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# Debriefing Policy

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Turas Training

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. TURAS is committed to ensuring that all staff are provided with adequate support through effective debriefing.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. To provide guidance to staff about the process by which they can be supported following their involvement in traumatic / stressful incidents at work.
- 2.2. To provide mechanisms governing debriefing at staff meetings and supervision to enhance organisational learning.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and locum workers within TURAS

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1. Debriefing: a once off, semi structured opportunity to give and receive feedback in relation to a specific occurrence that was either stressful, traumatic or out of ordinary, as perceived by the worker.

## 5. Principles

- 5.1. Debriefing can play a useful role in experiential learning and organisational growth. Therefore debriefing should be a part of the organisational response to improving services.
- 5.2. Staff are best protected from stress at work if they have meaningful opportunities to debrief. Therefore debriefing is a response to good health and safety policies.
- 5.3. All debriefing sessions are held in the strictest confidence.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1. Manager must ensure that staff support and counselling service is made available.
- 6.2. Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff who are involved in traumatic or stressful incidents have opportunities to debrief the incident.
- 6.3. Staff have a responsibility of making a manager aware if they have been affected in any way by an incident in the workplace.

## 7. Procedures

- 7.1. Debriefing may be informal or formal. Informal debriefing can occur through one-on-one, small group, or whole-class discussions. When formal debriefing sessions are utilised, a leader or facilitator encourages, and in some cases directs, cooperative inquiry into the participants' feelings
- 7.2. Staff should have regular formal opportunities to debrief at staff meetings. This should be a regular component of staff meetings even if a particularly traumatic incident has not been judged to have occurred.
- 7.3. Staff should have opportunities to debrief during supervision sessions. In the event that an incident has occurred in the course of the staff member's work that needs debriefed, they should request that a supervision session be brought forward. Following a supervision session if it is agreed that the supports required fall outside the expertise of the supervisor, the organisation will ensure access to a trained counsellor as soon as possible.
- 7.4. In the event that a traumatic event has occurred within the organisation, such as but not limited to a violent (physical or verbal) act, the death of a service users, an overdose suicide or attempted suicide, etc, the following should be followed:
  - 7.4.1. The manager should offer timely support to a staff member who may have been directly involved in an incident. This individual may need to debrief the incident individually before it is discussed in the group. This should be done on the day of the incident before the person has had a chance to sleep. The individual should be assured that their feelings are normal

and that the organisation may provide additional supports. It may be appropriate for the individual to leave work early at the manager's discretion.

- 7.4.2. The manager that was not involved in the incident or an individual with adequate training arranged by a manager should facilitate a debriefing session with staff that has been impacted by the incident. This may involve the full staff team as anyone who feels impacted by the incident should have the opportunity to attend. Staff should be contacted within 24 hrs to arrange a debriefing session where supports will be offered. While it is good practice to debrief on the day of the incident, it may not be useful to engage a debrief session if the group is highly escalated. The manager may decide to hold off on a formal debriefing for 24hrs or more. However this should be done within 48 hrs.
- 7.4.3. The debriefing process allows those involved to express what they did, what they saw, and how they felt. This is done in a group forum to allow the discussion to take place freely among staff. Debriefing will address the following questions
  - 7.4.3.1. Who was involved?
  - 7.4.3.2. What happened?
  - 7.4.3.3. Where did it happen?
  - 7.4.3.4. Why did it happen?
  - 7.4.3.5. How do people feel about what happened?
  - 7.4.3.6. What did we learn?
- 7.4.4. Staff should be given adequate time to discuss the event and their feelings in relation to it. Debriefing should cover an individual's personal and emotional reaction to the event / environment, not merely the programmatic or administrative issues encountered.
- 7.4.5. The role of the facilitator is to encourage all staff to listen respectfully and communicate openly. He or she should be skilled in group processes, and conflict resolution. The leader is responsible for creating an environment that stimulates trust and for ensuring that the session ends with a sense that something has been achieved and that people have been heard.
- 7.4.6. The organisation will not force anyone to share in a debriefing session if they do not feel ready to.
- 7.4.7. The manager should provide follow up with the group the day after the debriefing to ensure everyone is safe and coping well.
- 7.4.8. If staff self-identifies a need for counselling, this will be made available at the discretion of the manager and in reference to internal resources. If resources are not available other forms of support will be discussed and agreed between the staff member and the manager.