Alcohol & Other Drugs Practitioner Protocols for Domestic and Family Violence

A Resource from the Comorbidity Improved Services Project, School of Sociology & Social Work at the University of Tasmania and the Salvation Army Bridge Program.

Client Discloses Involvement in Domestic Violence

Immediately Be Aware of Mandatory Requirements
If a client is to disclose further details, what is your legal duty of care?

Client is the Perpetrator *
Violence was inflicted on others

General Risk
Assess if non-family members are at risk of violence. If risk is high, phone police.

Specific Risk
Client is violent to family only. Assess if violence related to their substance use.

Comply with Reporting Laws
If the client discloses details warranting mandatory reporting, relay this information to the appropriate authorities (e.g. police). Document everything in case notes/file.

Client is the Victim *
Violence was inflicted on them

Physical Injury
Provide first aid. Phone ambulance (if urgent) or client’s GP (if stabilised).

Body not Injured
If the client does not have visible injury, ask them to see their GP anyway.

Discuss Legal Options with Client
If the client discloses details warranting police involvement, outline options to them about how to seek intervention to prevent further violence. Document in case notes/file.

Trauma & Mental Health: Assess Client’s Psychological and Emotional Wellbeing
Domestic violence has physical, mental and emotional impact. Assess the client’s mental state using a mental health assessment or screening tool. Make a referral to a mental health service where there is indication of a mental disorder or presence of trauma. Support the client to seek help, whether they are the victim or the perpetrator. Ring the Mental Health Services Helpline for advice and referral options, ph 1800 332 388. Give the client the Family Violence Crisis Line, phone 1800 633 937.

Client’s Parental Status: Assess and Protect Safety of the Whole of Family
If the client has children that have contact with the perpetrator, and the client discloses that one or more children are at risk that warrants mandatory reporting, relay this information to the appropriate authorities (Child & Family Services and/or Police). Where appropriate, make referrals for any family members requiring family support or services specifically for children (see over the page).

Throughcare Follow-up: Ongoing Contact with Client
If the client continues in the service, negotiate safety planning and violence prevention measures with them. Once information sharing protocols are in place, collaborate with client’s external practitioners.

* Note: Sometimes the client may be both a victim and perpetrator. Protocols should be followed for both.
Domestic Violence Emergency Contacts & Potential Referral Options

Emergency Services: Phone 000
Ambulance, Police, or Fire Brigade

Child Protection Notifications, DHHS
Phone 1300 737 639

East Coast Counselling and Family Support Service, Anglicare
Phone (03) 6376 1810

Family Violence Response & Referral Line, Safe at Home, Tasmania Police
Phone 1800 633 937 (24 hours statewide)

Centacare Family Services Launceston
Phone (03) 6331 9253

Tools for Men Program, Anglicare
Phone (03) 6213 3555

Domestic Violence Rural Outreach Anglicare Launceston Phone 6334 6060

Children and Family Services South
Phone (03) 6230 7650

Family Support Outreach North West Anglicare Phone (03) 6424 8581

Children and Family Services North
Phone (03) 6434 6246

Mental Health Services Helpline
Phone 1800 332 388 (24 hrs statewide)

Children and Family Services North West
Phone (03) 6434 6246

Department of Emergency Medicine, Royal Hobart Hospital
Phone (03) 6222 8423

Relationship Abuse of an Intimate Nature (RAIN), Anglicare Tasmania
Phone (03) 6424 8581

Department of Emergency Medicine, Launceston General Hospital
Phone (03) 6348 7924

Sexual Assault Support Service
Phone (03) 6231 1811 (Hobart)
Phone (03) 6334 2740 (Launceston)

Department of Emergency Medicine, North West Regional Hospital Burnie
Phone (03) 6430 6633

North West Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
Phone (03) 6431 9711

Clare House (Child & Adolescent MH)
Phone (03) 6233 8612 (Hobart)

Holyoake (Families, Individuals, Youth)
Phone (03) 6224 1777 (Hobart)

The Link Youth Health Service
Phone (03) 6231 2927 (Hobart)

Community Connections
Phone (03) 6432 3610 (Burnie)

Youth & Family Focus
Phone (03) 6424 7375 (Devonport)

References: This document was designed around an adapted model from the following resources:
WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies (WANADA) (2008) Crisis Referral Tool for AOD Services
Drug and Alcohol Office Workforce Development Branch: Western Australia.

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Disclaimer: This information is provided on the basis that readers will be responsible for making their own assessments of the mental health emergency in question. It is not a substitute for appropriate professional training or qualifications.