

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

SUICIDAL CLIENTS

POLICY STATEMENT

Carelink will respond in a timely manner to distressed and potentially suicidal clients, and will intervene to ensure that these clients are linked with appropriate treatment services.

OUTCOME STANDARDS

- All staff are aware of the procedures for suicidal clients.
- All staff receive training in emergency response/ management of clients who threaten self harm.
- All relevant external health service providers (EHSPs) involved in the ongoing management of the client are alerted to the client's suicidal state of mind.
- All necessary documentation is completed without delay and by the next working day.
- All individuals involved in any incident are provided with the opportunity for debriefing.

RISK SITUATION

These situations typically occur when a client phones Carelink stating that they are suicidal, or when they explicitly or implicitly threaten self harm. The call may be received during office hours, or a message may be left out of hours on the answering machine. In some instances suicidal threats are received by letter or email, or via a third party.

RESPONSE

- If Admin staff take or return the call/correspondence, calmly reassure the client that you are able to help. Do not hang up on them.
- Establish the client's *current* location.
- Ask the client who else is involved in their care (if not already known).
- Check the client's file or electronic database to clarify current treatment arrangements (if present, a second staff member should do this).
- Encourage the client to make contact with their regular therapist, where appropriate, or offer to do this on their behalf.
- If the client has no regular therapist or the treatment has terminated, encourage them to speak to one of the Carelink clinicians.
- If present, the second Admin staff member should contact the Carelink Coordinator, according to availability, and provide them with the client's number. If the staff member taking the call is alone, the clinician should be contacted on another phone (e.g. via text message) where it is not appropriate to end the call, even temporarily.

- In the event that neither Carelink Coordinator or the client's EHSP is available, contact the Crisis Assessment & Treatment (CAT) Team (see CATT list).
- Ascertain if the client has other supports who can be contacted.
- If the client is at imminent risk of attempting suicide, contact the CAT Team and emergency services if indicated.
- Carefully document the incident in the client file.
- It is essential to follow up all clients who have threatened suicide. An individualised plan will be devised by the Carelink Coordinator, in conjunction with the EHSP and other relevant parties.

PHONE NUMBERS

Security..... 9416 0566

Police/Ambulance 000

Ambulance..... 000

Fire 000