Home Visits and Community Safety

Workers who provide care and services to people within their homes, hostels or in the community may be exposed to many risks. These risks will be dependant upon existing controls, patient factors and environmental factors.

Preparing to meet a Patient

Prior to meeting/visiting a patient for the first time it is advised to:

a) Contact the patient to advise of the appointment time.
b) Investigate with the patient if there are any hazards at their home (for example dogs) and who else might be present in the home.
c) Check available alerts and any risk assessments or previous patient notes
d) Ensure you have a phone and identification

Helpful Hints

- Know your local procedures and guidelines relating to home visits
- Where there is a history of aggressive behaviour from patients or known persons, consider what steps may be taken to control the risks
- Staff must assess if the visit is to go ahead if unable to develop a plan to control known risks

Destination – on arrival

- Park in a way that an expedient exit will not be impeded. For example, park on the roadside and not in the driveway; avoid areas of potential bogging.
- Avoid going to the back of the house or down laneways especially if it means you are not visible from the street
- Evaluate the surroundings, taking particular note of potential dangers (dogs, raised voices, evidence of alcohol or drug use)
- Knock and stand back from the entry, identify self and purpose, have identification available
- Enter the dwelling upon invitation only. Do not enter premises if you feel threatened.

Within the premises

- Look, listen and evaluate the surroundings, taking note of patient’s presentation, main exit and alternative exits, other persons on the premises, potential weapons, alcohol and drugs, etc.
- Ensure on entry the door is not locked behind you.
- Position self to facilitate a clear passage and a swift departure if needed.
- Leave at any time you are concerned.

Return/Delays

- If expected time of return is exceeded, notify Line Manager or senior staff in the department with amended times
- If responding to a crisis situation, ensure that the Line Manager or senior staff in the department is aware of the circumstances, any change in destination or time of return.
- On return, complete vehicle log book details, patient file administration and alerts
- Register your return on whiteboard or staff monitor if available

Further information

Staff may access Occupational Violence Prevention Services for further advice, information and in-services. If you require further advice please contact OVP-MNHHS@health.qld.gov.au.

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