

Open Disclosure Policy

Purpose

To ensure that if any incident occurs, the incident is acknowledged, an explanation given of what happened, how it happened and why it happened, and if and when appropriate, what steps have been taken to prevent it from happening again.

To ensure that the member and their family/whanau of choice (where appropriate) receive an apology and are treated with empathy, honesty and transparency in a timely manner. An apology is not accepting and laying blame but the providers chance to say: “we are sorry that this happened to you”.

To ensure that contractors are supported through such incidents.

Open Disclosure is the right thing to do

Good Friends wish to ensure open disclosure is routinely practised by all contractors, thereby strengthening the relationship and confidence shared between the member and the contractor involved in their services.

This policy is based on the principle that members, their Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPOA) and their family/whanau have a right to know what has happened to them and to be fully informed as set out in the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights.

Definition

Open disclosure is a frank discussion with a member and their family/whanau of choice about any adverse event that has occurred. The member may have suffered unintended harm whilst receiving care or an error has affected the member’s care whether it caused harm or not.

Communication in open disclosure is an ongoing process as information is shared, and the person supported.

Open disclosure is not about attributing blame. It helps to foster **trust** between people and those involved in their health care. It means that contractors take a real responsibility for their actions when something goes wrong. It means that learning from an event takes place, resulting in safer environments for our members. It focuses on:

- Individual member safety and the need to make changes to care plans and services to meet any changes in a member’s needs as a result of the unplanned/adverse event

- Resolution between all parties affected
- Service improvement

Scope

This policy applies to all contractors, members, families/whanau, nominated representatives and volunteers involved in member care and communication with members and/or support persons.

The standard is met when

Whenever there is an unplanned or adverse event which affects a member, the Care Manager and/or their delegate will fully and frankly disclose to them and/or their family/whanau of choice the circumstances associated with the event. This disclosure will:

- a. Be full, frank, open, honest and timely

Information about an event must be given to the member and/or family/whanau of choice in a timely, open, and honest manner, ideally within 24 hours of the event occurring.

- b. Include acknowledgement of the incident – the why, where, how

All events where there has been harm or potential harm as a result of a mistake or error must be acknowledged to the member and/or their family/whanau of choice as soon as practicably possible after the event is identified and reported.

- c. Include a sincere apology for what has happened to the member

The member and/or their family/whanau of choice must receive an honest and genuine apology for any event that has resulted from a mistake or error as soon as possible after the event (whether that event caused harm or not).

- d. Recognise the reasonable expectations of the member and their support person

The member and/or support person may reasonably expect to be:

- i. Fully informed of the facts surrounding an event whether harm has occurred and the consequences of that harm or not.
- ii. Treated with empathy, respect, and consideration
- iii. Be provided with such support as is necessary in a manner appropriate to their needs, including cultural needs.
- iv. Fully informed as to the outcome of any investigation undertaken together with any changes instituted as a result of that investigation.
- v. Reassured that the disclosure and their privacy is assured
- vi. Able to have a support person included at any time.

- e. Observe the principles of confidentiality
Open disclosure processes must be confidential and ensure that a member, support person and contractors' privacy and confidentiality is maintained in a manner consistent with the helper agreement and relevant legislation.
 - f. Be documented in the member's file and on an incident register.
 - g. Include the opportunity for contractors to debrief - to discuss the event, what happened, how it happened, the consequences and how to prevent recurrence.
2. Unplanned or adverse events may include any or all of the following (whether they cause harm or not):
 - Incident / near miss incident
 - Accident / Injury
 - Medication error
 - Unexpected change in member health status
 - Infectious outbreak of disease
 - Complaint/concern
 - Critical and sentinel event
 3. The member and/or their family/whanau of choice are informed of their right to make a complaint in accordance with the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights. This information is readily available from Good Friends.
 4. The member and their family/whanau of choice are provided with information and contact details of advocacy support services and assisted to access this on request.
 5. Management are committed to providing an environment in which all contractors are able and encouraged to recognise and report errors or mistakes and are supported through the open disclosure process.
 6. Contractor training is made available to ensure they understand:
 - what open disclosure means and familiarise themselves with this policy
 - their responsibilities and role in the process
 - Good and effective communication
 - Cultural acceptable practice

Associated Documentation

Consumers Rights Policy

Informed Consent Policy

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy

Privacy Policy

Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights.

The Health and Disability Commissioner has provided "Guidance on open disclosure policies" to assist providers with this approach. Refer to <http://www.hdc.org.nz> for further information.

Reference

NZS 8134:2008 1.2.4 – Organisational Management – Adverse Event Reporting

All adverse, unplanned or untoward events are systematically recorded by the service and reported to affected consumers and where appropriate to their family/whanau of choice in an open manner.

NZS8134:2008 1.1.9 – Consumer Rights – Communication

Service Providers communicate effectively with consumers and provide an environment conducive to effective communication.

NZS 8158:2012 1.6 Informed Consent

Information is communicated to consumers in a manner that the consumer can understand.