



Operational Guideline

TITLE: Personal Safety

APPROVED BY: Healthy Sexuality and Harm Reduction Working Group

TARGET REVIEW DATE
Sept 2013

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	Date		Date
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1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure the personal safety of staff involved in Street Connections services

2.0 Scope and Goal

- 2.1 Staff providing outreach services with Street Connections will provide outreach and nursing services while maintaining personal safety

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Services provided via Street Connections are based in principles of Harm Reduction and have a history of nonjudgmental service provision. Traditionally, staff maintain the position that they “do not get involved in street stuff” indicating that they will not get involved in disputes between street-involved people because such involvement can indicate to clients that they are taking sides or making a judgment.
- 3.2 Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health is applicable. Information can be accessed at <http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/safety/index.php>.

4.0 Procedure

- 4.1 Staff will assess for risk to personal safety of staff and clients in all situations including environmental, community and client factors.
 - 4.1.1 In keeping with the WRHA commitment to provide a safe and healthy workplace (Workplace Safety and Health policy 20.10.080), all staff have the Right to Refuse work they believe is unsafe. If/when this arises the Team Manager must be advised (or Team Manager on-call).
 - 4.1.2 Violent or abusive behavior by clients, whether verbal or physical, will not be tolerated. If this behavior occurs, the client will be asked to leave. If client doesn't leave, the staff will leave the area.
 - 4.1.3 In the case of immediate, life-threatening danger, staff should leave the situation as necessary to maintain personal safety. Call 911 and follow their directions.
- 4.2 In situation where risk to personal safety of staff or clients may increase:
 - 4.2.1 Consider remaining in the van to maintain personal safety



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4.2.2 If a staff assesses it is safe to leave the van in order to provide client service, maintain a close distance with quick access to the van e.g. park van as close as possible to the situation and the cell phone should be kept immediately available for use. Communication between staff members before, during and after the situation is important. The 2nd staff person must continue assessment of the area and watch the other staff member in order to provide assistance and alert of increasing risk, should this arise.

4.2.3 Staff members involved will debrief with each other after the situation as soon as possible. Additional communication including appropriate documentation, night report, informing the Team Manager and other team members should be followed as appropriate.

4.3 Van-Related

4.3.1 There must be two staff during the evening shift in the van at all times.

4.3.2 The van doors must be locked at all times while doing outreach work. The van door is only open or unlocked when at stops and after assessing the situation as safe in order to control who comes into the van.

4.3.3 The cellular phone must be on and in the van during the van run except 30 minutes before the shift ends and during breaks.

4.3.4 When a van home visit for needle exchange is being done, staff typically does not leave van. Staff should alert client that they are there for the home visit by either phoning client or honking the van horn.

4.3.5 If the police, fire department or any other agency has called the van with a request that you assess as being unsafe, advise them that you are unable to attend to the situation for safety reasons, but that you will have the Team Manager call them to discuss the situation. Contact the Team Manager the same or next working day.

4.3.6 While doing outreach and/or working in the van the, WRHA Identification card should be worn in full view at all times.

4.4 Dress

4.4.1 The WRHA Dress Code policy 20.70.010 applies. All staff will wear appropriate protective clothing at all times. Footwear must meet safety



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requirements of work area and provide for safe mobility. Footwear with thick soles and secure straps is recommended to facilitate safe needle exchange and quick exits. Opened toed footwear is not recommended.

- 4.4.2 Staff are discouraged from wearing valuable and flashy jewelry. Wedding rings and earrings are allowed.
- 4.4.3 Staff are encouraged to leave handbags at home. It is recommended that staff carry minimal cash.

5.0 Validation

- 5.1 Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Operational Procedure Right to Refuse.
http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/safety/files/OP_Right_to_RefuseMay10.pdf
- 5.2 WRHA Dress Code Policy 20.70.010.
<http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/files/20.70.010.pdf>
- 5.3 WRHA Working Alone Operational Procedures.
http://home.wrha.mb.ca/hinfo/chif/files/WCC-00072_Guide.pdf
- 5.4 WRHA Workplace Safety and Health Policy 20.20.080.
<http://home.wrha.mb.ca/corp/policy/files/20.20.080.pdf>.

6.0 Recommended Reading

- 6.1 WRHA Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Operational Procedure Right to Refuse.
http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/safety/files/OP_Right_to_RefuseMay10.pdf
- 6.2 WRHA Working Alone Operational Procedures.
http://home.wrha.mb.ca/hinfo/chif/files/WCC-00072_Guide.pdf