

Inner North Centre for Mental Wellbeing Aggression and Violence Prevention and Response Policy

Updated: 27 November 2024

Inner North Centre for Mental Wellbeing (Inner North) and the mental health clinicians who practice at this clinic are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all people who attend including clients, visitors, clinicians and management. In achieving this, Inner North supports a 'zero tolerance' policy with regards to verbal or physical aggression or violence (aggression). This includes aggression enacted in person at the clinic or remotely (i.e. via video or telephone contact). Inner North defines aggression as any behaviour or action committed by a person, that another experiences as frightening or threatening. This document outlines prevention, response, reporting and continued care policies and practices to support the physical and emotional safety for all people who attend Inner North.

Prevention

All people attending Inner North are asked to consider the safety of all and consider actions that can be taken to reduce the risk of aggression at the practice. This includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- All clinicians at Inner North will have some formal training in the understanding, recognition and prevention of, and response to, aggression or violence at the clinic.
- All clients will be asked about any history of aggression or violence at the point of intake. If a history of aggression or violence is noted, a risk assessment will be conducted by a clinician at intake. A safety plan will be required if the clinician deems the client is suitable for treatment at Inner North, and this must be signed and approved by the director. Client's will be referred to alternative services if they cannot be treated at Inner North.
- Clients are asked to reschedule appointments in the case where they or someone they know, may be at risk of behaving aggressively (e.g. due to a deterioration in mental state, substance abuse, an acute stressor).
- If risk of aggression is recognised during an episode of care, clinicians will draft safety plans with clients and oversee this plan as part of their clinical treatment.
- Management will publish this policy on our website, and maintain posters in prominent positions as a reminder of this policy.

Response

Management, clinicians and clients are all asked to participate in responding safely to aggression by:

- Being mindful of their own emotional state, and respectfully communicating to others if feeling threatened by another person, for any reason at any time.
- Being mindful if others may be feeling threatened by another person, and asking if people are ok.
- Allowing people to stop, breath and take time away if needing to regulate their emotions.
- Allowing the treating clinician to lead a response if they need to be more active or assertive in responding to a potential threat, including calling for additional support.
- Allowing your clinician to come to the support of others in the clinic if and when needed.
- Calling 000 if you develop the belief that somebody is at serious risk of physical harm.
- Immediately contacting the Clinic Director and practice manager when an assertive intervention is required, or when an incident has occurred.

Reporting

Management, clinicians, clients and visitors are encouraged to report any incident of aggression or violence that occurs at Inner North to management. You are encouraged to do so as soon as possible and provide as much detail as possible following the incident via email at info@yourinnernorth.com.au, and you will receive a response within 24 hours.

Reflection and continued care

Inner North is committed to learning from all critical incidents that occur at our practice, and providing support to all those affected by the incident. If you have experienced aggression at Inner North and are not satisfied with how the incident was handled, please contact your clinician or the clinic director Dr John Dileo to make a formal complaint (info@yourinnernorth.com.au).

If you are dissatisfied with the way your complaint has been handled, or if you do not wish to speak with your clinician or the clinic directly, you may make a complaint to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). All clinicians working at Inner North are registered members with AHPRA.

AHPRA

Ph: 1300 419 495

<https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/Concerned-about-a-health-practitioner.aspx>

You can also lodge a complaint with the Health Complaints Commissioner

Ph: 1300 582 113

<https://hcc.vic.gov.au/make-complaint>

This policy is informed by Health Complaints Act 2016, Complaints Handling Standards 2020.