



# Manager's occupational violence incident response toolkit



**ACT**  
Government

ACT Health



**Calvary**



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This toolkit has been developed to assist managers to navigate their requirements when an incident of occupational violence (OV) occurs in the workplace. A manager may be directly involved in an occupational violence (OV) incident or have an OV incident escalated to them for management. Where possible, in the first instance de-escalation should be attempted to manage the situation. Practice should be underpinned by compassionate care. Learn more at [Connecting with People](#).

### **Acknowledgement:**

The development of the **Managers Occupational Violence Incident Response Toolkit** came about following advocacy from the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation ACT Branch (ANMF) in 2016 for an in-depth review of workplace safety, including a review of occupational violence (OV), challenging occupational behaviours and workplace practices to improve the safety of nurses and midwives. ACT Health, in consultation with key stakeholders ANMF, Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) established a Steering Committee and Advisory Group to develop the Nurses and Midwives: Towards a Safer Culture – The First Step – Strategy to support the fundamental rights of nurses and midwives working in ACT public health services to be safe and protected in their workplaces.

## INTRODUCTION

Managing occupational violence (OV) against healthcare workers (workers) is never easy, but with the correct support and guidance the process can be streamlined. Workers will be looking to their manager for guidance on how best to respond to, and manage, OV.

### This toolkit covers:

- » recognising and responding to an OV incident
- » reporting an OV incident
- » supporting affected workers health and wellbeing
- » supporting affected consumers to remain engaged with healthcare services
- » engaging workers, and where applicable the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and/or Work Health and Safety (WHS) team in a review of the OV incident
- » reporting the investigation findings back to affected workers or consumers and those involved in the OV incident response.

### The purpose of this toolkit is to:

- » provide guidance for Nursing and Midwifery Managers who deliver healthcare services for the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services (inclusive of the University of Canberra Hospital and Community Health Centres) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce when responding to an incident of OV.
- » be used in conjunction with, or to support, any current procedure or guidance provided by CHS, CPHB or ACTHD in respect of managing the OV incident response.

### The Toolkit should be read in conjunctions with:

- [the ACT Public Sector Work Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement](#)
  - [the ACT Government Managing Occupational Violence - Policy Number: WHS-02-2019](#)
  - [the Challenging Behaviour Guidelines for Health Services \(ACT Health\)](#)
  - [the Isolated and Remote Work Guidelines for Health Services \(ACT Health\)](#)
  - organisation specific work health and safety management system (WHSMS) policies, guidelines, and procedures
    - \* [Calvary Public Hospital Bruce WHSMS, Calvary Connect](#)
    - \* [Canberra Health Services WHSMS](#)
    - \* [ACT Health Directorate WHSMS](#)
- » **and** should be supported by training and education in de-escalation techniques **and OV recognition and response training**.

**Managers should be aware that they do not have to manage an OV incident on their own. Refer to the SUPPORT section for more details.**

This Toolkit was developed in partnership with:



ACT Health



Canberra Health Services

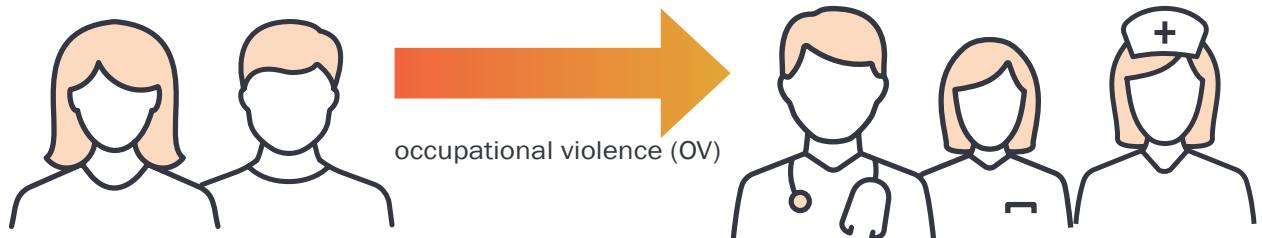


## OV DEFINED

OV is any action, incident or behaviour which causes a person to be assaulted, threatened, harmed, or injured during, or as a direct result of their work where the workplace also includes remote, community or home-based sites.

OV may also include intimidation, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, threatening behaviour, abuse through technology (text, emails, and phone calls).

For more information, see [Managing occupational violence](#).



Workplace violence that occurs between workers is considered out of scope for this Toolkit. For more information see the ACT Government Respect, Equity and Diversity Framework (2010), the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and the and the Culture Review Implementation.

## Improving OV outcomes

All employers and managers of workers engaged by the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), Canberra Health Services (CHS) or Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) must in accordance with the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(the WHS Act\)](#) take all reasonably practicable steps to protect the health and safety of workers, where health is defined as both physical and psychological health. Through the protection of workers, health and safety can be achieved by eliminating or minimising the risks and by making sure all OV incidents are reported and reviewed.

Positive outcomes and management of OV incidents occur when managers and workers can access a range of resources and services such as the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**, **Psychological First Aid** and other **Support Services**.

Outcomes are also improved when OV incident reporting is built into workflow practices such that everyone understands and feels supported to meet their responsibilities to report OV incidents.

## Definitions

- » Workers refers to healthcare workers, staff, students, or volunteers
- » Consumers refers to healthcare consumers, patients, visitors, support people, or carers.

## MANAGERS KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- » be able to recognise and respond to potential risk factors
  - » understand what OV looks like
  - » Recognise and acknowledge OV directed to workers, self or others
  - » be able to identify those affected by OV
- 
- » know how to access and use the Manager's OV incident response toolkit and supporting factsheets
  - » use appropriate de-escalation techniques
  - » manage the OV incident implementing the most suitable safety response
  - » ensure, or facilitate, immediate safety of workers or consumers affected by an OV incident by making the environment or people safe and implementing any required medical treatment
  - » document any actions taken

### Supporting managers

- » as required, seek support/advice from senior management, EAP or other organisational support services to manage the OV incident
- » self-assess capacity to provide support using the R U OK model
- » ensure safe systems of work
- » recognising opportunities for self-care

### Supporting workers

- » recognise changes in workers wellbeing and determine need for psychological first aid (Look, Listen, Link) or other support services aiming to keep workers engaged with the workplace
- » timely engagement with the EAP services for workers (and the workplace as required), supporting workers to engage if they choose
- » Assist workers with organisational reporting requirement (staff incident report in RiskMan)
- » support workers who wish to report the OV incident to ACT Policing
- » where workers have been injured, support their continued engagement with, or return to, work by ensuring they are aware of workers compensation and injury management processes to support them, as required, including if return to work planning is required
- » ensure adequate workers are rostered on during any worker absence or change to responsibilities
- » support any workers' compensation requirements

### Supporting Consumers

- » recognise consumers who have been affected by OV, listen to their experience and determine need for to debrief or access support services aiming to keep consumers positively engaged with ongoing healthcare
- » provide clear communication on expected behaviours and potential consequences of OV
- » support consumers who wish to report the OV to the organisation or ACT Policing

- » assist workers to complete a staff incident report in Riskman
- » complete any managers reporting requirement in Riskman
- » escalate to ACT Policing and/or WorkSafe ACT as required, meeting mandatory reporting timeframes
- » consider and maintain privacy and confidentiality requirements when you communicate details of the OV incident to:
  - the organisation and Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
  - ensure comprehensive handover for incoming managers and workers for ongoing care/ risk management
  - escalate and communicate concerns for information and action (e.g., Alerts Management System, WHS or leadership committees, team meetings, etc.)
  
- » as required, arrange an operational 'hot debrief' (ideally before affected workers go home) and/or an operational 'formal debrief' (ideally within 48 hours of OV incident)
- » as required, establish and/or lead a comprehensive Investigation of the OV incident and existing practices or controls
- » support/encourage workers to engage in the OV incident Investigation process, providing feedback on all risk identification and management processes implemented
- » ensure timely reporting of investigation findings to affected workers and the workplace
- » assist any ACT Policing or WorkSafe ACT investigation
  
- » engage with appropriate professionals or services to fulfill your requirements to recognise, report and review the OV incident, whilst supporting and engaging workers and consumers
- » incorporate OV and WHS into regular team meetings
- » ensure the results of the investigation are communicated back to workers and the workplace
- » engage workers in risk prevention and identification practices and routinely sharing organisational OV incident and risk control statistics
- » engage workers in OV education and training

# RECOGNISE

## Recognise

### Key responsibilities

- » be able to recognise and respond to potential risk factors
- » understand what OV looks like
- » Recognise and acknowledge OV directed to workers, self or others
- » be able to identify those affected by OV

### Factors that may contribute to OV

It is important to report all instances of OV, even if it is not intended. Understanding why people are expressing challenging behaviours (also known as behaviours of concern) can help a manager to identify risk factors that may ultimately assist in identifying the most appropriate response.

#### OV can happen when:

- » people feel vulnerable
- » concerned family members or friends are in emotional distress
- » someone is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- » someone is in a situation that triggers memories of past trauma
- » someone has a clinical condition such as dementia, delirium, post-operative responses, acute pain, acute mental illness, or head trauma
- » someone has concerns with the environment such as extended wait times, staffing levels, feeling unsafe or the complexity of information being provided
- » when restrictive practices are used (chemical, physical, environmental, mechanical, emotional)

### Recognising OV

OV typically impacts those directly involved in the incident (including witnesses) which can cause physical or psychological trauma (injury or illness). OV can also impact the people who respond to, and/or provide support after, the event.

Occupational violence can be thought of as behaviours that escalate from psychological through to serious physical actions, inclusive of, but not limited to:

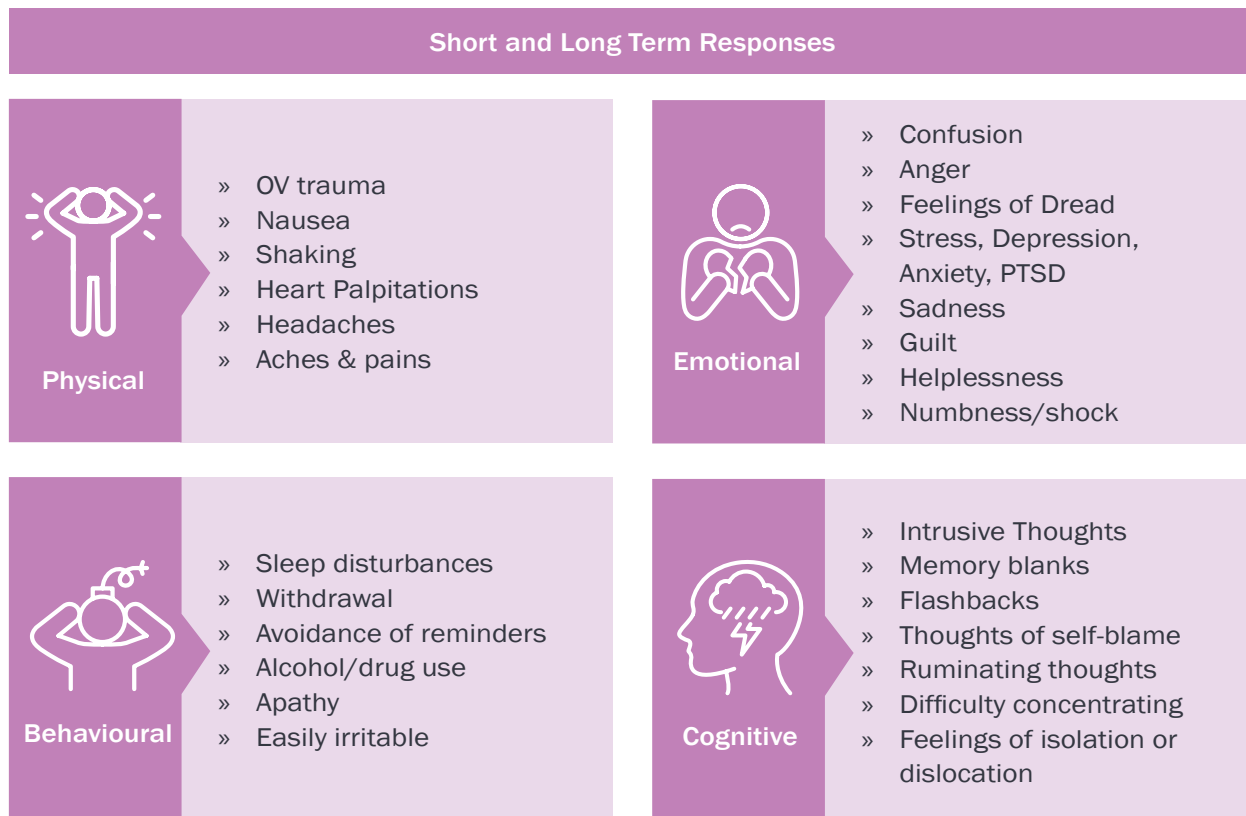
- » aggressive gestures or expressions such as eye rolling and sneering
- » verbal abuse such as yelling, swearing and name calling
- » verbal threats to physical safety, making vexatious complaints, or derogatory, slanderous or threatening statements to or about another person
- » intimidating physical behaviour such as standing over a worker, invading a worker's personal space or stalking
- » physical assault such as biting, spitting, scratching, pushing, shoving, tripping and grabbing
- » extreme acts of violence and aggression such as hitting, punching, strangulation, kicking, personal threats, threats with weapons, sexual assault

Occupational violence also includes any attempt at a physical attack, including near misses.

*(Modified from the ACN Position Statement, 2021, Occupational violence against nurses)*

## Common responses to OV

The impacts of OV on the worker may be immediately recognisable or may manifest over time. The symptoms a worker may experience are identified below. Anyone exposed to OV could benefit from **Psychological First Aid** support, connection with the **Employee Assistance Program** or other **Support Services**.



Not all OV results in physical injury, but the psychological trauma (injury or illness) can impact the workers ability to perform their work duties. Workers may need time away from the workplace, or to change their duties. They will need support to cover any roster changes.

## Useful resources for managers

### Toolkit Factsheets

- » Occupational violence unpacked
- » Occupational violence triggers
- » Occupational violence risk identification and control
- » Occupational violence psychological and physical trauma
- » Organisational barriers to practice change
- » Organisational responsibilities

### Other resources

- » Challenging behaviours guidelines for health services
- » Staff Rights to a Safe Workplace Factsheet
- » [ACT Charter of Rights for people who experience mental health issues](#)
- » Safewards model of care and interventions used to reduce conflict and containment (OV)



# RESPOND

## Respond

### Key responsibilities

- » know how to access and use the OV toolkit
- » use appropriate de-escalation techniques
- » manage the OV incident implementing the most suitable safety response
- » ensure, or facilitate, immediate safety of workers or consumers affected by an OV incident by making the environment or people safe and implementing any required medical treatment
- » document any actions taken

### Immediate safety response

ACT Policing advise that OV incidents that result in physical assault, sexual assault and/or threats to harm someone should be reported to and managed by ACT Policing. Call 000 if an emergency or life threatening. Call 131 444 for police assistance.

In most cases the OV victim decides whether to provide a statement with ACT Policing. However, managers and workers should be aware that ACT Policing are legally obliged to investigate any known or suspected domestic and/or family violence related incident.

### De-escalation

Managers and workers should use de-escalation processes to emphasise self-control, respect, and empathy, with a focus on clarifying issues and finding resolution together as the first line safety response. This promotes respect and mutually positive outcomes.

The organisation should ensure that managers and workers have access to appropriate training and education in de-escalation practices and techniques.

### Safety response options

When de-escalation attempts have been exhausted other safety response options are available. Managers will need to follow local emergency response processes.

Duress alarm	Security/ Ward Service Officers)	Code Black	Police
Activated by staff when security is required to attend, but staff are unable to implement the call.	Engaged by staff where they have been unable to de-escalate, or physical injury has occurred.	Activated by staff notifying the response team that immediate threat to safety is occurring and assistance is required	For any OV incident that has resulted in a serious injury or requires immediate emergency attendance*.
Activate duress alarm as per local protocols	Call or engage Security/ Ward Service Officers as per local protocols	Dial local Code Black Number State CODE BLACK	Dial 000 for emergency Dial 131 444 for non-urgent assistance

Managers should advise the organisation by reporting an incident and consider contacting the organisation's WHS team and Health and Safety Representative (HSR) if further action needs to be taken on the OV incident.

*\*For onsite OV incidents - engaging security and wardspersons early for low-risk situations, this can improve outcomes and make sure timely interventions are considered or implemented.*



### Make safe

The first thing managers need to do after an OV incident is make sure the environment and people are safe.

Managers can make people safe by:

- » identifying a safe space
- » moving affected people to a safe space
- » replacing workers, as required, to re-establish a safe workspace
- » engaging workers, wards persons or security to make people safe
- » considering a clinical review of the consumer to investigate and manage causes of violence (e.g., infection, electrolyte imbalance, impaired cognition etc.)
- » considering if it is appropriate to withdraw treatment from the consumer or remove the consumer from the environment (by engaging security or ACT Policing assistance)

**You can make the environment safe by:**

- » identifying hazards such as liquid or other spills, biological hazard exposure, furniture, or equipment breakages
- » engaging workers or cleaners to clean or repair any hazards

*\*If workers are offsite – maintain communication, encourage the worker to move away from hazards and to a safe space, and where appropriate to secure the site as required or possible.*

### Site preservation

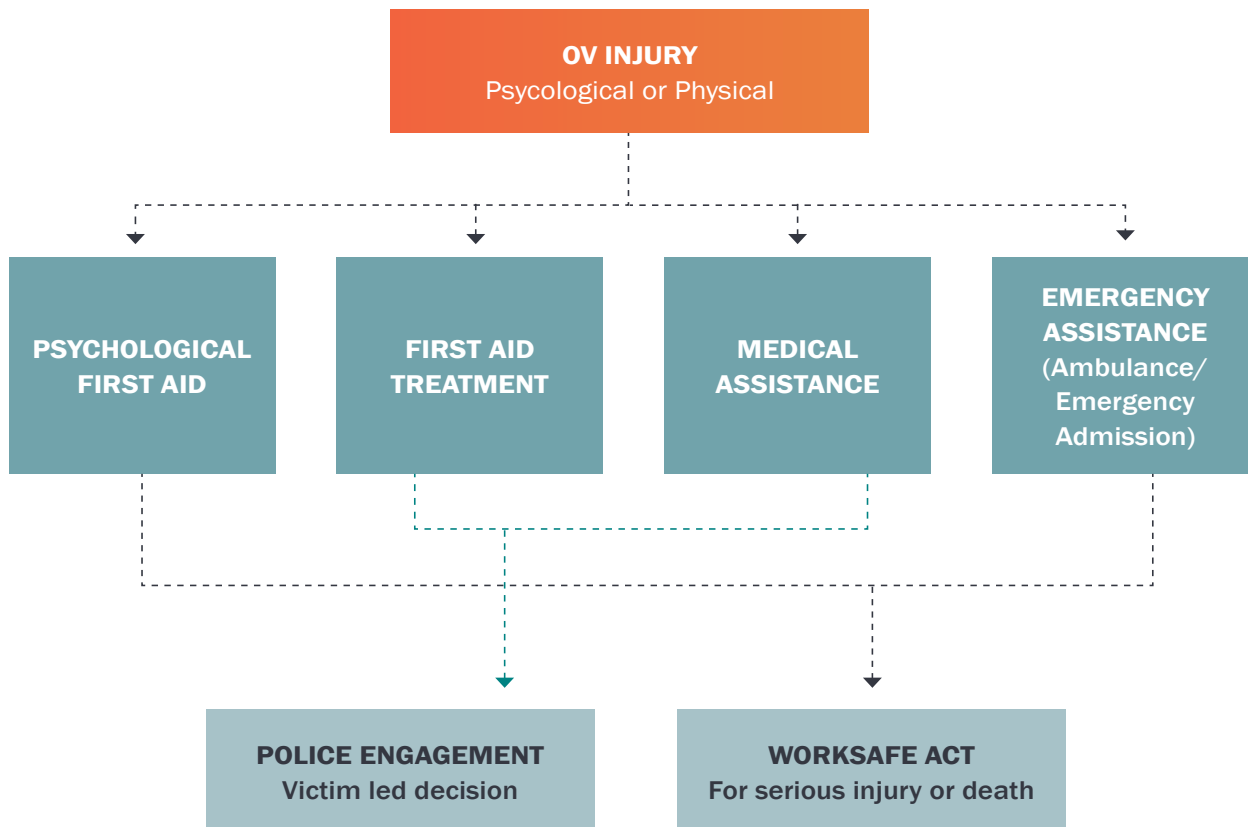
- » If ACT Policing or WorkSafe ACT have been engaged, or a serious injury has occurred, the manager may need to preserve the site (e.g., a worker becomes an inpatient due to OV and this would therefore be a notifiable incident to WorkSafe).
- » If the site cannot be preserved, the manager will need to take photos in line with advice received from ACT Policing or WorkSafe ACT.

## Medical treatment

Treating any physical injury is an essential part of the response process.

- » Minor injuries may only need the First Aid Officer, or a local clinical worker.
- » Serious injuries should be treated as an emergency, and immediate medical services should be arranged.

Managers will need to assess the workers emotional wellbeing and may need to offer immediate Psychological First Aid to workers.



## Useful resources for managers

### Toolkit Factsheets

- » Responsibilities when responding to an incident of OV
- » Post incident - make people or environment safe
- » Safety Response
- » Occupational violence psychological or physical trauma
- » Psychological First Aid
- » Police Engagement - outlines what to expect if ACT Policing are engaged in an OV Incident

### Other Resources

De-escalation training or resources

- » Canberra Health Services
- » Calvary Public Hospital Bruce
- » ACT Health Directorate

## SUPPORT

### Support

#### Key Responsibilities:

##### Support for managers

- » as required, seek support/advice from senior management, EAP or other organisational support services to manage the OV incident
- » assess capacity to provide support
- » ensure safe systems of work
- » recognising opportunities for self-care

##### Supporting workers

- » recognise changes in workers wellbeing and determine need for psychological first aid (Look, Listen, Link) or other support services aiming to keep workers engaged with the workplace
- » timely engagement with the EAP services for workers (and the workplace as required), supporting workers to engage if they choose
- » assist workers with organisational reporting requirements (Staff Incident Report in [RiskMan](#))
- » support workers who wish to report the OV to ACT Policing
- » where workers have been injured, support their continued engagement with, or return to, work by ensuring they are aware of workers compensation and injury management processes to support them, as required, including if return to work planning is required
- » ensure adequate workers are rostered on during any worker absence or change to responsibilities
- » support any workers' compensation requirements

##### Supporting consumer

- » recognise consumers who have been affected by OV, listen to their experience and determine need for to debrief or access support services aiming to keep consumers positively engaged with ongoing healthcare
- » provide clear communication on expected behaviours and potential consequences of OV
- » support consumers who wish to report the OV to the organisation or ACT Policing

#### Support for managers

If managers need support to manage the OV situation, they can reach out to the following for support or advice

- » colleagues or senior managers
- » local Work Health and Safety (WHS) team
- » local Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
- » Human Resources (HR)
- » MyHealth, CHS specific health and wellbeing program
- » local intranet for organisation specific resources and contacts
- » Manager Assist Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

## Manager Assist EAP

The EAP Managers Hotline service offers advice, for managers, in dealing with workers related difficulties or critical incidents. These numbers are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

### ACTHD and CHS

Converge International

Phone: 1300 687 327 (1300 OUR EAP).

Website: [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

### Calvary

Life Works

Phone: 1300 361 008

Refer to informational posters located throughout CPHB sites.

## Assessing your capacity to offer support

Before managers offer support to workers, they need to make sure they are emotionally prepared and capable and have the capacity and space needed.

They can assess their emotional preparedness by using the RUOK model which asks them to consider:

- » Are you ready?
- » Are you prepared?
- » Have you picked your moment?

Connecting with People (CwP) is an education and training initiative from the [ACT Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing \(OMHW\)](#) in partnership with [The Black Dog](#) Institute that managers and workers could consider accessing to improve their capacity and skills when it comes to responding to and supporting colleagues. Start by accessing the [Connecting with People Wellbeing Module](#).

## Ensuring safe systems of work

Managers must be supported to [lead a safer culture](#). A safer culture offers workers an empowering, respectful, and safe working environment that has risk identification and control measures in place. This involves having clear and consistent policies, safe staffing levels (including skills-mix), fair and equitable rosters as well as a positive work culture and practice environment. If managers are concerned with any elements of the work environment, they should raise their concerns with the organisation and consider informing the relevant union.

## Recognising opportunities for self-care

After stressful incidents such as OV, self-care can help in the recovery process, by implementing practices that help to create calm and promote coping mechanisms.

Understanding the benefits of self-care, having personal practice and role modelling these positive behaviours, will help managers to talk about self-care with their workers.

### Useful resources for managers

#### Toolkit Factsheets

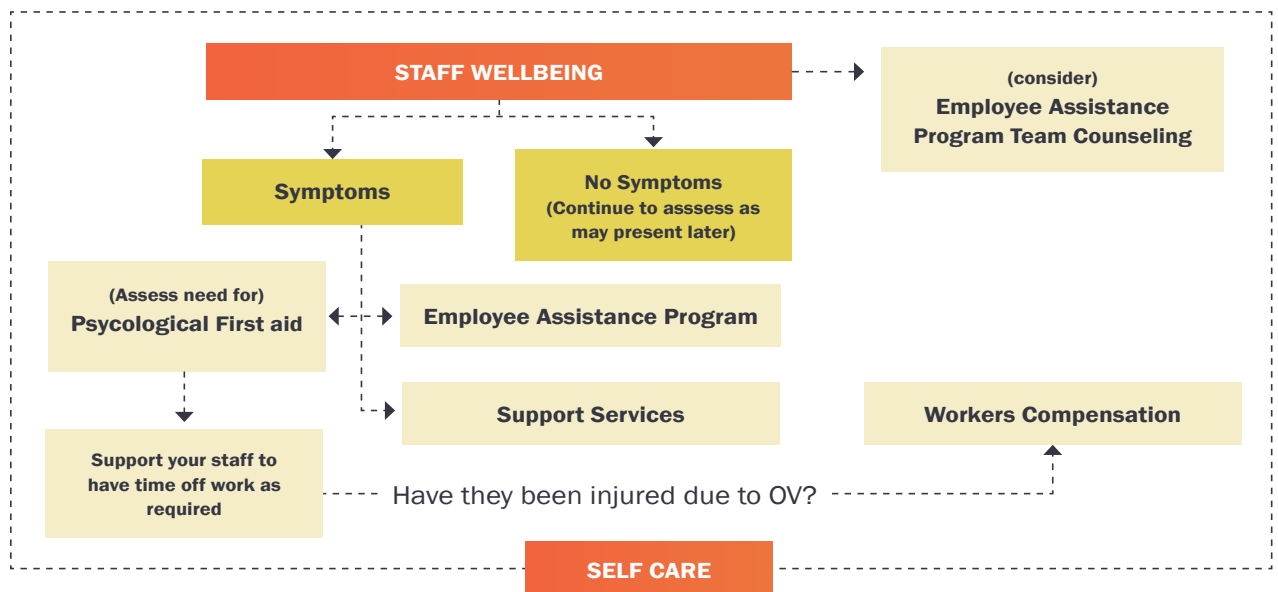
- » Assessing your capacity to support workers' wellbeing
- » Recognising changes in workers' wellbeing
- » Supporting others using the R U OK model
- » Supporting self-care
- » Creating a self-care plan
- » Responsibilities when responding to an incident of OV
- » Organisational responsibilities - for more details on service level support and responsibilities
- » Support services - for services options.
- » Employee Assistance Program

#### Other Resources

- » RUOK website: [www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask](http://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask)
- » [Connecting with People \(CwP\) Suicide Prevention Project Plan](#)
- » Connecting with People (CwP) wellbeing module
- » Leading a Safer Culture Purpose Statement

### Supporting workers

Immediate support is typically about offering practical solutions that allow the affected worker time to process the situation. As well as dedicated Support Services, the EAP and Psychological First Aid, managers may need to arrange an opportunity for the workers to Debrief or contact their next of kin, support the worker to leave early, take time off work or modify their workplace responsibilities.



#### Psychological First Aid (PFA)

PFA addresses the immediate needs of people who are affected by OV. Not everyone will need PFA, so it is important to assess the needs of workers using the LOOK, LISTEN and LINK framework.

- » **LOOK** – make sure workers are safe and assess if they need assistance
- » **LISTEN** – start communication with the worker as soon as possible and then listen with an open mind
- » **LINK** – identify possible services to link workers to, including services such as the [Black Dog Institute](#), [The Essential Network](#) or [Beyond Blue](#).
- » Manager can also support workers to identify self-care strategies.
- » **REMEMBER** - When offering PFA you are not giving treatment, a diagnosis or solving the workers issues.

#### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP offers free, confidential support for workers and their immediate family, for work or non-work-related issues. The EAP is a safe and private space to connect with a professional counsellor without fear that any details will be discussed with their manager or the organisation.

**On-site EAP** services can also be engaged to offer group counselling if needed.

##### ACTHD and CHS

Converge International  
 Phone: 1300 687 327 (1300 OUR EAP).  
 Website: [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

##### Calvary

Life Works  
 Phone: 1300 361 008  
 Refer to informational posters located throughout CPHB sites.

These numbers are staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

#### Supporting workers to practice self-care

Practising self-care and having a self-care plan can aide in a worker’s recovery after an OV incident by providing them with opportunities to create a sense of calm and promote coping mechanisms.

When talking with workers about self-care it is important to identify the difference between positive and negative self-care practices and encourage them to identify and focus on those that will have an ongoing positive influence on their health and wellbeing.

Managers can raise engagement in positive self-care with their workers by leading by example, openly talking with workers about self-care practices and providing opportunities for workers to engage or attend related education and training.

### Support services

If a worker's life is not in immediate danger, managers can call the [Access Mental Health Team](#), previously known as the Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT) on 1800 629 354 or 02 6205 1065.

Other options include [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14, or the [Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467 for immediate support.

Profession-specific support services such as [Doctors' Health Advisory Service](#) (02 9437 6552), [Nurse and Midwife Support](#) (1800 667 887) and [Pharmacists' Support Service](#) (1300 244 910) are valuable resources for immediate or ongoing counselling and support.

Ongoing support options include the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), GPs, [Next Step, Beyond Blue](#) or [Black Dog](#) The Essential Network.

### Emergency and crisis (24/7) support services

Service	Number
ACT Policing, Fire, Ambulance – Only call 000 in case of an emergency	000 or 131 444
Lifeline - Free and confidential support 24/7 Australia wide	13 11 14
Domestic Violence Crisis Line - 24/7 ACT specific crisis line	(02) 6280 0900
1800 RESPECT - 24/7 national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line.	1800 737 732
DV Connect - 24/7 Crisis hotline for anyone affected by domestic or family violence	1800 811 811

### Supporting staff who make a workers' compensation claim

ACT Public Sector workers are covered for workers' compensation under the [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 \(Commonwealth\)](#).

Managers are responsible for providing support and/or information to support a worker's compensation application. Managers can find out more at [WorkSafe ACT](#) or reach out to local WHS or Human Resources business partners for advice.

### Communication

It's important that managers agree with the worker how, and at what frequency, they want to communicate regarding the OV incident. Continuing to check in with the worker will make sure managers recognise any changes in the worker's behaviours, attitudes or practices that may indicate that they are not coping and need additional support.

### Useful resources for managers

#### Toolkit Factsheets

- » Recognising changes in workers' wellbeing
- » Psychological first aid
- » Supporting others using the RUOK model
- » Support services
- » Supporting self-care
- » Creating a self-care plan
- » Employee Assistance Program
- » Workers' Compensation

#### Other Resources

- » RUOK website: [www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask](http://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask)
- » [Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 \(Commonwealth\)](#).

### Supporting Consumers

An OV incident can disrupt the relationship between consumers and workers or the healthcare service. This means the consumers may no longer feel safe and can disengage or may no longer feel comfortable receiving care. Consumers who commit, experience or witness OV will need access to healthcare services and support to maintain or re-establish their healthcare service connection.

Managers need to understand and address the needs of the consumer, the environment, and the needs of the workers to provide safe care.

Managers can assist workers to maintain or re-establish a positive relationship with the affected consumers by:

- » having established and well communicated expected Mutual Behaviour Expectations for workers and consumers, which identify the importance of recognising, reporting and reducing incidents of OV, and communicating feedback channels
- » supporting consumers who wish to report the OV incident to the organisation or ACT Policing
- » ensuring that workplace practices are underpinned by trauma informed care, the [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#) and the [ACT Charter of Rights for people who experience mental health issues](#) including training and education of workers
- » linking consumers to the [ACT Mental Health Consumer Network My Rights My Decisions](#) program, as required
- » recognising when consumers have been affected, listening to their experiences, working together to address their needs, and giving them appropriate information so they can access required support services
- » supporting workers to provide reassurance and debrief to affected consumers after any OV incident
- » providing workers and consumers adequate time and resources to discuss the OV incident and any outcomes
- » making sure healthcare continues, by establishing clear ongoing care, or case management, plans with input from the consumers and workers.

### Communicating the consequences of OV

It is important that consumers understand the potential consequences of any OV incident that occurs in ACT healthcare services. Options for managing the incident are varied, and it is important that they are communicated clearly with the consumer. Options typically scale in response to the severity of the OV incident and may include the following:

- » de-escalation of the situation
- » asking the consumer to vacate the immediate area to make themselves or others safe
- » withdrawing or making changes to immediate care for the consumer
- » implementing a Care Plan for the management of ongoing care for the consumer
- » raising the incident with ACT Policing and supporting the worker to make a report
- » taking out a work protection order that defines the consumers ongoing access to healthcare services
- » making the consumer aware that when a report of the incident is made to the organisation, it may result in a record which could be filed in the consumer's health record.

### Useful resources for managers

- » Support services
- » Police engagement

### Other Resources

- » [Mutual Expectations for patients, consumers, carers, visitors, healthcare staff, students, and volunteers](#)
- » [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#)
- » [ACT Charter of Rights for people who experience mental health issues](#)
- » [ACT Mental Health Consumer Network My Rights My Decisions](#)



# REPORT

## Report

### Key Responsibilities

- » assist workers to complete a staff incident report in Riskman
- » complete any managers reporting requirement in Riskman
- » escalate to ACT Policing and/or WorkSafe ACT as required, meeting mandatory reporting timeframes
- » maintain privacy and confidentiality when:
  - communicating details of the OV incident to the organisation and Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
  - ensuring comprehensive handover for incoming managers and workers for ongoing care/risk management
  - escalating and communicate concerns for information and action (e.g., Alerts Management System, WHS or leadership committees, team meetings, etc.)

### Incident reporting in RiskMan

Workers need to use the 'Staff Incident Reporting' system in RiskMan to report all workplace related OV incidents, as soon as possible. As needed, managers may need to report the incident for the worker.

Please refer to local Staff Incident Reporting procedures for reporting specifics.

### Work Health and Safety (WHS)

The WHS team or representative should be contacted for all WHS issues including OV as part of the organisations risk prevention, control, and management process.

The WHS team or representative (in consultation with others, such as the Health and Safety Representative) will identify, review and investigate workplace issues and risks and risk control measures to improve workplace safety.

### Health and Safety Representative (HSR)

The HSR can be contacted for all WHS issues including OV. Refer to relevant enterprise agreement for HSR roles, responsibilities, and provision.

Where practicable HSRs should be contacted to meet consultation requirements and for assistance with review of the OV incident. HSRs have specific powers under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#). Remember that information shared with a HSR needs to be de-identified.

Follow local guidelines for how to engage with HSRs and WHS teams or representatives.

### Organisational communication

Managers are responsible for making sure relevant workers and managers are aware of any OV incidents, as part of handover. This may be in the form of the Manager's Section of the Staff Incident Report (manager's investigation, controls, etc.) or may be escalated in Divisional WHS meetings or other forums. Details should be provided of all actions undertaken, including any de-escalation attempts, and resulting outcomes.

## Escalation to ACT Policing

If you need to engage ACT Policing, you should do this as soon as possible. Workers should be supported to progress reports of OV to ACT Policing.



Call 000 if an emergency or life threatening. Call 131 444 for police assistance.



Take note of the Police Incident Number and record in the workers incident report.



As possible/required preserve the site and make sure details of the OV incident are documented.



Assist ACT Policing in their investigations. The site may need to be preserved or photos taken.



Injured workers will be asked to complete an Authority to Release Medical Information form.



Support workers during the investigation process and if the case goes to court.

Call Triple Zero (000) if OV incident is unable to be de-escalated or contained by Security, a Code Black has escalated, a consumer is engaging in aggressive/abusive behaviours or actions, with the potential to cause harm or injury, or the consumers behaviour or actions have resulted in harm or injury.

ACT Policing can also be engaged to help remove a consumer from an area or assist with physically restraining or transferring a consumer from the community to emergency services.

Managers need to be aware that the decision to make a statement and progress a Police report is with the victim. However, in circumstances of domestic and/or family violence, ACT Policing may proceed with an investigation regardless of the victim's decision. Once a case has been opened, it is the responsibility of ACT Policing to investigate.

## Incidents that require notification to WorkSafe ACT

- » the death of a person, a serious injury or illness of a person, a dangerous incident
- » A serious injury or illness includes:
  - » an injury or illness that requires immediate treatment in hospital as an inpatient in a hospital
  - » amputation, serious head, eye or burn injury, degloving or scalping, spinal injury, loss of bodily function, serious laceration, exposure to a substance which requires medical treatment within 48 hours. More information is available in agency specific WHS procedure documents.

### WorkSafe ACT Role

As the WHS regulator, [WorkSafe ACT](#) can assist with a notifiable OV incident by:

- » monitoring and enforcing compliance with the [Work Health and Safety Act](#)
- » providing advice and information on WHS incident reporting to duty-holders
- » collecting, analysing, and publishing statistics relating to WHS
- » promoting and supporting education and training on matters relating to WHS
- » conducting and defending proceedings under the Act before a court or tribunal.

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) or duty holder must notify WorkSafe ACT as soon as they become aware of a [notifiable incident](#). Managers may contact WHS to assist with identifying Notifiable incidents and completing the notifiable incident form.

**Business hours:** (02) 6207 3000

**After hours:** 0419 120 028

After notifying WorkSafe ACT, the online [notification form](#) must be completed within 48 hours of the notifiable incident.

## Useful resources for managers

### Toolikt Factsheets

- » RiskMan reporting
- » Police engagement

### Other Resources

- » [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- » [WorkSafe ACT](#)

## REVIEW / INVESTIGATE

### Review

#### Key Responsibilities

- » as required, arrange an operational 'Hot debrief' (ideally before affected workers go home) and/or an operational 'Formal debrief' (ideally within 48 hours of OV incident)
- » as required, establish and/or lead a comprehensive Investigation of the OV incident and existing practices or controls
- » support/encourage workers to engage in the OV incident Investigation process, providing feedback on all risk identification and management processes implemented
- » ensure timely reporting of investigation findings to affected workers and the workplace
- » assist any ACT Policing or WorkSafe ACT investigation

#### Operational debriefing

Operational debriefing is a structured voluntary discussion aimed at putting a stressful event into perspective. It is not counselling. Debriefing can be at an operational or individual level. Managers need to ensure anyone affected has an opportunity to debrief. Managers who were directly impacted by the OV incident, may need to find a facilitator to manage this process for other affected people.

- » **Hot debrief** - Ideally this takes place before the affected workers leave the workplace
- » **Formal debrief** – ideally takes place within 24-48 hours of the event

Through conversation/discussion and reflection the debrief aims to understand the OV incident and:

- » learn from the people who went through the process and involve them in the solutions
- » minimise any negative effects
- » evaluate the physical and emotional impact on workers
- » identify the need for counselling or support for workers involved.

#### Formal investigation

Managers may need to conduct and lead an investigation into the OV incident. For more severe OV incidents managers may likely engage with the WHS team for a more formal investigation.

The intention of the formal investigation is to understand why the OV incident occurred, any contributing factors, whether the response was appropriate, and any risk control measures that might be implemented to reduce the risk of future incidents.

If, or when, a formal investigation is undertaken, everyone impacted by, or involved in, the response to the OV incident should be given an opportunity to engage and/or participate in the incident review process. The HSR should be advised of the OV incident and the outcome of the investigation.

## Clinical supervision

Clinical supervision is a purposely constructed opportunity for managers to undertake their own critical reflection on issues that may arise at work, such as incidents of OV, where they can actively talk about, and reflect on, the realities, challenges, and rewards of practice with their own clinical supervision supervisor.

ACT Health has developed a Clinical Supervision Framework for ACT Nurses and Midwives and is undertaking a careful and sensible roll-out and implementation across all divisions in ACT Health. All ACT Health nursing and midwifery managers and workers are encouraged to consider engaging in clinical supervision to support their work.

Managers can support their staff to engage with clinical supervision by connecting them with training opportunities and ensuring they have protected time to connect with their supervisor.

For more information contact [Clinical.Supervision@act.gov.au](mailto:Clinical.Supervision@act.gov.au) or go to the [ACT Nursing and Midwifery Office website \(Health\)](#).

## Useful resources for managers

### Toolkit Factsheets

- » Debriefing - includes a debriefing template
- » Police engagement

### Other Resources

- » [Clinical Supervision Position Statement](#)
- » ACT Clinical Supervision Web page
- » [WorkSafe ACT](#)



## ENGAGE

### Key Responsibilities

- » engage with appropriate professionals or services to fulfill your requirements to recognise, report and review the OV incident, whilst supporting and engaging workers and consumers
- » incorporate OV and WHS into regular team meetings
- » ensure the results of the investigation are communicated back to workers and the workplace
- » engage workers in risk prevention and identification practices and routinely sharing organisational OV incident and risk control statistics
- » engage workers in OV education and training

### Engaging appropriate services

As managers progress through the stages of responding and reporting the OV incident they may need to engage with appropriate professionals or services to make people and the environment safe, provide medical treatment, engage workers with the EAP and support services and facilitate any debriefing or investigation requirements.

Professionals or services managers may engage with, dependent on the OV incident, could include:

- » Security
- » Wardspersons
- » Other healthcare workers or managers
- » Health and Safety representatives
- » Work Health and Safety representatives/teams
- » Other organisational departments (e.g. Human Resources)
- » EAP Services
- » Support Services
- » ACT Policing
- » WorkSafe ACT
- » Union representative or delegate

### Reporting the review findings

OV should be a standing agenda item in team and ward meetings. This will raise awareness and embed the importance of reporting with workers and support the HSR to raise any WHS issues or updates.

The frequency of reporting back to workers and the workplace will be dependent on organisational policies and procedures. For an example of best practice for talking about OV with workers, refer to the Incorporating WHS into Team Meetings Factsheet.

In addition, when an investigation into an OV incident has occurred, it is important to ensure that the details are reported back to the affected workers and workplace. Details that will typically be reported include:

- » incident summary – maintaining confidentiality and privacy requirements a summary of the OV incident and those affected/involved
- » details of any investigation undertaken – steps taken, outcomes and any recommendations
- » risk controls identified
- » risk controls implemented

Another way to engage workers and maintain awareness of OV measures and controls in the workplace is to ensure that any organisational reports on OV statistics or risk control reviews are routinely communicated with workers – for example in team meetings or worker communiques.

### Risk identification and prevention

Managers need to create opportunities for workers and their representatives to engage in ongoing practices, education and training related to risk identification and prevention. Examples of how this can be achieved:

- » clear and consistent communication with your workplace ensure workers are aware of, and practice according to, related OV policy and procedures
- » ensure OV standards and expected behaviours are clearly and consistently communicated to all workers and consumers
- » engage workers and others in the workplace to embed practices that regularly review existing risk control measures and identify factors that might increase the risk of OV including review of the effectiveness of implemented control measures
- » supporting workers to actively engage in OV training and education to better equip them to recognise, respond, report and review OV incidents and highlight the importance of reporting of all OV incidents to achieved improved workplace safety
- » ensure workers understand their right to make a report and any accompanied rights to representation, legal advice, support etc.

### Useful resources for managers

#### Toolkit Factsheets

- » Employee Assistance Program
- » Support services
- » Police engagement
- » Occupational violence triggers
- » Occupational violence risk identification and control
- » Organisational barriers to practice change
- » Organisational responsibilities

#### Other Resources

- » [WorkSafe ACT](#)
- » Incorporating WHS into Team Meetings Factsheet



## REFERENCES

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- » [ACT Government, Managing Occupational Violence Strategy: 2019-2022](#)
- » [ACT Government, Public Sector Work Health and Safety and Wellbeing Strategy: 2019-2022](#) –
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- » ACT Health, 2020, Calvary Workers Rights Safe Workplace Factsheet FINAL
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- » ACT Health, 2020, ACTHD Occupational Violence Workers Rights Factsheet FINAL
- » ACT Health, 2021, Isolated or Remote Worker Guideline for ACT Health Services, AHDPD-37:2020
- » [ACT Health, 2018, Nurses and Midwives, Towards a Safer Culture – The First Step \(Strategy\)](#)
- » ACT Health 2021, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Connecting with People (CwP) Suicide Prevention Project Plan
- » [ACT Health, 2018, Quality Strategy: 2018-2028. Person-centred, Safe and Effective Care](#)
- » ACT Health, Safewards: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/safewards>
- » Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, Australian College of Midwives, and Australian College of Nursing, 2019, Position statement: Clinical Supervision for Nurses & Midwives
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- » Canberra Health Services, 2020, Operational Policy - Occupational Violence Policy
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- » Department of Health - Victoria, 2013, Occupational violence incident response. Managing incidents in public health services
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- » Porter M., Victoria Police, 2017, Occupational Violence – Engaging with Police
- » Queensland Government, West Moreton Health, The Park – Centre for Mental Health: Occupational Violence Incident Response Kit
- » [Safe Work Australia, 2015, Incident Notification information sheet](#)
- » Safe Work Australia, 2021, Preventing workplace violence and aggression. National guidance material
- » Safe Work Australia, Workplace violence and aggression – advice for workers





## RESOURCES

An example of possible resources to utilise in your workplace include the Be Kind and Respectful to our Nurses and Midwives campaign: <https://www.health.act.gov.au/respect>

Please refer to the OV Resources Fact Sheet for a comprehensive listing of other related resources accessible to employees of the ACT Health Directorate, Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce.

