


<b>Title:</b>	<b>Family Violence</b>			
<b>Section:</b>	Governance	<b>PRH:</b>	Chief Executive Officer	

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT:

To ensure that Alexandra District Health (ADH) provides safe high quality health care and experiences to our consumers by actively following the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework and through its Consumer Participation Framework actively engage and partner with consumers.

To ensure all staff are responsible and accountable for safe and high quality care, and ADH continuous improvement will be informed by regular monitoring and evaluation of performance.

ADH is committed to providing high quality care, support and referrals for those who have experienced, or are at risk of experiencing Family Violence. Family Violence can affect anyone; however, the majority of serious family violence is committed by men against women in intimate partner relationships.

*The wording in this document and associated procedures refer to women or use gendered language to reflect this. However, it is not the intention that Men would be excluded from support, consideration or provisions of this policy.*

Violence against women is the leading contributor to ill health and preventable death in women aged 15–44. With one in three women in Australia experiencing physical violence from the age of 15, a significant proportion of our clientele, employees and volunteers at Alexandra District Health will be either directly or indirectly impacted by family violence, and this violence is most likely to be committed by someone they know.

ADH recognises the devastating impact violence can have in the personal or professional life of an individual as well as the effect this can have upon the health, safety, capacity to work and financial security.

## 2. POLICY OUTCOME:


1. Promote ADH as a primary setting for support of those affected by family violence
2. Recognise the potential cumulative trauma impact of other types of workplace violence (ie. patients, colleagues) after intimate and/or family violence has occurred
3. Educate our staff with the knowledge and skills to address the issue of family violence whether the violence occurs inside or outside the workplace
4. Provide a safe and supportive work environment for staff experiencing family violence
5. Provide up to 20 days (pro rata) paid and 5 days unpaid Family Violence Leave to a staff member affected by Family Violence
6. Provide staff with access to information and services

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

All staff are responsible and accountable to know, understand and support each other to meet the requirements of the Victorian Clinical Governance Framework. All staff will be aware of the Consumer Participation Framework and actively engage and partner with consumers, demonstrate ownership and accountability for safe, quality care, and participate in regular evaluation and monitoring of performance to inform improvement.

- The Executive team will ensure that advice and support is provided to staff experiencing family violence. It is the responsibility of Human Resources to oversee the provision of Family Violence Leave.

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Family Violence</b>			 <b>ALEXANDRA</b> DISTRICT HEALTH
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- It is the responsibility of all managers to attend relevant mandatory training. Managers are encouraged to make a sensitive enquiry of any staff member who is observed to be displaying possible indicators of family violence. Following a disclosure it is the responsibility of the manager to respond appropriately by informing the staff member of procedures for applying for family violence leave, offer a workplace support plan.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to maintain strict confidentiality if information about another staff member's family violence situation is disclosed to them. It is also the responsibility of staff to treat each other with respect and not to engage in behaviours or make statements within the workplace that support violence or contribute to violence supportive attitudes.

#### 4. DEFINITIONS:

A central element of family violence is an ongoing pattern of behaviour that takes many forms for the purpose of establishing power and control through fear. It is defined by the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) as behaviour by a person towards a family member that is:

Physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of themselves or another family member.

It includes behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the above behaviour.

#### 5. PROTOCOL:


##### Principles

Healthcare professionals are ideally placed to identify, assess, offer referral and advocate for people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence. Health professionals require training to ensure they are equipped and competent to provide the appropriate interventions.

A central element of the experience of family violence is the loss of control and feeling of powerlessness, therefore the governing principle is to give patients and in particular, women as much sense of control over their health care as possible.

##### Process

1. Provide all staff with basic training regarding Family Violence and Sensitive Practice as part of annual Mandatory Training Day.
2. Clinical staff, department managers and contact officers will be given additional training in identifying and responding to Family Violence.
3. Offer first-line support to patients who are identified as experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence.
4. Sensitively inquire about exposure to violence when assessing patients with conditions that may be caused or complicated by intimate partner violence (pregnancy, reproductive health and mental health), in order to improve care.
5. ADH is committed to providing a workplace environment that supports any staff member experiencing family violence by taking additional steps to ensure that the workplace is a safe environment, and providing that staff member with the time and capacity to respond to their safety and wellbeing needs.

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Family Violence</b>			
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6. The policy provides a platform and framework for supporting any staff member impacted by violence, which is critical to promoting independence and wellbeing.
7. Foster gender equity measures within the workplace,
8. Promote respectful workplace behaviour, including behaviour by contractors and associates
9. Foster a zero tolerance position on violence in the workplace
10. Take action against employees who use violence in their work context

## 6. REFERENCES:

- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Child Youth and Families Act 2005
- Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct.

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- [Identifying and Responding to Family Violence Work Instructions](#)
- [Family Violence – Workplace Support Work Instructions.](#)
- [Family Violence Assessment Form](#)
- [Family Violence Referral Flowchart](#)
- [Elder Abuse](#)
- [Vulnerable Babies, Children and Young People at risk of harm.](#)
- [Leave](#)