



DEATH OF A CLIENT

PURPOSE:

This policy will direct actions for staff of Breakaway Toowoomba Inc in the event of a death of a client residing at one of its Guesthouses

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the respite services operated by Breakaway Toowoomba Inc at their Guesthouse

PRINCIPLES:

- A). The response to the death of a client is sensitive and appropriate. This includes ensuring that:
- The cultural and religious beliefs and practices of the client and their family are respected;
 - The response is dignified and prompt to minimize the distress arising from the event.
 - The involvement of external stakeholders to represent the client's needs, views, interests, choices and rights

- B). Breakaway Toowoomba Inc and its staff offer appropriate support. This includes:

- Providing practical and organizational assistance within normal expected arrangements where required;
- Ensuring the confidentiality of the clients personal information protected
- Provide support to the clients support network to make a complaint where they have a concern with service delivery.
- Offer appropriate support to other clients affected by the death.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. Report deaths in accordance with legislative requirements and timeframes set out within this document
2. Cooperate with enquires from external agencies such as Police, ambulance and coroner
3. Review the circumstances of death and implement and monitor appropriate actions arising from the review

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The legislative framework is contained in a number of Acts of Parliament including:

- Disability Services Act 2006
- Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995
- Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1997
- Corners Act 2003

Developed: 17th August 2009

Ratified by Management Committee: 22nd October 2009

Review Date: August 2010

P:\Policies\Death of a Client.doc

Approved:*DB*.....

POLICY

All Staff and Supervisors are requested to notify the Executive Officer immediately in the event of a death or suspected death of a client in a Breakaway Toowoomba site/activity whether or not the client was in the care of Breakaway Toowoomba at the time of death. A copy, via email of that notification should also be sent by The Executive Officer to the Chairperson.

Following the immediate notifications and procedures being completed in Procedures A-D outlined below, it is important that Breakaway Toowoomba Inc conduct an internal review (Procedure D) of the circumstances surrounding these deaths. This internal review is independent of the review conducted by other agencies. It is to be arranged by the EO. Its key objectives are to examine the circumstances; identify any systemic risks or trends and ensure that any organizational policy or procedural changes are made. It does not seek to replace the need for an external investigation and will work collaboratively at all times with any investigation conducted.

PROCEDURES

Procedure A: *Death or suspected death of a client in a Breakaway Toowoomba site/activity other than Guesthouse Service*

Procedure B: *Death or suspected death of a Client at a Breakaway Toowoomba Guesthouse*

Procedure C: *Reported death of a client who has accessed a Breakaway Toowoomba service/s.*

Procedure D: *Follow up review and management of client / staff records.*

PROCEDURE A

In the event of a death or suspected death of a client in a Breakaway Toowoomba site/activity other than at the Guesthouse

This sets out a structured plan of action to follow in the event of a medical emergency. If, by virtue of visible signs, it appears that a client has died in a Breakaway Toowoomba site/activity, the following steps need to be carried out immediately:

- Seek medical attention **IMMEDIATELY** by phoning an ambulance on '000'. This responsibility could be delegated to someone at hand.
- Administer first aid within the knowledge you have ie CPR etc.
- Notify the immediate Supervisor/ ON Call person. This responsibility could be delegated to someone at hand.
- Do **NOT** alter the scene and where possible take steps to preserve the scene.
- Continue first aid treatment until the ambulance has arrived and hand over to the ambulance officers.
- The EO/Supervisor should conduct an investigation as soon as possible after an incident, as crucial evidence may be disturbed or destroyed with the passage of time. The report must contain information on the location, chronology of the incident and witnesses' reports to reconstruct the event as accurately as possible for the report.

Follow-up Action

- The EO or delegate must notify the following personnel of the death as soon as is practicable:
- Executive Officer to notify the Chairperson.

Developed: 17th August 2009

Ratified by Management Committee: 22nd October 2009

Review Date: August 2010

P:\Policies\Death of a Client.doc

Approved: ...*OB*.....

- Notify the local police station. If no medical practitioner (doctor) was present at the time of death, it is necessary for a police officer to attend the death. It is necessary for the police to inform the Coroner.
- Notify immediate family members i.e. next of kin
- Notify other staff and clients of the death as appropriate.

PROCEDURE B

In the event of a death or suspected death of a Client at a Breakaway Toowoomba Guesthouse

This sets out a structured plan of action to follow in the event of a medical emergency. If by virtue of visible signs it appears that a client has died the following steps must be carried out immediately:

- Contact back-up emergency system i.e. On call person. Seek medical attention **IMMEDIATELY** by phoning an ambulance on 000 (this responsibility can be delegated to someone at hand).
- Administer first aid within the knowledge you have ie CPR etc.
- Continue first aid treatment until the ambulance/doctor has arrived and hand over to the ambulance officers/doctor.
- Do **NOT** alter the scene and where possible take steps to preserve the scene.
- Call back-up people. This responsibility can be delegated to someone at hand.

Immediate Action - for the Supervisor and/or on Call person in the Event of the Death of a Client

- The ambulance officers/doctor will declare the resident has died. The doctor may complete some paperwork to this effect, but should not issue a death certificate, as this is a matter for the Coroner.
- Notify the local police as soon as possible. The Police are required to make a report to the Coroner. (*The deaths of all people with disabilities in services authorized, funded or licensed under the Disability Services Act 2006 are examinable by the Coroner*)
- Notify immediate family members ie. Next of kin (if family members are away interstate or intrastate you may like to contact the nearest police station and ask if an officer will notify the family).
- Notify other residents of the death.
- Notify other staff and give them the opportunity to say goodbye.
- The EO/Supervisor should conduct an investigation as soon as possible after an incident, as crucial evidence may be disturbed or destroyed with the passage of time. The report must contain information on the location, chronology of the incident and witnesses' reports to reconstruct the event as accurately as possible for the report.
- **DO NOT** give a statement to third parties or the media.

Removing the Deceased

- The police will arrange for the body to be removed to the morgue by the city coroner. The police may require the attending Doctor to sign paperwork before removing the body.

Follow-up Action

The following actions are to be carried out as soon as is practicable:

- The Executive Officer will notify the Chairperson via e-mail.
- The Executive Officer will notify Disability Services no later than **24 hours** after the person's death.

Developed: 17th August 2009

Ratified by Management Committee: 22nd October 2009

Review Date: August 2010

P:\Policies\Death of a Client.doc

Approved:*OB*.....

- The Executive Officer or delegate will notify the manager at the appropriate employment service or day option program and other appropriate people.
- Contact an appropriate Social Worker and Psychologist to arrange for counseling and support for service users and staff (if required).

PROCEDURE C

Reported death of client accessing Breakaway Toowoomba services (excluding deaths in procedures A&B)

If a family or friend of a client rings to notify Breakaway Toowoomba of a recent death of a client, the following details should be taken from the caller:

- Name and date of birth of the deceased client
- Date of death or estimated date.

The person taking the call should convey Breakaway Toowoomba's condolences and indicate that they will update records and notify any relevant staff.

The Executive Officer will forward this information to the appropriate Disability Services personnel who will ensure that records are updated and inform relevant team members.

PROCEDURE D

- Follow up review and management of client records
- Following the immediate notifications and procedures being completed in Procedures A-C, Breakaway Toowoomba will conduct an internal review of the circumstances surrounding any death.
- All appropriate client records should be collected and review these records and interview relevant staff to gain a full understanding of the situation.
- A report will be completed including any recommendations or actions resulting from the review.
- Any written requests /subpoenas from external agencies (including the police) for copies of client records to assist with investigations should be sent directly to the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer will coordinate the photocopy of these records and check through the records to ensure that all is in order.

Approved (Executive Officer) David Bond Date 22.10.09

Approved (Chairperson) Paul Oliver Date 22.10.09

Developed: 17th August 2009
 Ratified by Management Committee: 22nd October 2009
 Review Date: August 2010
 P:\Policies\Death of a Client.doc

4
 Approved: OB