Government of South Australia

SA Health

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A collaborative approach to prevent and respond to challenging behaviour

sahealth.sa.gov.au/challengingbehaviourstrategy

Contents

The Minister's Preface

The Government of South Australia is committed to protecting and improving the health of all South Australians, particularly public health care workers.

Our dedicated staff do an outstanding job in providing the highest quality care to our community.

Sadly, these same staff frequently face situations of violence and aggression from the very people they are there to look after.

Every day, across our hospitals and community programs, patients exhibit complex and challenging behaviours. Often these behaviours are not deliberate, but a result of illness and can be a symptom of unmet needs.

Any incident of violence and aggression is unacceptable. It is of paramount importance that they are actively addressed and staff supported, enabling the provision of high quality, patient-centred care.

To address safety and high quality care, I am pleased to launch the SA Health Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework.

The Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework outlines the key roles that the Department for Health and Wellbeing, the Local Health Networks and SA Ambulance Services play in supporting the health workforce and providing practical, evidence-based interventions to keep people safe from harm.

Every staff member is entitled to a safe workplace, environment and systems that focus on their safety and wellbeing.

I hope that all South Australians will support the directions in this Framework and be a part of a whole-of-community effort to promote safe work environments in South Australian health services.

Message from the Chief Executive

As the Chief Executive, Department for Health and Wellbeing (DHW) and the system leader across SA Health, I am committed to supporting the South Australian public health system to achieve success.

Our greatest asset to achieving this outcome is our staff, who dedicate their lives and careers to helping others.

SA Health is committed to a safe and inclusive culture. The growing rate of violence and aggression in health care settings can be attributed to a number of factors. Health care workers are too often victims to violent forms of physical and emotional aggression. This puts undue strain on our people and risks their safety and wellbeing. This is not acceptable.

Complex behaviours from people assisted or cared for by health care staff, can have a significant impact on their wellbeing leading to anxiety, trauma and fatigue. Whilst we understand the relationship between complex and challenging behaviour and particular conditions and illnesses, there are still actions that can be taken to make a difference.

In August 2019, the DHW formed the SA Health Challenging Behaviour Steering Group and established a Challenging Behaviour Working Group to commence a review of our current strategies in place to effectively prevent and manage challenging behaviour across our hospitals and health services.

Our Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework was developed in partnership with a wide range of SA Health staff, including nurses and clinicians and support staff that work on the front line and are exposed to challenging behaviour.

It recognises the good work already in place across the Local Health Networks and SA Ambulance Service, addresses gaps and identifies opportunities and innovative approaches to ensure ongoing improvements and safe work environments for all.

Our Chief Executive Officers, Boards and I are committed to implementing this important initiative to strengthen the safety of our entire health workforce and the consumers for who we care. As leaders, managers and employees, we will work together to support each other and put an end to violence and aggression towards health care workers.

About SA Health

The Department for Health and Wellbeing (DHW) sets the strategic direction for the South Australia's health care system. DHW is responsible for maintaining the Work Health Safety and Injury Management (WHSIM) System which is supported by policies, procedures, frameworks and educational tools and resources. The Department supports Local Health Networks (LHNs), SA Ambulance Service (SAAS) and other portfolio entities to implement the WHSIM System by providing high-level system leadership.

Whilst LHNs, SAAS, DHW and the attached offices operationalise the WHSIM System and frameworks, they are accountable for developing procedures and implementing interventions to prevent and respond to challenging behaviours, in accordance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) and the "SA Health Preventing and Responding to Challenging Behaviour Policy Directive".

LHNs manage the delivery of public hospital services and other community based health services as determined by the state government. There are 10 LHNs in South Australia established as incorporated hospitals under the *Health Care Act 2008* that are responsible for one or more of the hospitals within their Network. Each LHN has a Governing Board which is responsible for the overall governance and oversight of local service delivery by the LHNs, including governance of performance and budget achievement, clinical governance, safety and quality, risk management and fulfilment of the Governing Board functions and responsibilities.

SAAS is the provider of emergency ambulance services in South Australia. SAAS provide out-of-hospital emergency patient care, transport including non-emergency patient transport, ambulance support at emergency and major public events and coordinate rescue operations in partnership with other health and emergency services. Wellbeing SA and the Commission on Excellence and Innovation are attached offices of the DHW.

It is recognised that our staff provide care every day that prevent challenging behaviours through good care and good communication. Notwithstanding this, our health care workers assess and treat consumers who display challenging behaviours which may arise from their illness on a daily basis. Our systems tell us that challenging behaviour incidents remain significant for SA Health with 3244 work health and safety incidents; 7704 consumer incidents and 12307 code black incidents reported in 2018-2019. An event may require more than one type of incident report, depending on the involvement of workers, consumers (patients) and security.

77 per cent of challenging behaviour incidents involve consumers in the 70-89 age range.

Mental illness, dementia, delirium, intellectual disability and substance abuse continue to be associated with increased risk of challenging behaviour incidents. Further data information can be found on page 5.

Our Story

What is Challenging Behaviour?

Challenging behaviour is any behaviour with the potential to physically or psychologically harm another person, or self or property. It can be deliberate or unintentional and ranges from verbal abuse, through to acts of physical violence. Challenging behaviour or actions result in people feeling unsafe or threatened, or feeling that intervention or withdrawal is warranted to avoid harm to someone. Ultimately, regardless of its level of extremity, challenging behaviour is a barrier to the delivery of care in a way that is safe for the consumer and worker.

Why has this new Strategic Framework been developed?

SA Health Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework has been developed to describe how to prevent and respond to challenging behaviour during health care, to minimise the potential harm to our staff and our consumers. The framework aims to further strengthen our safety culture and assist in meeting our obligations to our staff, consumers, partners and community.

SA Health has obligations defined in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) and we have a primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of our workers and other persons on site are not put at risk or adversely affected by the work we do, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHS) describe actions that need to be met for accreditation. Among these are:

5.33   The health service organisation has processes to identify and mitigate situations that may precipitate aggression

5.34   The health service organisation has processes to support collaboration with patients, carers and families to:
> identify patients at risk of becoming aggressive or violent
> implement de-escalation strategies
> safely manage aggression, and minimise harm to patients, carers, families and the workforce

The Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQS) describe actions that need to be met by organisations providing aged care services for accreditation. Among these are:

Standard 8.3 The organisation demonstrates:

(d)   effective risk management systems and practices including but not limited to the following:

(i)   managing high impact or high prevalence risks associated with the care of consumers; and

e)   where clinical care is provided – a clinical governance framework, including but not limited to the following...

(ii)   minimising the use of restraint.

This framework provides our mechanism for addressing our collective obligations for ensuring safe, high quality, patient centred health care.

It recognises our requirement to minimise or eliminate, where possible, the use of restrictive practices and the requirement to apply restrictive practices where a health practitioner believes a failure to do so could put the consumer, workers or the public at a significant health or safety risk.

What do we look like right now?

5 high risk settings

- EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
- MEDICAL WARDS
- MENTAL HEALTH
- AMBULANCE
- AGED CARE

Challenging Behaviour Incidents 2018-2019

7704[*] CONSUMER (PATIENT) RELATED INCIDENTS

3244[<] WHS INCIDENTS

61% physical assaults

39% Mental Stress

41% behaviour to other person

18% abscond

17% behaviour to patient

10% damage to objects/ disregard for hospital by-laws

12307[*] CODE BLACK CALLS

*Data source Safety Learning System.

> Data source Safety Learning System and SA Ambulance Service Incident Response and Quick Assessment.

Facts

77.1% recorded incidents are from persons aged 70-89 years.

Royal Adelaide Hospital, Flinders Medical Centre and Lyell McEwin Hospital are the top locations due to volume of presentations.

Mental illness, dementia, delirium, brain injury, neurological, and substance misuse are prominently associated with challenging behaviour.

What are we doing about it now?

SA Health have a **policy directive, policy guideline and toolkit** which will support health services to focus action on prevention and response to challenging behaviour in a systematic way.

We are actively working to continually improve our safety culture and ensure the engagement of our people in active risk management, assessing risks, employing prevention strategies and reviewing incidents with a view to implement learnings, continually improve and prevent recurrence. Local Health Networks have committees to actively monitor and work through strategies to better prevent and respond to these behaviours. A number of innovative and evidenced based approaches are being employed by our people and some of these are listed on the website **www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/ challengingbehaviourstrategy**

Our Strategic Aim

The aim of the Strategic Framework is to:

> Improve safety outcomes and our safety culture across the health system for our people and our consumers by building on the good work that has already been done, addressing gaps, adopting best practice and identifying opportunities and innovative approaches to ensure ongoing improvements and safe work environments for all.

Our Approach

This Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework details the multimodal approach to identifying risks, preventing and responding to challenging behaviour.

It has been informed by extensive data review, intrastate, interstate and overseas research for best practice models; and by feedback from our people and our community.
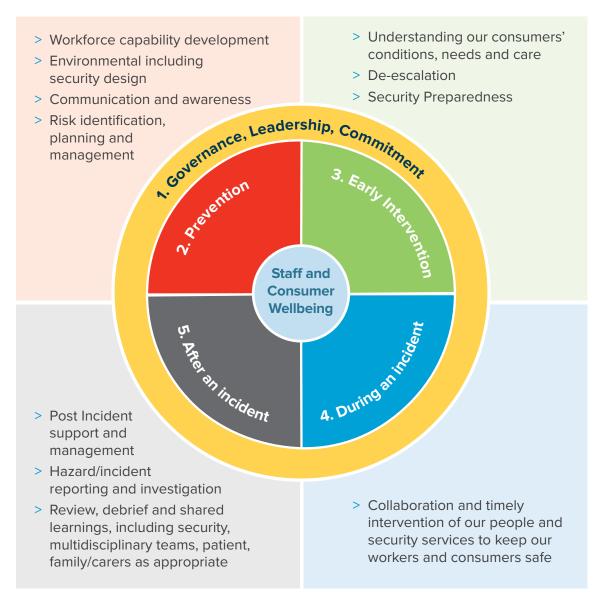
Our approach involves demonstrated commitment and leadership in the area of challenging behaviour.

This informed leadership, based on evidential best practice, supports patient-centred care and equips staff with the skills required to prevent and minimise challenging behaviour events through awareness, early intervention and appropriate action.

Risk management practices and during and after incident supports are critical components of this strategy.

The Challenging Behaviour Strategic Framework

Our Strategic Framework is articulated through 5 themes detailing critical elements and objectives, and through setting key priorities.

> Workforce capability development

> Environmental including security design

> Communication and awareness

> Risk identification, planning and management

> Understanding our consumers' conditions, needs and care

> De-escalation

> Security Preparedness

1. Governance, Leadership, Commitment

2. Prevention

3. Early Intervention

Staff and Consumer Wellbeing

5. After an incident

4. During an incident

> Post Incident support and management

> Hazard/incident reporting and investigation

> Review, debrief and shared learnings, including security, multidisciplinary teams, patient, family/carers as appropriate

> Collaboration and timely intervention of our people and security services to keep our workers and consumers safe

1.

Governance, Leadership and Commitment

This theme is critical to achieving best practice prevention and management of challenging behaviour through demonstrated leadership and commitment across the health portfolio and through a robust process of due diligence and governance.

Leadership and Commitment

Our leaders understand their responsibilities in developing, leading and promoting a safe environment for consumers and workers and are committed to listening to consumers, families, carers and workers to identify any areas of concern.

Information leads to better understanding of the consumer's condition, needs and care, leading to skilled prevention of, or de-escalation of challenging behaviour.

Our leaders will continue to ensure that the resources needed to maintain and improve prevention, recognition and responses to challenging behaviour are available.

Our leaders provide support and contribute to decisions that support SA Health's challenging behaviour objectives.

Our people are committed and understand the importance of preventing and responding to challenging behaviours to create a safe environment for all.

We work together as a team to create and maintain a safe workplace across SA Health.

Accountability

Our leaders across all workplaces are role models in demonstrating accountability in preventing and responding to challenging behaviour.

Our people take ownership of their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and improving prevention, recognition and responses to challenging behaviours.

Our staff feel safe knowing that their managers will act to address challenging behaviour and ensure their staff are supported at all times.

Safety Culture

Safety is everyone's responsibility.

We highly value our people, our safety and wellbeing, and the quality services we provide to our community.

Our leaders have a vital role to play when it comes to managing safety. When teams know their managers place high importance on working safely, they are more likely to be motivated to follow safety procedures and raise safety issues.

Leaders who set the example by showing their commitment to WHS, safety and quality of care, being actively involved in their business and who encourage and value workers' participation, create organisations that can be healthy and safe. Such organisations are also more likely to be innovative and productive.

Policy Directive, Guideline and Tools

SA Health provides a number of documents to assist managers and workers in **preventing and responding to challenging behaviour.**

- Preventing and Responding to Challenging Behaviour Policy Directive

- Challenging Behaviour Safety Management (WHS) Policy Guideline

- Preventing and Responding to Challenging Behaviour – A guide to using the Challenging Behaviour Policy Directive, Guideline and Toolkit

- Tool 1: Quick Guide – Policy and Legal Information Relating to Challenging Behaviour

- Tool 2: Organisation wide self-assessment audit tool for challenging behaviour committees

- Tool 3: Example Terms of Reference for a Health Service Challenging Behaviour Prevention and Response Committee

- Tool 4: Clinical Guidelines and additional resources

- Tool 5: Education and Training Framework

- Tool 6: Guide to Reporting and Review of Challenging Behaviour Incidents

- Tool 7: Evaluation and Metrics

- Tool 8: Challenging Behaviour, Violence and Aggression - Post-Incident Support Toolkit

- Tool 9: Consequences of Challenging Behaviour, Violence and Aggression

- Tool 10: A Stepped Response to Challenging Behaviour by a Patient

Evaluation and Metrics

Our challenging behaviour experience is greatly influenced by the clinical conditions of consumers.

We frequently evaluate our data to better understand the conditions that place people at higher risk of challenging behaviour incidents.

We strive to access different types of data to inform care and our responses. Data collection and access must be continuously reviewed and improved.

Our leaders encourage staff and create environments that support a learning culture which values reporting, analysis and continual improvement to prevention and management of challenging behaviour.

Key Governance and Leadership Priorities

1. Our leaders will implement this strategic framework, focusing on achieving the key priorities.

2. Our leaders will regularly access and analyse challenging behaviour data and information to inform targeted programs to develop skills and knowledge of staff providing care to consumers with high risk conditions.

3. Our leaders will act to continually improve our safety culture, through raised awareness of proactive behaviour management, improved staff understanding and knowledge, and leading by example.

2.

Prevention

This theme focuses on the prevention of challenging behaviour through identifying risk factors, employing risk control methods; promoting communication, raising awareness and developing our people's skills and knowledge.

Workforce Capability Development

We focus on the importance of the individual team's skillset and their area of expertise to ensure our staff are able to respond and provide patient centred care and trauma informed care that address high risk clinical conditions of its consumers.

We recognise that the type of education, training and information that is required by our people will depend on the work environment and type of service provided.

We have communication and awareness skills and insight to assist in recognising, understanding and responding to the needs and concerns of others.

We remain informed on lawful and ethical practices.

Environmental Design – including security focus

We strive to create safe, calm and more relaxing environments with the understanding that environmental stressors can be a contributing factor in incidents of challenging behaviour.

We consider environmental security factors, such as lighting, noise, access and egress, in keeping our people safe.

Communications and Awareness

Members of the community are informed that deliberate acts of violence and aggression against our people are not tolerated and are a barrier to providing care and treatment.

We value transparency and understand the importance of access by consumers and members of the public to our processes for managing challenging behaviour, ensuring they are aware of the steps that can be taken.

We are committed to listening and working collaboratively, across disciplines and with the consumer's, families and carers, to understand interventions that can prevent and minimise challenging behaviour.

As we pursue the effective and safe management of challenging behaviour, we consider our choice of communication and language (including body language), ensuring clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and responses, in consideration of cultural and language diversity.

We share learnings and prevention strategies with our colleagues from within SA Health and other Agencies to improve safety in the prevention and response to challenging behaviour.

Risk Identification, Planning and Management

We apply a systematic risk management approach to prevent challenging behaviour and its impact at our workplace. We identify, assess and monitor the associated risks to inform control measures to manage the risks.

We draw on the experience, knowledge and ideas of our people, particularly those working in high risk clinical settings, in the identification of common hazards and the selection of effective control measures.

We address work health and safety risks in conjunction with other important business risks.

We use individualised care plans, which include creating an environment and activities to prevent behaviours of concern are employed to manage risks.

Key Prevention Priorities

1. The skillsets of individual teams are regularly reviewed and provision of training and information provided accordingly.

2. Physical environments are assessed for improvements, security, functionality and integration with workflow, as well as its ability to support the consumer journey and provide information, when considering change in design.

3. Risk management processes are implemented in clinical settings where there is high frequency of challenging behaviour incidents.

4. Awareness and visibility of challenging behaviour tools and supports are evident.

3.

Early Intervention

This theme focuses on recognising and acting promptly when early signs are exhibited to ensure that challenging behaviour incidents are de-escalated where possible, and appropriately managed.

Understanding Consumers and their Needs

Our consumers with high risk clinical conditions are monitored for deterioration in behaviour and mental state, and managed appropriately to decrease the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring.

We employ consumer assessment and screening to better understand consumer needs and identify warning signs and contributing causes of challenging behaviour.

Each time diversional techniques or nursing/medical/allied health interventions are used, they are reviewed for effectiveness and discussed with the consumer, family, carers and the multi-disciplinary team.

De-escalation

We are appropriately equipped to identify the early signs of challenging behaviour and employ de-escalation techniques and strategies.

Our staff are trained and know when and how to involve security services, either to attend urgently, or as part of a planned prevention strategy.

We know when diversional techniques should be employed and when nursing, allied health and/or medical interventions should be considered.

Security Preparedness

Our people are appropriately equipped to manage and deal with challenging behaviour, working effectively together with security staff, where relevant.

Key Early Intervention Priorities

1. Methods for monitoring and communicating deterioration in the condition and behaviour of consumers with high risk clinical conditions are established.

2. Training programs for de-escalation include core skills.

4.

During an Incident

This theme describes appropriate action during instances of challenging behaviour with the primary goal being to keep our people, consumers and community safe.

Collaboration and timely intervention of our staff and security services to keep our people, consumers and community safe

We act confidently and in a timely manner during challenging behaviour incidents to keep themselves and others safe.

We know when to withdraw and when to call for assistance from an Emergency Response Team (Code Black) and/or Security Response/SA Police, as they can recognise a developing incident through observation and training.

Recognised staff are trained in restrictive practices and apply them only when there is an imminent risk of harm and/or when de-escalation has failed to keep our people, consumers and community safe.

Only our trained staff and trained security services apply restraint or seclusion and we ensure they are familiar with the correct and safe selection and use of equipment and lawful and ethical practices.

Key During an Incident Priorities

1. All staff are trained to know what to do when faced with challenging behaviour and how and when to request Emergency Response Team attendance (Code Black) and/or Security Response/ SA Police.

2. Relevant staff are trained in lawful and ethical practices of restraint and seclusion and are familiar with the correct and safe selection and use of equipment.

5.

After an Incident

This theme focuses on ensuring that our people are safe and supported to recover well, and that all possible steps are taken to learn from the challenging behaviour incident.

Post-incident Support and Management

Our leaders and our staff understand that individuals respond differently to stressful situations and consider this factor in the support and management provided following a challenging behaviour incident.

We value our people and provide appropriate supports following challenging behaviour incidents. In appropriate cases, staff will be supported to report matters to the police and pursue matters under the criminal law.

We ensure the post incident debriefing and Employee Assistance Program is available to support our staff following exposure to challenging behaviour.

We note the principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA) as a useful tool to assist in facilitating the natural recovery process for individuals.

We collaborate with the consumer, their family and carers about the incident to review, debrief and understand what the next steps are in delivering health care in a safe environment.

Hazard and Incident Reporting & Investigation

We understand the importance of having reporting systems in place and are vigilant in ensuring all challenging behaviour incidents are reported and investigated, regardless of their severity.

Our investigation process is robust and includes collecting and documenting information as soon as possible after the incident, looking for contributing factors, reviewing risk control measures, determining what new risk control measures are required, and monitoring outcomes.

Review, Debrief and Shared Learnings – including Security

We enhance the learning process and take steps to prevent future incidents and enhance security by reviewing the management of incidents and sharing our learnings.

We ensure continuous improvement by updating our documentation and processes when learnings and gaps are identified.

Key After an Incident Priorities

1. All staff involved in challenging behaviour incidents are provided with support to meet their individual needs.

2. All challenging behaviour incidents are reported and investigated with the intention to review and improve prevention and management strategies.

3. Mechanisms are put in place to analyse data and share the learnings from challenging behaviour incidents.

Strategic Framework Evaluation

Challenging behaviour incidents will be monitored regularly. In two years the Strategic Framework will be reviewed and feedback sought from Local Health Networks, SA Ambulance Service, health services, attached offices, employee associations and consumers to form a thorough evaluation. The review will include research into best practice approaches, the assessment of key performance indicators and the implementation of the key priorities across the portfolio.

Key Performance Indicators and Targets

> Increase in reporting of challenging behaviour incidents (improved reporting culture).

> Increase in perceived levels of support by staff in relation to challenging behaviour. (survey).

> Increase in the number of staff reporting they know what to do in the event of a challenging behaviour incident. (survey).

> Meet relevant Standards at accreditation/evaluation.

For more information

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sahealth.sa.gov.au/challengingbehaviourstrategy

Please note material in this guide was accurate at the time
of printing and may be subject to change without notice.