

## CRITICAL INCIDENT

### PURPOSE:

The Purpose of the policy is for Breakaway Toowoomba staff to deal with a critical incident effectively and professionally.

### SCOPE:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff, paid and unpaid understand what constitutes a critical incident and the actions to be taken when a critical incident occurs and during the period following an incident.

### POLICY:

1. When using Breakaway Toowoomba services clients, staff, service providers and others have a right to interact in a way that is free from risks to their personal safety or wellbeing.
2. Breakaway Toowoomba Inc will work towards establishing a *safe environment* and take appropriate action in response to incidents which affect, or have the potential to affect, the health, safety or wellbeing of staff, clients, carers or other persons.
3. Incidents must be appropriately reported and managed in a way that is responsive to the immediate circumstances of the incident, the rights of those involved, and the need to ensure that any risks of recurrence are minimised as far as possible

### DEFINITION:

1. A critical incident is an incident, whether accidental or deliberate, that –
  - a. involves a client, a staff member, or a member of the public; AND
  - b. occurs regardless of whether a staff member is present or witnesses the event and involves –
    - i. death; or
    - ii. risk of death; or
    - iii. abuse, neglect or exploitation; or
    - iv. risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation; or
    - v. abandonment; or
    - vi. risk of abandonment; or
    - vii. serious harm or injury; or
    - viii. serious risk of harm or injury; or
    - ix. other incidents, including for example:
      - alleged criminal activity;
      - inappropriate sexual behaviour by a client;
      - property damage resulting in closure of a service, such as destruction of premises by fire;
      - emergency situation, eg bomb threats, hostage situations, natural

Developed: 17<sup>th</sup> August 2009

Ratified by the Management Committee: 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009

Review Date: August 2010

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Approved:  .....

disaster; AND

- c. meets one or more of the following criteria:
- i. the incident occurs during the delivery of, or in association with the delivery of, a service to –
    - a in-home ore community Access client; or
    - a guesthouse client;

Incidents involving family based abuse are not to be reported as a critical incident under the Critical Incident Reporting Policy – refer instead to Breakaway Toowoomba's *Preventing and Responding to Abuse of Client &/or Child Protection Policy*.

Where a staff member is injured as a result of a critical incident, the incident must be reported as both a critical incident under this Policy and under the Workplace Health & Safety Policy. When a critical incident occurs, good and effective communication is vital. Good communication ensures the organisation responds to the incident quickly, appropriately and with a minimum of disruption to all involved

**PROCEDURE:**

In the first instance, in the event of a critical incident members of staff are to contact their supervisor or the On Call person. This person will determine the nature and seriousness of the incident and will advise on what needs to be done. For incidents of a serious nature as outlined above, it will be necessary to inform the Executive Officer who will make a decision as to informing the Management Committee or other members of the community.

In an emergency situation where immediate assistance is required, (such as a fire) staff may make the decision to make the initial contact with the appropriate agency/service and notify the contact person immediately afterwards. Phone numbers for emergency services are to be located in all work sites.

The Executive Officer is ultimately responsible for contacting outside agencies, organizing the dissemination of information, arranging for counseling or debriefing procedures, and contacting next of kin should this be necessary. The Executive Officer will also inform the Chairperson of the Management Committee and keep the Management Committee fully informed.

To protect the privacy of individuals and to ensure the provision of accurate information, any quires from the media are to be directed to the Executive Officer. At no time are members of staff to provide information or comment to any external person or agency without the permission of the Executive Officer or the Management Committee.

It is important that persons involved in or affected by a critical incident that they receive the support they need. An Employee Assistance program is funded by Breakaway Toowoomba to provide immediate and short term counseling and debriefing for staff as required. Where the incident has caused distress or trauma to family members, support is to be extended to these persons as well.

Within 24 hrs of a critical incident occurring, the Executive Officer will notify Disability Services on the appropriate form. Within a week the Executive Officer will assess the procedure followed and prepare a report for the management Committee to be tabled at the next meeting.

Approved (Executive Officer) David Bell Date 22.10.09

Approved (Chairperson) Paul Derrin Date 22.10.09