

STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINING A POSITIVE WORKPLACE AT WESTERN HEALTH

**THE WH FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE YOU IN PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND
RECOGNISE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE RESPECT**

THE STANDARD YOU WALK PAS IT THE STANDARD YOU ACCEPT...



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A Message from our Chief Executive

Evidence worldwide shows that a positive workplace environment creates a better, safer and more compassionate environment for patient care – a better environment for our patients as well as for all of us.

Many of you are leaders in your field but only those who show respect to others are true leaders within this organisation.

We face immense challenges in tackling the vast demands on our resources. There is a great tendency in hospitals to accept the bad behaviour of some because ‘they are brilliant at what they do; we don’t want to lose them’...

The fact is if you cannot show compassion and respect for your colleagues and your patients, then you are not at your best.

Many of you who work at Western Health devote the greater part of your lives to providing care to thousands of patients of the west of Melbourne. Some of you have chosen to work here because you want to make a difference and because you want to make your mark.

We have a reputation for getting on and doing, but this cannot be at the expense of the quality of our interactions with each other.

If we believe in treating our community with dignity and respect, we must not lose sight of the culture of the organisation needed to support that.

When instances of poor behaviour occur, most of us are bystanders, not perpetrators. Most of us have stood by and stayed silent when we had the option to speak up, to call our colleagues to account.

In August 2016, we invited the Australian of the Year, Lt Gen David Morrison (Ret’d), Former Chief of Army, to Sunshine Hospital to speak with our doctors and surgeons around issues of workplace culture, bullying and harassment and gender diversity.

David Morrison made a video speech to the armed forces when he was Chief of Army in which he said:

“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.”

We all have a duty not to ‘walk past’ when we see or become aware of unacceptable behaviours, yet often we do just that. For many employees, speaking up is not an option if a range of supports are not in place. It is our role as employers and leaders, to establish those supports and back them up.

I know it will take a lot of courage for us to get this right. You demonstrate courage every time you make a difficult clinical decision. Now I am asking for that courage to extend to getting this right.

Respect cannot wait.



The Behaviour Accountability Framework

The People Matter Survey of 2015 / 2016, Victorian Auditor General's Audit Recommendation have sent Western Health a very strong message

- We are not consistently “living” our values and that there is a perception that “unprofessional” behaviour is tolerated.
- Employees feel that they “cannot” report poor behaviour and / or are not supported to speak up

Examples from the survey are:

- Speaking up is a “career ending move”
- I will be on the receiving end if I speak up about someone
- I don't know how to report something if I see or hear it

We know that these behaviours have the potential to compromise the safety of patients/ employees / volunteers.

Without equipping our employees and volunteers with tools and capabilities, unprofessional and unacceptable behaviours may persist and continue to impact the care we give to patients and colleagues in our workplace.

This document will outline critical information you can access to enable you to take action and feel safe to do so.



Definitions

Unacceptable workplace behaviour

Aggressive	Passive Aggressive	Passive
Inappropriate yelling, anger and threats	Hostile notes, emails or text messages	Chronic lateness
Publicly demeaning or degrading team members	Negative comments about the hospital or teams / colleagues	Failure to return calls or emails / pagers
Pushing or throwing objects	Sexual Harassment	Avoiding meetings
Intimidating colleagues, patients or volunteers	Complaining or blaming others	Avoiding individuals
Swearing		Not participating
Outbursts of anger and/or physical abuse		Not prepared for discussion or meetings

Bullying & Harassment defined

Workplace bullying is defined as persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed at an employee – that creates a risk to health and safety.

Harassment is defined as when someone is made to feel intimidated (including sexual), insulted or humiliated because of their race, colour national or ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexual preference or some other characteristic.

Bullying behaviour is dealt with under OH&S Legislation.

Discrimination is dealt with under Anti-Discrimination Legislation.

Accountability – A Shared Responsibility

Speaking up – “The Standard you walk past is the standard you accept”

We all have a responsibility to sustain and ensure a positive workplace. If you cannot say something as you see or hear unacceptable behaviour – then tell someone who can. When we don’t maintain the right level of behaviour, we then must hold each other and ourselves to account.



Prevention and Response to Unacceptable Workplace Behaviour

Every workplace environment, culture and relationships within are unique and dynamic. They are influenced by the nature of our business, leadership style and the workforce mix.

At Western Health there is a fundamental requirement that we conduct ourselves within the values of Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence and Safety.

To meet our values all Western Health employees should be able to say common things about our workplaces

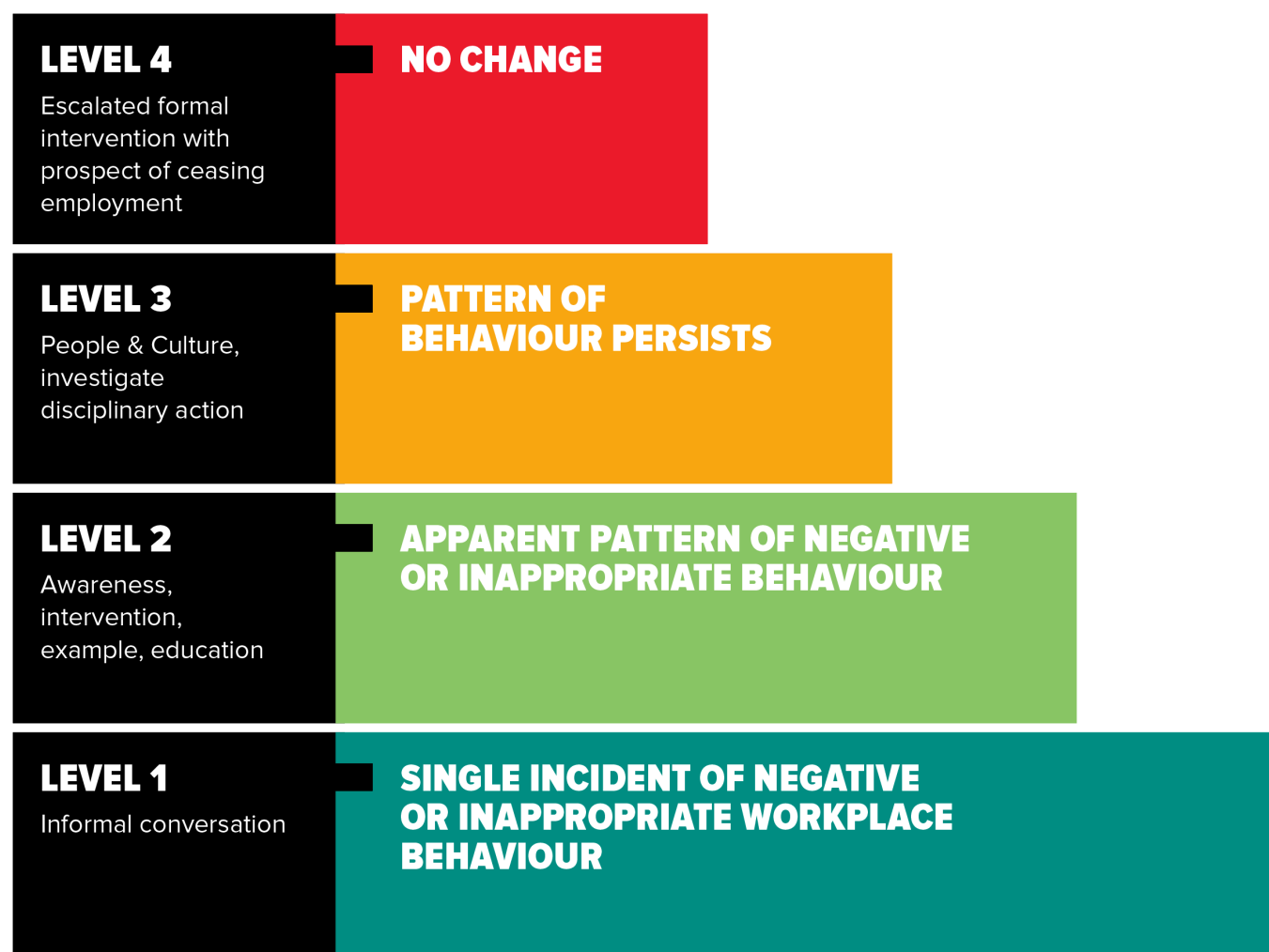
- We consider people equally without prejudice or favour
- We build relationships based on mutual respect
- We respect each other regardless of seniority
- There is good will between us and we work collaboratively
- We are all responsible for maintaining and creating a positive workplace
- We don't tolerate unacceptable behaviour, including harassment or bullying
- We treat each other with respect even when we hold different opinions or are under pressure

It is understood that no workplace is free from occasional conflict outbursts or bad temper and disrespectful behaviour. The response to these behaviours is critical to whether they continue or are curtailed within each workplace.

Refer Appendix 1 for examples of values based behaviours we encourage at Western Health



Hierarchy of Control - Responding to Unacceptable Behaviour



What is it?

This is a model which has a proven approach to managing unacceptable behaviour known as the Vanderbilt model.

How it's used?

This model will be applied where there has been a notification, report, complaint, etc. to commence a conversation. The conversation can be had by any Positive Workplace Resolution Officer or other person be it supervisor, manager etc.

Our approach is to raise awareness where behaviours have not been positive and to support and encourage change.

The model supports the conversation to raise awareness and outline Western Health expectations as well as allows us a clear pathway by which we can respond to the behaviour.

An initial informal conversation is all that is required to raise awareness about the behaviour, reinforcing that it is not in line with Western Health values. An escalation in response will occur if the behaviours worsen or remains unchanged.



Preventative interventions will be guided, supported and used by leaders and Managers, setting clear expectations for the need to change. It will also offer support resources to enable further change in behaviour.

Persistent negative / unacceptable workplace behaviour will lead to action such as formal investigation of complaints and subsequent disciplinary action.

If there is no evidence of changed workplace behaviours consideration will be given to ceasing the individual's employment with Western Health, in alignment with relevant processes and policies.

How does the model fit in with the existing structure at Western Health for conduct which requires investigation, discipline or dismissal?

This Vanderbilt model is not to be taken as imposing any obligations on Western Health, beyond its obligations in the relevant enterprise agreement or its policies or processes.

To avoid any doubt, this Vanderbilt model is only a guide. It tends to be most relevant for what might be described as “lower level” types of negative or inappropriate behaviour.

There may of course be situation where even a single incident may require Western Health going straight to level 3 or level 4, depending upon the circumstances.

For example, a single incident of negative or inappropriate workplace behaviour may be of a very serious nature and therefore a warning may be appropriate, or in very serious circumstances, a potential dismissal (e.g. a serious physical or sexual assault).



What Can You Do?

Are you experiencing or witnessing bullying and / or harassment or any other form of inappropriate behaviour? Is the behaviour unreasonable?

Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see or view as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

There are circumstances when perceived unfair or inappropriate treatment or response can actually be a result of miscommunication. It can be difficult in times of pressure and stress to be objective about what is happening. It may be worthwhile to seek the perspective of an independent person who is not involved to discuss the matter. You can always seek the opinion of your Health and Safety Representative.

If you are experiencing or witnessing behaviour that involves violence or physical assault or threats of same, it should be reported immediately to your line Manager who will escalate the matter immediately.

If you would like to information or to discuss your concerns or be informed of options, you can make contact with one of our Postive Workplace Contact Officers.

REMEMBER:

One off unreasonable behaviour is unacceptable

- Reasonable management action is acceptable if it is delivered appropriately. You may feel upset by the nature of the feedback but it is important to balance your reaction to the feedback itself as compared to how the feedback was delivered.

If you believe the behaviour you have witnessed or experienced involves unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment you should seek advice from People Culture as soon as it occurs.

You can now consider and decide what action you may wish to take.



The Western Health Positive Workplace Issues Centre - PWIC

You will soon have the opportunity to ‘lodge a complaint or issue’ (online) by simply emailing pwic@wh.org.au

Western Health will capture the behaviour identified and assess or ‘triage’ how we deal with it and what conversation or action occurs.

The Positive Workplace Resolution Officer most appropriate will be contacted and engage the individual in a discussion focussed on the inappropriate behaviour.

There may be different responses depending on the nature of the behaviour(s) and they will be considered in the way in which we respond.

Important Details

- You have the option to provide your name or remain anonymous when you submit an entry into the PWIC
- Although you are encouraged to provide your name, it could allow us to contact you for a confidential follow up if required – your name will never be disclosed to the person you are reporting (without your permission). However, it may need to be sought by the Executive Director, People Culture & Communication in serious cases or in a situation of vexatious reporting.
- The response time from receipt of the report will be no longer than 48 hours.
- Western Health prohibits retaliation against “reporters” – who have in good faith reported behaviour that is inappropriate at Western Health. In the event of retaliation, the matter will be automatically escalated to a level 3 intervention and a disciplinary process.

Examples of retaliation include but are not limited to

- An employee being “approached” by someone who sees them as the reporter of the behaviour – even if trying to apologise.
- Denial of promotion, harassment, transfer or any such discriminatory or threatening action taken against the “reporter”.
- If a report is submitted and found to be vexatious or malicious, the incident will automatically be referred to the Executive Director People, Culture & Communication for investigation and further potential disciplinary action



Western Health

Evaluation and feedback

Western Health will undertake to evaluate our strategy, its implementation and usage over the course of 12 months.

We will:

- Review the data we collect
 - Conduct interviews and focus groups
 - Ensure education evaluations occur
-
- People Matter Survey results from 2016 and compare them with our 2017 results
-
- Check whether we have better attendance in the workplace because people feel safe coming to work

This is a “shared” accountability

“The Standard you walk past is the standard you accept!”

Become a positive workplace champion at Western Health