COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES
OF NORTHUMBERLAND

SAFETY STRATEGY

The Community Health Centres of Northumberland's (CHCN) Safety Strategy has been developed to support the organization's Mission which states:

The Community Health Centres of Northumberland take leadership in

- *creative health promotion,*
- *diligent illness prevention and*
- *inter-professional treatment services*

*in an inclusive, responsive and **safe environment.***

Safety is a Strategic Priority for CHCN and leaders are responsible for ensuring that a safe environment and safe policies and processes are in place for all clients, staff, volunteers, and visitors of the organization. The following processes and structures have been put in place to ensure the fulfillment of this priority:

1. **'Safety First' Culture**

   Clients, staff, volunteers and visitors are encouraged to take an active role in their own safety and the safety of others. This is done through various means:
   - Orientation for all new clients, staff, and volunteers (including Board Members)
   - Client Rights & Responsibilities booklet
   - Organization's health & safety policies and procedures

- Signage – throughout the building, on the CHCN website, and bulletin boards
- Joint Health & Safety committee
- Board Quality and Risk committee
- Infection Prevention and Control Committee
- Standing agenda items at management, team, and board meetings
- Quarterly safety reports and discussions at management, staff, and committee meetings
- Staff recognition regarding safe practices (e.g. kudos at staff meetings)
- 'Just Culture' policy & procedure

2. Identification & Assessment Processes

Taking a proactive approach to safety is a key aspect of safety planning. The identification of potential risks and the assessment and monitoring of compliance is done in a variety of ways:

- Adverse Event and Incident Management processes
- Complaints procedures
- Informal input from clients, families, visitors, staff, and volunteers through feedback and suggestions
- Client & Family Experience surveys
- Accreditation Canada 'Client' Safety Culture Instrument
- Team Assessments regarding Required Organizational Practices (Accreditation Canada Standards) compliance
- Organizational Risk Registry (HIROC)
- Health & Safety Committee monthly environmental audits (walk-abouts)
- Hand Hygiene Audits

3. Standards of Practice

The CHCN has put in place processes, tools, resources, and policies to create an environment for sound safety practices. For example:

a. Physical Measures: such as handrails, call bells, panic buttons, immediate safety alerts on EMR screens, door windows, Automated External Defibrillator (AED), hand sanitizer stations, etc.
b. Practices: such as medical directives, safety inspections, regular meetings and reviews by the Joint Health & Safety Committee, Infection Prevention & Control Team, and the Privacy Committee
c. Processes & Procedures: such as fire plan/drills, emergency plan, pandemic plan, Respirator (N-95) Fit testing, home visit guidelines, air quality testing, sterilization protocols, etc.
d. Required Organizational Practices: such as suicide prevention, prospective risk analysis, falls' prevention strategy, adverse event/incident reporting system, preventative maintenance, etc.

4. Education

Education for clients, staff, volunteers, and board members is a key element of the CHCN Safety Plan. The organization puts a high priority on providing everyone who has a role to play in safety, with the knowledge and tools needed to understand how to keep safe and how to act in safe ways. Annual safety training is provided to clients. Staff and volunteers complete mandatory training on safety related topics.

a. Staff education such as :
   o Hand Hygiene
   o CPR & First Aid
   o Suicide Intervention
   o Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
   o Crisis Intervention
   o Anti-Violence Policy and Legislation
   o Ethics
b. Client education such as:
   o Rights & Responsibilities
   o Hand Hygiene

- Crisis Planning and Prevention
- How to Respond to Harassment, Abuse or Violence
- Food Handling
- Ethics Framework
c. Volunteer & Board education such as:
  - Hand Hygiene
  - Anti-violence Policy and Legislation
  - Ethical Decision Making
  - Safe Food Handling
  - How to Respond to Harassment, Abuse or Violence

Education on Safety is delivered in variety of formats such as one-on-one teaching, workshops, lunch & learns, demonstrations, bulletin boards/campaigns, orientation sessions, on-line modules and videos, client & family focus groups, information handouts, social media & television programming in the waiting room, and participation in simulation opportunities

5. Reporting and Indicators of Success

The management team, the staff & board quality committees, the Joint Health & Safety committee, and the coordinator of volunteers, all play a role in monitoring the indicators related to the safety plan. This is done using the various identification and assessment processes mentioned above, followed by actions, follow-ups, and analysis of trends. Feedback loops contribute to the safety culture and demonstrate quality improvement success by informing clients, staff, volunteers and visitors about the results of their valuable input related to safety issues. This feedback is delivered through a variety of venues such as:
- Quarterly Incident Report Summary
- Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) reports that are publically posted

- o Staff, volunteer, partnership meeting updates
- o Client & Family Advisory Roundtable (CFAR) updates
- o Bulletin boards

6. Assigning Responsibility

- o Client responsibilities for safety are outlined in the Client Rights & Responsibilities booklet
- o Staff responsibilities for safety are outlined in job descriptions
- o The Management Team has responsibility for implementing and monitoring the CHCN Safety Plan and for leading the safety improvement activities with input from staff, volunteers, clients and family members Managers have extended responsibility in terms of responding to safety issues. These responsibilities are outlined in managerial job descriptions
- o The Joint Health & Safety Committee's has responsibility for safety in the workplace laid out in their legislation and in the committee's Terms of Reference
- o The Just Culture Policy outlines the process for joint accountability of staff and the organization to report and take action on errors, at risk behaviour, and reckless behaviours regarding safety
- o The Board's Quality & Risk committee has a responsibility to oversee safety structures and risk management protocols as outlined in their Terms of Reference.