

Policy 208 Family & Domestic Violence Policy

Policy Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
208	1.07.2020	1.07.2020	Endorsed

Why

The purpose of our family violence policy is to demonstrate a commitment to providing a workplace in which family violence is not tolerated or excused, as well as a commitment to managing the impact it has on employees and their participation in the workplace.

The purpose of a workplace family violence policy is to:

- Raise awareness among employees about family violence and the impacts it has on people in the workplace, and how to support co-workers
- Create a safe working environment that promotes gender equity and models non-violent and
- Respectful relationships
- Guide responses to employees who are affected by family violence
- Create a supportive environment that will encourage people experiencing family violence to seek support

Responding to Disclosures of Family Violence

It is recommended that employees experiencing family violence be encouraged to raise the matter with either their immediate supervisor, a manager, a member of the Human Resources (HR) team, or Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) team. However, they may feel more comfortable disclosing their experience to a peer or close colleague, therefore it is important that all employees are provided with information and training on how to respond to a disclosure, and are aware of their responsibilities in these situations. While all employees require an understanding of how to respond to family violence disclosures, it is likely that supervisors, managers, HR staff and WHS staff will have primary responsibility for supporting employees experiencing family violence. It is therefore Bay Building Group's commitment that people in these roles are provided with adequate training and resources to support them with the process.

Maintaining Employee Confidentiality

At Bay Building Group, we recognise that Family violence issues should always be discussed in a safe and confidential place. It is important that the privacy of employees experiencing family violence is strictly maintained, and that disclosures of family violence are only provided to other employees (such as managers or HR staff) as required, and only with the consent of the employee experiencing the violence.

In addition, we recognise it is important that information pertaining to a disclosure of family violence is kept strictly confidential and is not recorded on the employee's personnel file without their express permission (with the exception of recording family violence leave). If an employee chooses to record information about their family violence experience, it is important that only information that relates to the workplace is documented, as this information could be used if a family violence issue is brought before the courts. Family violence incidents involving children may need to be reported to a relevant authority, in line with relevant legislation. This should be undertaken in consultation with the employee experiencing violence as well as a specialist family violence service.

Documenting Employee Disclosures of Family Violence

We confirm that only the following information be recorded and stored securely and confidentially on an appropriate data management system:

- The date and time discussions occurred
- The details of family violence incidents as relevant to the workplace
- The details of support your organisation has provided to the employee, including referral options, workplace safety planning and information provided
- Whether a referral has been made to justice services, for example, the police or child protection.

Providing Support to Employees Experiencing Family Violence

Bay Building Group confirms there will be reasonable efforts to create a safe and supportive workplace for employees experiencing family violence. We commit that employees who disclose their experience of family violence are listened to, believed and given complete control over how to manage their situation, including accessing the support options available to them. At Bay Building Group we will provide support to the employee regardless of whether or not they plan to take the matter further, for example making a formal report to police or engaging with a family violence support service. In addition to providing a safe and supportive environment, we will support employees in the following ways:

- Providing information on the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Providing information on the family violence resources and support services available externally
- Providing information on the organisation's family violence leave options, and supporting employees to access it
- Supporting changes to duties and responsibilities when requested
- Supporting changes such as relocation, change of hours and contact details in order to increase their safety
- Supporting them to develop a workplace safety plan, in consultation with a specialist family violence service

Family Violence Leave Options

People experiencing family violence are likely to require time away from the workplace. Family violence leave provisions ensure that employees are supported to take time off, for reasons including:

- To seek medical or legal assistance
- To attend appointments, including with various support services and health professionals
- To attend court appearances
- To relocate to new accommodation
- To make safety arrangements
- To take action relating to the wellbeing of their children.

Evidence for Leave

BBG will require that employees experiencing family violence provide evidence of their need to access family violence leave. Evidence may include an agreed document issued by the police (incl a statutory declaration), a court, a family violence support service, health or legal professional. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that it is not burdensome, it does not cause unnecessary additional stress, and it does not impact on their ability to access leave or maintain employment. Eg. The employee may provide evidence upon their first disclosure of violence, rather than for every occasion of leave they seek.

Supporting Employee Work Performance

Bay Building Group understands family violence can affect the wellbeing, productivity and performance of people in their workplace, and can lead to increased work interruptions and absenteeism. Bay Building Group will ensure that employees experiencing family violence are not subject to any adverse or disciplinary action if their attendance or performance at work suffers as a result. Employees will be protected against adverse action or discrimination on the basis of their disclosure, experience of, or perceived experience of family violence, in line with Equal Employment Opportunity legislation.

If a team leader / manager becomes aware that an employee's productivity and performance is being impacted by family violence, that they consider all aspects of the employee's situation and that they make reasonable efforts to resolve performance issues. Employees experiencing violence will be within reason, supported to develop and implement a modified work plan that enables them to continue in their role and manage their workload. In some instances, this may involve modifying job duties and responsibilities and/or changing the pattern of hours worked.

Family Violence Training and Education

Bay Building Group will provide training to all employees on:

- The causes, impacts and indicators of family violence
- Responding appropriately to a disclosure of family violence
- Understanding how to appropriately identify and respond to a disclosure of family violence
- Understanding how to refer for family violence support within the organisation.

HR & WHS staff as well as senior managers will be provided with training and supervision on:

- Referring an employee experiencing family to appropriate support services
- Providing support to employees on attendance and performance at work
- Supporting employees to put a Workplace Safety Plan in place
- Accessing support for their own self-care (recognising the impact providing family violence support can have on their own wellbeing).

Workplace Safety Plan

A workplace safety plan will be developed in consultation with the employee experiencing violence. When developing a workplace safety plan, BBG representative will consider the changes that may need to be made to the employee’s working arrangements (such as work schedules, location and contact details).

Consideration will also be given to the potential risk of physical harm to other employees. In instances where there is a threat to the safety of an employee, **the police should be contacted immediately on triple zero (000).**

Support Services & Resources

Agency	Phone	Website	Services Provided
1800 RESPECT	1800 737 732	1800respect.org.au	National 24-hour Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Line
MENSLINE	1300 78 99 78	mensline.org.au	24/7 support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship issues
Lifeline	13 11 14	lifeline.org.au	24/7 counselling and referral service for people in a crisis situation.
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636	beyondblue.org.au	24/7 support to people experiencing anxiety or depression.
Assure Programs	1800 808 374	assureprograms.com.au/	Counselling services for mental health, financial and legal, relationship support for all employees and their immediate family members
Translation & Interpreting	131 450	https://www.tisnational.gov.au/	An interpreting service provided by the Department of Home Affairs for people who do not speak English. Access to interpreters speaking more than 160 languages