

## Member Bullying and Harassment

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### Preamble

Massage & Myotherapy Australia (Association) is a not for profit body representing the professional practice of massage. The Association recognises that work related violence and aggression is an unwanted and unwarranted occupational hazard for staff and Management. The Association acknowledges and fully accepts its statutory obligations to ensure the provision of a safe and secure environment for all Association employed staff, but also to all service users, members, contractors and visitors.

This Position Statement reflects the Association's commitment to fulfilling its ethical duty to take all reasonable steps to protect and support staff from any forms of physical, verbal or mental abuse whilst conducting their duties. The Association Board of Directors serves to protect staff, membership and the public by adopting this position statement which is resolutely linked to the overall position statement on ethical practice by members.

This Position Statement also serves as a context for the National Ethics Committee and Board of Directors and a platform from where they can make an informed determination in relation to any complaints that arise in relation to members abusing staff.

This Position Statement should be read in conjunction with the Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice.

### Aim

The aim of the Position Statement is to set out the Association strategy for the protection and security of staff by defining behaviours considered to be unacceptable and detailing practical steps to be taken in tackling offenders and providing adequate and appropriate support to staff, both in preventing a potential assault (physical or verbal) and following an actual incident.

This policy aims to:

- Increase staff awareness of safety issues relating to violence and aggression
- Ensure that staff are given the tools to enable them to manage an incident of verbal or physical abuse as far as reasonably practicable
- To ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training to assist them with recognising risk and to provide staff with practical skills to manage any situations of physical or verbal abuse in an appropriate manner.
- To advise staff that appropriate support is available if they are subjected to an incident of physical or verbal abuse
- To encourage full reporting and recording of all incidents or near misses relating to physical or verbal abuse
- To reduce the exposure of incidents and injuries to staff relating to physical or verbal abuse
- To raise awareness to members, visitors and contractors that the Association will not

# Position Statement

- tolerate violence or aggression against Association staff.
- Provide a framework and recommended guidance for Contractors associated with the Association.
- To provide clarification on the classification of complaints heard by the National Ethics Committee

## Process

### Definition of Bullying and Harassment

A worker is bullied at work if:

- a person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably towards them or a group of workers
- the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. Whether a behaviour is unreasonable can depend on whether a reasonable person might see the behaviour as unreasonable in the circumstances<sup>1</sup>.

### Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour, Actions or Comments

The Association will not accept violence, racial, sexual or verbal harassment against any member of staff. It is reasonable to expect that service users, members, their clients and the general public and visitors treat Association staff politely and with respect.

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviour towards staff:

- Threatening or abusive language involving swearing or offensive remarks
- Derogatory racial or sexual remarks
- Violence
- Threats or threatening behaviours
- Offensive sexual gestures or behaviours
- Malicious allegations against staff
- Excessive noise such as loud or intrusive conversation or shouting

*Examples* of other behavioural forms considered unacceptable:

- Theft
- Wilful damage to the Association property
- Malicious or vindictive treatment during a massage as a client

The above lists are not exhaustive or all-encompassing and any other behaviour deemed to be unacceptable is subject to review.

The Association will seek the prosecution of anyone suspected of committing crimes against, or on, the Association staff, property and assets.

### Appropriate action to be taken by the Association staff if confronted with an Incident

Any person displaying any of the above behaviour will be asked to stop immediately, advised of required standards and offered the opportunity to explain their actions that is the cause of upset, to enable effective resolution or help.

Failure to comply with the required standards of behaviour must be communicated to the Manager and arrangements made for the individual to be removed from the area or to end a phone call as appropriate. The individual may request an immediate review or reconsideration of this action and the Manager should inform the individual that the opportunity to behave in an appropriate manner must be demonstrated before resolution can occur.

## **Procedure for the withdrawal or refusal to continue customer service from members**

When a violent or abusive incident occurs or when there is evidence of continued and serious inappropriate behaviour, staff may consider withdrawing or refusing to offer assistance.

The member of staff should seek immediate advice from the most appropriate senior professional or Manager available. Staff should take full details of the incident and concerns. The behaviour is to be recorded on file by the staff member who was initially exposed to the behaviour.

The individual should then be informed by the senior professional or Manager, if possible in the presence of a witness / witnesses, of the staff members concerns that his / her behaviour is unacceptable.

Where unacceptable behaviour continues towards staff, the Chief Executive Officer is to be informed. The matter will be reviewed and where relevant, the matter will be heard by the National Ethics Committee, Board or in emergency, the Executive.

The Chief Executive Officer has the right to suspend membership service of a member for the interim period until the matter can be resolved. In this case, the individual must be advised of the suspension in line with the Association Ethics Complaints Guidelines and the Customer Service Charter.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.fairwork.gov.au> 2014