

**PROCEDURES FOR RESPONSE TO  
SUSPICION OR REPORT OF SEXUAL ASSAULT****SUMMARY OF ACTIONS**

- Contact your manager or another member of the management team immediately if a person **reports sexual assault** or you have **any suspicion** that assault may have occurred
- Don't question the person
- Reassure the person
- Don't do anything that causes distress to the person

At the first suspicion or report of a sexual assault on a person using Achieve Foundation services, staff are to immediately contact their Manager.

**1. WHEN A PERSON REPORTS A SEXUAL ASSAULT**

Where a person using Achieve Foundation services has said an assault took place, the Manager is to advise the Chief Executive Officer immediately and with the person's consent immediately accompany the person to either Royal North Shore or Westmead Hospital Sexual Assault Unit, depending on the proximity to either location.

**2. WHEN BEHAVIOUR OR CIRCUMSTANCES INDICATE THAT A SEXUAL ASSAULT MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE**

If a person does not report that an assault has taken place, but:-

- behaviour or circumstances are suspicious
- or family or the general public report suspicion of an assault

the Service Manager must be immediately informed.

A meeting will be held between the Chief Executive Officer, Manager and relevant staff as soon as possible to discuss all known facts. All necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the person are to be put in place.

**No individual staff member should rule out the possibility of an assault without following the above procedure.**

**3. OFFER REASSURANCE**

It is particularly helpful for long term recovery from a sexual assault if the person can be informed as early as possible that the sexual assault was not their fault.

#### **4. PREPARING TO GO TO THE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT**

If an assault has recently taken place, staff are to attempt to ensure that the person:-

- does not wash, bathe or change clothing.
- does not have anything to drink if there is any possibility of a recent oral sexual assault
- does not go to the toilet if recent vaginal or anal penetration may have occurred.

**Whilst preferable, obviously these precautions should not be undertaken if the person is likely to become further distressed.**

#### **5. DO NOT INVESTIGATE**

It is important that staff do not undertake any investigative role. Any attempt to interview victims or perpetrators about the sexual assault could potentially jeopardise any legal action. Any interview of the victim could also be traumatic and so should be left to professional sexual assault counsellors.

If possible staff should encourage the person not to discuss the incident with them, and to wait until they reach the Sexual Assault Unit to discuss the assault. Again this should only be done if it does not further distress the person. If the person insists on talking about the incident, staff should listen and reassure but not comment or ask the person questions.

#### **6. ACCOMPANYING THE PERSON TO THE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT**

The Service Manager will contact the Sexual Assault Unit and arrange for an appointment. They will advise the Unit of any communication difficulties, behavioural difficulties and background to the incident.

Because of the seriousness of sexual assault, whenever possible the Service Manager should accompany the person to the Sexual Assault Unit and assist the Sexual Assault Counsellor where possible. This assistance may involve re-framing questions to the person or assisting to interpret the person's responses. This should only be done under the direction of the sexual assault counsellor.

#### **8. REPORTING THE MATTER TO THE POLICE**

The person may elect to report the matter to the police. The sexual assault unit personnel will generally inform the person of their rights in this regard and assist with contacting the police. If the person wishes to report the matter to the police, s/he should be accompanied by the Service Manager and/or someone they feel comfortable with.

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for making sure that mandatory reporting requirements are met.

## **9. MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY**

Conversations with all personnel (medical, legal etc.) regarding the matter are strictly confidential and are to be documented in full. Details of any discussions are to remain confidential and are not to be discussed with other people receiving support from Achieve Foundation, families, advocates, members of the community, health professionals or staff other than the Service Manager and Chief Executive Officer.

## **10. INFORMING NECESSARY PARTIES**

The Chief Executive Officer will co-ordinate all necessary communications with families, advocates and other organisations. The Chairperson of Achieve Foundation will be informed of the situation as soon as possible

## **11. GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION ON THE MATTER**

If questioned by family members, staff, or external parties, no comment is to be made and people should be informed that enquiries are to be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or Service Manager.

## **12. FOLLOW-UP**

All necessary follow-up services must be provided to protect the person both physically and psychologically. This may include:-

1. Security measures such as changing locks etc.
2. Relocation
3. Ongoing counselling and support
4. Medical examinations and tests
5. Review of staffing and sharing arrangements.

## **13. DOCUMENTATION**

A detailed report of the incident and follow-up is to be made and kept in a confidential file. This will include reports from all staff involved that have knowledge of the situation. The Service Manager will be responsible for organising the reports and submitting them to the Chief Executive Officer.

## **14. STAFF TRAINING/SUPPORT**

Staff are to be provided with all necessary training and support regarding their professional role in supporting people who have been sexually assaulted.

The sexual assault units also provide telephone consultation to organisations and individual staff. It is particularly helpful for long-term recovery and should be used if considered beneficial in any situation. Staff should speak to their Service Manager if they feel traumatized or upset as a result of the assault of a person using Achieve Foundation services.

**ACHIEVE FOUNDATION**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEWS**

Policy/Procedure	Last Review	Next Review
Complaints Policy and Procedures	June 03	June 06
Response To Suspicion Or Report Of Sexual Assault	June 03	June 06
Procedures For Locating Missing People	June 03	June 06
Procedures For Dealing With Epileptic Seizures	June 03	June 06
Procedures For Dealing With Communicable Diseases	June 03	June 06
Behaviour Support Policy And Procedures	June 03	June 06
Privacy Policy & Procedures	June 03	June 06
Procedures for Recording Significant Incidents	June 03	June 06
Governing Body Policy	June 03	June 06
Planning and Review Policy	June 03	June 06
Office Fire Evacuation Procedure	June 03	June 06