

Royal Children's Hospital	POLICY: STAFF SUPPORT	Policy No:
		Issue Date: 29.06.14
Gatehouse Centre (for the Assessment & Treatment of Child Abuse)		Review Date: 29.06.15
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1. Policy statement

The Gatehouse Centre has a commitment to providing appropriate support to its staff through a range of means. The opportunity to participate in/access individual and/or group activities that recognize the potential impact of working in the field of child abuse is considered important for all staff.

2. Persons affected

Gatehouse Centre staff

3. Definitions of terms

- *Staff Support*

Staff support is defined as any activity designed to acknowledge and address the impact of working with traumatized individuals and their families. This may include activities such as:

- Supervision
- Professional development
- Team building activities
- Reflective Practice
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
- Cumulative Stress Debriefing

- *Follow Up Contact*

Gatehouse Centre recognizes that on taking significant leave of absence (eg. long service leave, extended leave without pay) from their work, staff may experience some delayed reaction to the traumatic material to which they have been exposed. Conversely as the time to return to work approaches, some staff may experience a sense of discomfort that is unexplained by any current life event. It is believed that it is important to acknowledge the possibility of such feelings as much as it is important to recognize that there may be no such impact on some people.

Follow up contact with staff could take the form of a phone call or a letter to ask the staff member how their time off has been and whether they have identified any unmet support needs during their time off. This contact should be discussed and planned for prior to the staff member taking leave. The possibility of such contact being experienced as either supportive or intrusive should be discussed.

- *Support for Staff at Resignation/End of Term of Employment*

As a part of the Exit procedure, the need for formal debriefing should be considered.

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4. Responsibilities

Gatehouse Centre staff are responsible for:

- Discussing their support needs with their supervisor/team leader
- Informing their supervisor/team leader of any critical incidents

Gatehouse Centre team leaders are responsible for:

- Informing the Manager of any unmet support needs
- Informing the Manager of any critical incidents
- Discussing the possibility of and planning follow up contact (where deemed appropriate) with staff who take extended leave
- Organizing an individual debriefing for the staff member if this is required (or providing the staff member with the contact details of a debriefer so that they can make their own arrangements). Such debriefing would occur in accordance with the Gatehouse Centre Debriefing Policy.

5. Other Relevant References

Gatehouse Centre Debriefing, Supervision, Conference and Scholarship Leave Policies