



FEELS LIKE HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

CORE MODULE: OPEN DISCLOSURE

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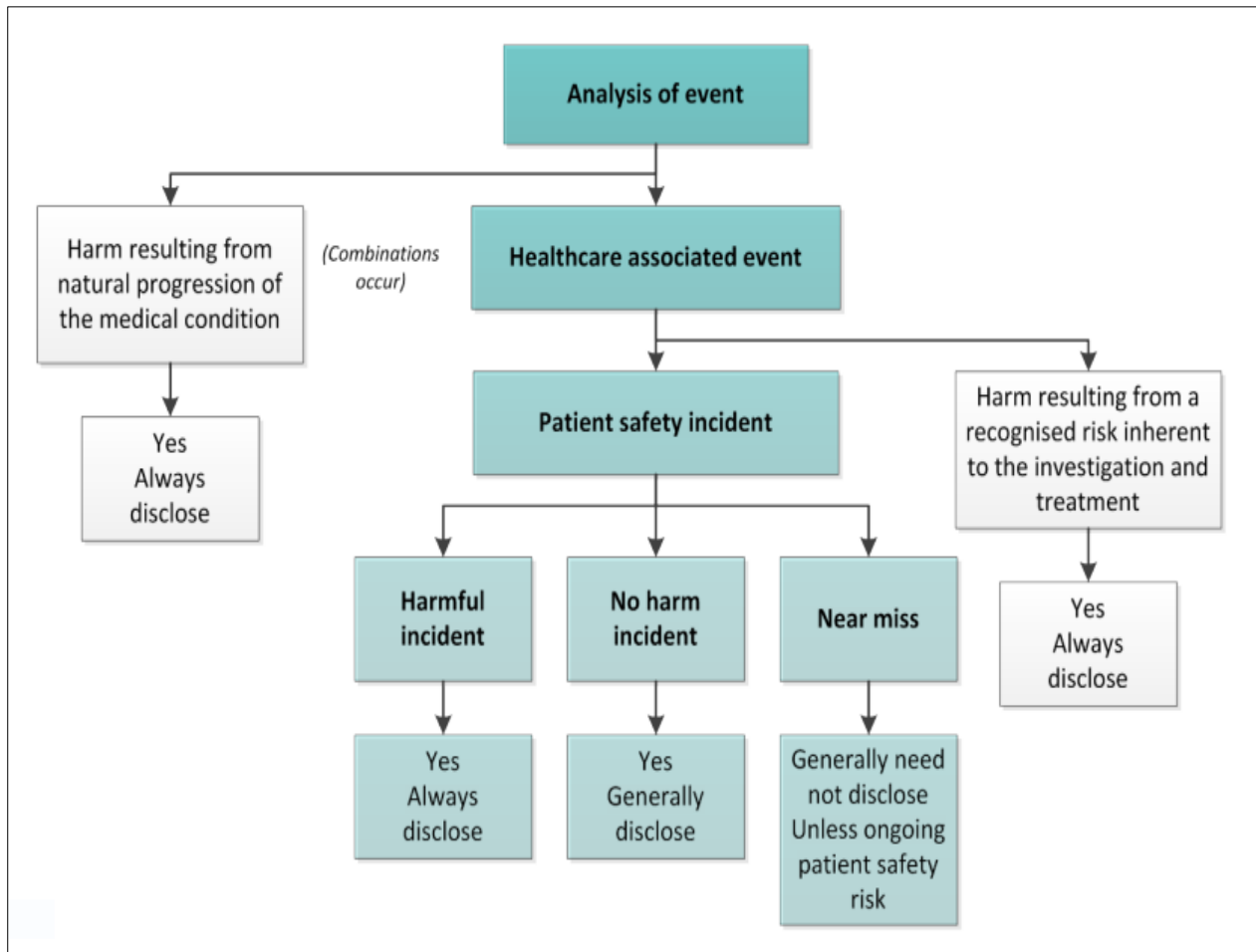
OPEN DISCLOSURE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY

The Purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to support the organisation to communicate openly with Participants, and their person(s) responsible when an adverse event occurs.

DEFINITIONS

Word	Meaning
Open Disclosure	<p>An open discussion or series of discussions with a Participant and/or their person responsible about a Participant safety incident which could have resulted or did result in harm to that Participant while they were receiving health care.</p> <p>Open disclosure is the open discussion of incidents that result in harm to a patient while receiving health care with the patient, their family, carers, and other support persons. The essential elements of open disclosure are outlined in the national Australian Open Disclosure Framework.</p>
Adverse event	is any event or circumstance which resulted in unintended and/or unnecessary psychological or physical harm to a patient during an episode of health care
Harm	is impairment of structure or function of the body and/or any harmful effect arising from an incident including disease, injury, suffering, disability, and death. Harm may be physical, social or psychological.
Near miss	<p>is an incident that did not cause harm but had the potential to do so.</p> <p>Where there is a near-miss incident, the disclosure is discretionary and based on whether it is felt the Participant would benefit from knowing. For example, if there is an ongoing safety risk to the Participant. Advice may be required from the Senior Leadership Team to assist with the determination of risk. The timeliness of informing Participants must always be considered. Near miss incidents must be entered into the incident management system.</p>
No-harm incident	<p>means an incident where the patient was exposed, but where no harm resulted.</p> <p>When a no harm incident has been identified, generally the Participant and/or their person responsible would be informed. Even though no harm is immediately apparent, an ongoing Participant safety risk may be present and the Participant and/or their person responsible may be aware that some sort of mistake or incident has occurred.</p>



Open disclosure is also recommended when the Participant has been harmed as a result of the natural progression of their medical condition, or from a risk inherent to the investigation and treatment of their medical condition.

Legal liability & precautions

Open disclosure does not, of itself, create legal liability, and acknowledgment of an adverse event is not the same as an admission of liability. However, it is important that workers use the language of apology, concern, and regret without apportioning blame or admitting liability.

Workers of Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd will take care not to:

- State or agree that they are liable for harm caused to a client.
- State or agree that another worker is liable for harm cause to the client.
- State or agree that Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd is liable for the harm caused to a client.



Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd is committed to creating a positive culture of trusted and productive communication between Participants, support persons and the workforce, in which open disclosure is standard practice.

This policy forms part of our broader organisational incident management system.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Enable Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd to communicate openly with Participants, and their support person(s) when an adverse event occurs.
- Ensure that communication with, and support for all affected Participants and staff, occurs in a supportive and timely manner.
- Provide a framework for open disclosure that establishes a standardised approach to open disclosure across Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd [include following if your organisation assesses against NSQHS Standards] and adheres to the principles of the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

PROCEDURE

Scope of policy

This policy applies to all communications with Participants and their support persons following harm from an adverse event, no-harm incidents, or near misses across all areas of Feels Like Home Support Services. While the policy focuses on adverse events, the harm suffered by a client does not have to be serious or permanent for open disclosure principles to apply.

Open disclosure: key elements

Open disclosure consists of five key elements, which are:

- An apology.
- A factual explanation of what happened.
- An opportunity for the client to share their experience.
- A discussion of the potential consequences; and
- An explanation of the steps being taken to manage the incident and to prevent recurrence.

In addition to these core elements, open disclosure includes:

- Acknowledging to the client and their support persons(s) when things have gone wrong.
- Listening and responding appropriately when the client, or their support person(s) express their concerns or feelings.
- The opportunity for the client and/or their support person(s) to ask questions; and
- Providing support to Participants and/or their support persons(s), as well as workers, to cope with the consequences of an incident.



Open disclosure may involve one discussion, or a series of interactions. The duration of the process will depend on the severity and nature of the incident, the needs of the client and/or their support person(s), how the investigation into the incident progresses, and whether the client has any ongoing care needs as a result of the incident.

Open disclosure: when to disclose.

When a **harmful incident** occurs, Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd must inform the client and/or their support person(s). This may include harm from an outcome of an illness or its treatment that did not meet the client or staff member's expectations, or harm resulting from a risk inherent to treatment.

When a **no-harm incident** has been identified, Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd will generally inform the client and/or their support person(s). Even though no harm may be immediately apparent, there may be a chance of an ongoing client safety risk, or their support person(s) may be aware that some kind of mistake or incident has occurred.

For a **near miss incident**, disclosure is discretionary, and is based on whether Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd feels the client would benefit from knowing. This could include situations where there is an ongoing safety risk to the client. Not all near miss incidents require open disclosure, for example, if disclosure may result in distress to Participants or their support person(s).

Near miss incidents must be recorded in the incident management system.

Promoting a culture of open disclosure

Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd commits to the following key actions and will ensure that all workers are trained and supported to implement these actions. Implementation of these actions will contribute to successful open disclosure:

- Establishing good rapport and relationships with Participants, as well as their support persons, from the outset of their care.
- Ensuring that informed consent is obtained, and that the client has reasonable expectations prior to receiving the care, treatment or procedure.
- Accurately communicating the potential risks involved in the procedure or in health care generally.
- Acknowledging an unexpected event as close to the occurrence of the event as possible, even if further investigation is needed.
- Refraining from speculating on the causes of an incident, making unrealistic promises, or attributing blame.
- Remaining respectful to the client, their support persons, and other workers at all times.
- Communicating compassion and remorse when talking with Participants; and
- Listening actively to Participants during disclosure of discussions and being conscious of body language.

OPEN DISCLOSURE: PROCESS

Feels Like Home Support Services Pty Ltd will follow the below process when implementing open disclosure.

Step 1:

Detecting and assessing incidents

- Immediate steps taken to prevent further harm
- Initiate response
- Escalate

Step 2:

Signalling the need for open disclosure

- Acknowledge the adverse event to the client and/or support person(s)
- Signal the need for open disclosure

Step 3:

Preparing for open disclosure

- Investigation
- Gather all necessary information

Step 4:

Engaging in open disclosure

- Meet with the client and their support person(s)
- Clearly explain the incident
- Offer practical and emotional support

Step 5:

Providing follow-up

- Provide feedback to the client and their support persons
- Agree on future care

Step 6:

Completing the process

- Reach an agreement
- Provide the client with final written and verbal communication

Step 7:

Maintaining documentation

- Maintain a record of open disclosure
- File relevant documents in the client record

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed and updated if necessary, annually by the Director and any changes made will be approved by the Management Team.

<http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/incident-management/open-disclosure>