

	Family Violence Management Policy	Policy Number <i>WCDHB-FVP-002</i>	Version Nos: 3
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1. Policy Statement

The West Coast District Health Board (WCDHB) does not condone any form of family violence. The WCDHB recognizes the vital role that health care professionals have in screening for family violence and in reducing its impact on individuals, families/whanau and the wider community. The WCDHB are committed to creating a supportive environment in which patients/clients can feel safe and comfortable seeking assistance regarding family violence. The WCDHB recognizes that culturally appropriate services are essential.

2. Purpose

This Policy establishes the responsibilities and parameters of WCDHB Health Care Professionals to screen for, and respond to family violence.

3. Application

Routine screening for family violence is an important component of clinical care for all women aged 15 years and over.

What should patients/clients be screened for?

- Women aged 15 years and over should be screened for family violence over the past year.
- Male patients should be screened for family violence when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.
- Children aged up to 15 years should be screened for child abuse when they present with signs or symptoms indicative of abuse.
- In situations where there is an ongoing relationship between health care provider and patient, screening for family violence should be take place annually unless circumstances suggest more frequent questioning is warranted.
- Screening should only occur when it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that the patient/client is alone and that no children under 2 years old are present.

Family Violence screening should occur as part of the routine health history

- At every emergency department visit.
- As part of admission to hospital.
- At sexual health clinic appointments.
- At outpatients clinic appointments
- At primary health care appointments
- **At initial appointment with Obstetrician / Lead maternity carer**
- At each three-month review if patient/client screens positive for family violence and is receiving ongoing or periodic treatment.
- During any preventive care consultation (e.g. cervical screening, mammography).
- The mothers of children attending for healthcare are screened:
 - As part of well child assessments.
 - When children are reviewed in the Emergency Department or admitted to hospital.
 - When family violence is suspected, including when child abuse is identified.

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4. Definitions

Child	0-14 years old. The Child, Young Persons and their Families Act include young people up to 17 years.
Young person	14-17 years old.
Family Violence	Violence or abuse of any type, Physical or sexual violence, psychological/emotional abuse, or threat of physical or sexual violence that is usually perpetrated by one family member against another family member. Family violence includes Domestic violence, Child abuse and Elder abuse.
Domestic Violence	Family Violence that occurs between adults in an ongoing relationship. Domestic violence includes co-habitant, sibling, inter-generational, extended family and Partner abuse,
Child Abuse	The harming (whether physically, emotionally or sexually), ill treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person
Routine Screening	Routine enquiry, either written or verbal, by health care providers to patients about personal history of partner abuse. Unlike indicator-based questioning, routine questioning means routinely questioning all women aged 15 years and over about abuse. The enquiry is usually made within the social history.

5. Responsibilities

Executive Responsibilities

WCDHB is responsible for:

- Providing adequate resourcing for the Policy to be implemented and evaluated.
- Ensuring there is organisation-wide Policy and Procedures for the routine screening and management of family violence
- Providing mandatory training for staff about their responsibilities and the actions required by the Policy and Procedures
- Ensuring processes are in place to monitor and evaluate adherence to the Policy and Procedures.
- Providing adequate support and supervision for staff.
- Provide adequate resourcing of family violence activities

Staff Member Responsibilities

All employees of the WCDHB with a healthcare responsibility will be involved the screening and management of family violence.

Responsibilities include:

- To be conversant with WCDHB Policy and Procedures
- To routinely screen for family violence at each initial contact, when it is safe to do so.
- To understand how to identify, manage and refer victims of suspected family violence
- To attend initial training, core training and regular updates appropriate to their area of work
- To facilitate and/or provide access to WCDHB specialist health services that may include:

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- Mental Health assessments
- Diagnostic medical assessments
- Social work services, counselling and therapy resources
- Paediatric assessment for any children who may be at risk
- To practice in a safe way: including, consulting with a senior colleague, seeking peer support after each disclosure of family violence or accessing the Employees Assistance Programme
- In all cases where a member of staff has a concern about a child/ young person being or likely to be abused by an adult or another child or young person, they will report this to their manager/ supervisor and make referrals/ notify key clinical staff to assist in the formulation of a plan to address the care and protection concerns.
- A referral to Child, Youth and Family may be made at any time. All CYFS referrals will be forwarded to the Child Protection Coordinator.

Family Violence Steering Committee Responsibilities

- To meet on a regular basis
- To advocate and support the implementation of routine screening for family violence throughout the WCDHB
- To monitor and evaluate the programme
- To provide guidance and support to the family violence response co-ordinator

Co-ordinator of the Family Violence Intervention Programme Responsibilities

- Convene focus groups to facilitate the implementation of staff training, policies and procedures, community response and quality assurance
- Ensure provision of training in family violence is available cyclically
- Provide regular reports to the family violence steering committee
- To be available to staff for consultation regarding family violence concerns
- To communicate with Heads of departments to ensure that security systems are established and maintained
- To conduct regular chart audits to ensure that the family violence management Policy and Procedures is being implemented; conduct an annual review of compliance to Policy and Procedures

6. Legislative Requirements

Legislation

- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 and Amendments
- Health Information Privacy Code (1994)
- New Zealand Public Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights (1996)
- Domestic Violence Act (1995)
- Human Rights Act (1993)
- Privacy Act (1993)

7. Related Documentation

- WCDHB Domestic Violence Management and Screening Procedure
- WCDHB Child Protection and Screening Procedure
- WCDHB Department Guidelines
- WCDHB Tikanga – Best Practice Guidelines
- WCDHB Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure

Revision History	Version:	3
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	Date Last Reviewed:	February 2012
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