

INSIGHT

Personal Safety Australia Newsletter

April - May 2007



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Personal Safety Australia MISSION STATEMENT

To equip, empower and inspire individuals, organisations and their clients to maximise their safety, enhance their wellbeing and advocate the safety and wellbeing of children and other vulnerable groups.



NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

New legislative changes have placed a further requirement on organisations working with children to ensure the safety and protection of children in their care. This new requirement is in addition to previous legislated child protection obligations including for all people working with children to hold a current blue card and the requirement for all children's organisations to have a written risk management strategy in place to protect children and young people from harm.

From 1 January 2007 the *Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2006* requires all organisations working with children to include a number of essential components in the organisation's risk management strategy.

A risk management strategy is a set of policies and practices tailored to specific service environments to protect children from harm. The strategy should identify and evaluate potential harm to children in the service environment and detail the procedures to help manage the identified sources of harm in order to foster child-safe environments. This strategy must be updated annually.

To comply with the requirements under the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, **as a minimum**, a risk management strategy for child protection **must** include:

1. A policy with a statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm;
2. A Code of Conduct for interacting with children and young people;
3. Recruitment, training and management procedures for staff (including appropriate employment screening, i.e. blue cards and registers of staff who hold blue cards);
4. Reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm;
5. A policy for managing breaches of the risk management strategy;
6. Policies and procedures for compliance with blue card legislation;

Personal Safety Australia SERVICES

Children's Safety:

Protective Behaviours Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Equipping participants with communication, problem-solving and networking skills to relay to their children and clients to enable them to feel safe and to take effective action in any threatening situation.

Child Protection Policy Development:

Maximising the safety of children in care and providing a supportive work environment for staff and

volunteers by implementing policies and procedures that: minimise access for child abuse offenders; and deal appropriately with abuse or suspicion of abuse that may occur.

Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Workshops:

Increasing awareness and enhancing understanding of the surrounding issues to enable participants to recognise and report child abuse and to implement preventative measures to protect children in their care.

Women's Safety:

Women's Self Defence Courses:

Incorporating practical, non-strength related, physical self defence techniques and preventative and responsive safety strategies to gain defensive skills, maximise safety and increase confidence.

7. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events; and
8. Strategies for communication and support such as:
 - Information sheets for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct;
 - Training materials and strategies to help staff, volunteers and parents identify and manage risks of harm.

Personal Safety Australia can assist your organisation to meet these requirements by preparing a risk management strategy in consultation with your staff, parents, volunteers and children. In developing tailor-made policies and procedures, *Personal Safety Australia* staff will conduct a physical assessment of your premises, providing recommendations to enhance safety and security. We can also provide training for staff and parents to ensure a clear understanding of the risk management strategy. For further information please contact us via the details listed below.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian can also provide more information on risk management. You are encouraged to visit the Commission's website at www.cfcycpg.qld.gov.au/about/risk_management.html or call the Commission on 1800 113 611 or (07) 3247 4145.

How Rude!

Making the most of difficult customers

How often have you encountered a customer who is downright rude? While it is no doubt tempting to treat the customer with the same lack of respect and dignity they are showing you or become personally upset by their rudeness, it is much more effective to turn off your defence mechanism and maintain a 'professional face'.

Your 'professional face' is unlike your 'personal face', which indicates how you really feel about the person you are dealing with. A 'professional face' refers to you as the representative of the organisation. Maintaining a professional face is about dealing with customers in a professional, confident and polite manner and resolving their request as fairly, promptly and effectively as possible.

A 'professional face' helps us avoid taking things personally, which can fuel the flames of conflict. Remember the rude customer is probably rude to everyone they deal with. It is not our job to make them nice, it is to assist them in achieving the aim of their visit, phone call or email.

By dealing with customers in this manner (i.e. with a professional face) we are more likely to: increase customer satisfaction; deal with conflict quickly and effectively; maintain our safety and that of our colleagues; reduce our own stress and anxiety; and increase our enthusiasm, confidence and productivity.

It is interesting to note that rudeness often has its roots in a feeling of inadequacy with rude people trying to put others down in a bid to make themselves feel more important. Rudeness can also indicate the person is anxious about the situation and may need extra reassurance. Being in tune to the motivations behind the behaviour can assist us to deal with the

Workplace Safety:

Workplace Bullying Prevention Workshops and Awareness Sessions:

Raising awareness of the workplace bully and dynamics of bullying in the workplace to address this behaviour appropriately and prevent it from occurring.

Dealing with Aggressive and Difficult Clients Workshops:

Equipping clients in customer service roles with a range of communication and problem-solving skills to maintain their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and provide an excellent standard of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients.

Safety for Everyone:

Personal Safety Seminars:

Incorporating preventative and reactive strategies to deal with any threat to one's safety including: at home, in the workplace, out and about, in the social scene, on public transport and in the car.

situation more effectively.

If a customer makes a particularly rude remark, you might try asking, "I'm not sure quite what you meant by that remark. Can you explain it to me please?". This sentence, when delivered in your most friendly, professional voice – without forgetting the please – will usually help rude people tone down. Asking "What would you like me to do to solve this problem?" also encourages the rude person to acknowledge they are in fact seeking your help. Another tip to develop rapport and help curb difficult behaviour is to introduce ourselves and use the customer's name, if known.

Most organisations do not expect staff to tolerate a customer who becomes abusive or threatening. In these instances, a warning may be appropriate and, if ignored, may result in terminating your dealings with the customer. Be aware of your organisation's guidelines in this instance, as well as security measures in place to ensure your safety and that of your colleagues.

Personal Safety Australia provides a one day 'Dealing with Difficult and Aggressive Clients Workshop' designed to provide staff working in customer service roles with a range of communication and problem-solving skills to assist in maintaining their personal composure, safety and wellbeing and to provide an excellent standards of customer service when dealing with difficult and aggressive clients.

Workshop topics include:

- Factors contributing to difficult and aggressive clients: including client, staff, organisation and external risk factors;
- The difference between difficult and aggressive behaviour and difficult and aggressive people;
- Internal policies and procedures (tailor-made to you're your organisation);
- Tactical communication principles: including strategies to prevent, and quickly diffuse, conflict;
- The Personal Safety Australia Customer Service Framework;
- Risk assessments: responding to threat levels as identified by verbal and non-verbal cues;
- Key communication and problem-solving skills; and
- Handling specific customer profiles and incidents.

For further information contact us via the details listed below.



CONTACT US

Please contact us if you:

- would like further information regarding PSA services;
- wish to subscribe or unsubscribe to *Insight*;
- have a personal safety question or topic of interest you would like included in a future edition of *Insight*.

Tel/Fax: (07) 3379 4475

Email: admin@personalsafeyaust.com

www.personalsafeyaust.com