exploring the:



Where the nature of and intensity of the incident suggest deep or continuing impact upon the worker (having a lasting disruptive emotional, psychological or physical impact) a **Formal Defusing** session should be planned for.

- Formal Defusing Meetings should be planned for prior to the individual or teams return to work
- Incident De-Briefing Meetings should be planned at least 24 hrs. after the incident but must be within 5 working days of the incident

The firm expectation will be that:

- ▶ **a Simple Defusing Meeting is undertaken following all significant incidents**
- ▶ **a Formal Defusing Meeting is undertaken where there is a need to reduce the level of reactions in an individual worker or team**
- ▶ **an Incident De-briefing Meeting will be undertaken where injury or enduring negative emotional or psychological reactions are present**

Recording of Defusing/De-Briefing

A record of the meeting will be taken by the person facilitating the session. Agreement of those present is important and should be expressly sought. This record should include any discussion and agreements reached in relation to:

- ▶ **Impacts felt or continuing to be experienced by staff involved**
- ▶ **Supportive measures to staff members involved**
- ▶ **Issues of safety**
- ▶ **Service or person centred issues**
- ▶ **Strategies for managing future incidents within the person's support plan, by the shift team and in an individual workers response**

Developing Future Practice

Our service is committed in seeking to continually develop safe and caring future practice. Opportunities to analyse and reflect upon incidents will promote all staff's learning and assist in this process.

To assist in this, we will collect and collate statistical data from significant incidents. This information will include the number of restraints, the people we support involved, staff involved, levels of intervention attempted and the outcome, identifiable triggers i.e. times and antecedent circumstances.

The sharing of this information in addition to the thoughts, views and observations of people we support will inform discussion on safe caring and assist in support planning, both with individual people being supported and at service and organisational levels. Forums for discussion and planning will be formal individual supervision and team meetings.

It is recognised that the organisation as a whole and the entire staff team have a shared responsibility for ensuring that the de-briefing protocol is used. However, the lead role in relation to both de-briefing and monitoring rests primarily with the employee's line manager

Framework for Operational Debrief/Reflection

Frame work can be used to support a brief discussion or more formal dialogue

*The questions are to assist with your thinking about the incident

1. Detailed description of the event

*What happened? Where and when? Where were you? Who else was there? Why were you there, what were you doing? What were other people doing? What was the context of the event? What happened? What was your part in this? What part did other people play? What was the result? A diagram can be drawn.

2. Initial responses to the incident (Self Awareness)

Recall and explore your own thoughts and feelings during the incident:

*How were you feeling at the prior to the event? What were you thinking about? How did it make you feel? How did other people make you feel? How did you feel about the initial outcome of the event?

3. Evaluation and Analysis

Break the event down into its component parts so they can be explored separately.

*What went well? What did you do well? What did others do well? What went wrong or didn't turn out as it should have? In what way did your or others' actions contribute to this?

4. Conclusions / Learning from the experience

What could have been done differently? What do your practices say about your assumptions, values, beliefs?

*What other choices did you have? What might have been the consequences of these choices? What insights have you gained? What changes can be made to your practice based on these insights? Have you identified any learning needs as a result of this incident?
What do you think about the event now?

5. Action plan / Outcomes

Identify main points of action – personal practice and learning / staff-team practice and protocols.

*How will changes and lessons learned be communicated? How will we know if the changes have been effective?
If the incident were to happen again would you act differently?