

www.lccq.org.au



Corporate

Commitment to Child Safety

Lifeline Community Care Staff Information Brochure



INTRODUCTION

In 2006 Lifeline Community Care launched a Child Protection framework. The framework reflects our commitment to the protection of children from harm and upholds the community value of ensuring the safety of children.

The purpose of the framework is to ensure all staff have an awareness of child abuse and neglect and work collaboratively to provide consistent and appropriate good practice responses to child protection issues which arise in their areas of core business.

This goal was encapsulated in the Lifeline Community Care Child Safety Policy. This policy requires that all staff are to be familiar with the organisation's commitment to the safety of children and act in ways appropriate to their role to address child safety concerns.

This booklet provides information which will assist you to carry out these responsibilities. Please read this booklet carefully and keep a copy for future reference.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Lifeline Community Care has made a commitment to the safety of children and will act to address child safety concerns as they are identified both quickly and effectively.

Lifeline Community Care aims to ensure the organisation is one in which all participants feel safe and are encouraged to make constructive suggestions and voice concerns appropriately.

All Lifeline Community Care staff are encouraged to voice any concerns they have regarding the safety of children and young people in our community and within our services.

The Child Protection Act (1999) defines a child in need of protection as “a child who –

- (a) has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm; and
- (b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.”

A child is any person under 18 years of age.

What is harm?

Harm is the consequence of abuse. It can be physical or emotional. When considering harm, it is important to focus on the child's experience of the harm.

Harm to a child is any negative or damaging effect of a significant nature caused by the action, behaviours, or inaction of another.

Lifeline Community Care delivers a range of services directly to children, young people and families. Staff in these services must prioritise the safety of children and young people and act when they have concerns about harm or potential harm occurring within the child or young person's family, or in the community.

Lifeline Community Care staff also need to be alert to any actions or inactions by other staff, volunteers or contractors of the organisation which are likely to cause harm to a child or young person.

Harm could be caused to a child or young person if a staff member, volunteer or contractor acted in the following ways:

- Intimidated or threatened a child or young person.
- Used physical violence or was verbally abusive to a child.
- Made fun of a child or young person.
- Demonstrated or discussed sexually explicit material.

Harm could be caused to a child or young person if a staff member failed to:

- Listen or to act on a child or young person's complaint.
- Failed to act to prevent bullying of the child by others during an activity.
- Failed to act after observing abuse or after a child or young person has talked about their experiences of harm.

Be aware that:

- The harm to a child or young person caused when an adult fails to act to protect the child can have as great an impact as the abuse itself.
- Children can experience harm from other children and young people as well as adults.

Types of harm

Harm can occur as a result of one serious incident or a series of incidences that occur over time.

Harm to a child or young person can be caused by:

- **Physical abuse:** punching, slapping, kicking, shaking, biting, applying physical 'discipline' or 'punishment' causing harm or injury.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse:** constant criticism, scapegoating, name-calling, belittling, excessive teasing, ignoring, punishing normal behaviour, exposure to domestic and family violence, withholding praise and affection.
- **Neglect:** failing to meet the child's basic needs for adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, safety, hygiene, medical care, education, love and affection and failure to use available resources to meet those needs.
- **Sexual abuse or exploitation:** any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child including exposure, indecent phone calls, voyeurism, persistent intrusion of a child's privacy, penetration, rape, incest, involvement with pornography, child prostitution.

These types of harm often occur together.



What can you do?

Be aware of Lifeline Community Care's policies and procedures that are in place and why due process is important. Avoidance, shortcuts and secrecy are actively discouraged. Lifeline Community Care policies are available on the intranet under Policies, Service Provision. For hardcopies, please ask your Manager or contact the Human Resources team.

Talk about your concerns with someone in your own area that can listen to you, advise you and support you in voicing your concerns about abuse of children and/or young people.

Concerns must be reported to Supervisors or Managers. Specialist advice can be obtained from Lifeline Community Care program staff who work directly with children and families in a child protection context within your Division or from the Families Plus Division.

Access the Department of Communities; Child Safety Services website for further information.

Lifeline Community Care is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We support the rights of children to live in a safe environment free from harassment and danger and will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained at all times. The harm of children is a breach of trust and Lifeline Community Care will not tolerate this behaviour.



Signs of harm

Children who have been harmed or are at risk of harm may show behavioural, emotional or physical signs, and some children may show no signs at all.

Some general indicators that a child or young person may have been harmed or is at risk of harm include:

- Showing wariness and distrust of adults
- Excessive rocking, sucking and biting
- Difficulty sleeping, often being tired and falling asleep
- Inconsistent explanation for injuries
- Low self esteem
- Difficulty relating to adults and peers
- Aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Bedwetting or soiling
- Being seemingly accident prone
- Suicidal feelings or attempts at suicide
- Difficulty concentrating
- Being withdrawn or overly obedient
- Reluctance to go home
- Creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse.

If you suspect that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, seek expert advice by contacting the Department of Communities; Child Safety Services.

If the person responsible for the harm is a child or young person, reporting your concerns may enable them to get help to address their behaviour.

If the person responsible for the harm is an employee, volunteer or contractor of Lifeline Community Care, you must report the matter to a supervisor.

When you report concerns to Department of Communities; Child Safety Services or the Queensland Police Service, your details are kept confidential and your identity is protected.

Contact Details

Department of Communities; Child Safety Services

P | 1800 811 810

E | info@childsafety.qld.gov.au

Queensland Police

To report an offence, contact your nearest police station. Local details can be found online.

W | www.police.qld.gov.au

Juvenile Aid

The Juvenile Aid Bureau works with juvenile offenders and young victims of crime, investigates child abuse and general child related crimes and provides cautioning and counselling to children up to 16 years of age.

The Juvenile Aid Bureau has regional offices located throughout Queensland. Please check the Juvenile Aid Bureau listing on acrossnet.net.au for full contact details.

www.lccq.org.au

OUR SHARED VALUES

Compassion

Respect

Justice

Working Together

Leading through Learning