Australian College of Nursing

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Code and Number	E.1.19
Title of Document	Critical incident - Students

Policy

In the event of a critical incident, the following policy and procedure outlines action to be taken and details the provision of support services. ACN will implement strategies to avoid and mitigate the impact of critical incidents through critical incident and safety awareness, education and training.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students and visitors who have been exposed to a critical incident on or off the premises.

Where staff witness an event that may be considered a critical incident, or are aware of an event which may either indicate or escalate to a critical incident, this policy and procedure should be followed.

Definitions

A **critical incident** is defined as 'a traumatic event, or the treatment of such which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'.

Critical incidents may include but are not limited to:
- Death/suicide of a student or staff;
- Serious accident, injury or illness;
- Missing student;
- Deprivation of liberty, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, biological or chemical weapons;
- Serious distressing or disturbing behavior;
- Fire, riot, bomb-threat, explosion, gas/chemical or environmental hazards, discharge of firearms;
- Threat of widespread infection or contamination;
- Natural disaster e.g. cyclone, earthquake, tsunami, or flood
- Students or staff lost or injured during fieldwork excursions;
- Disruption to operations of ACN;
- Serious damage to facilities;
- Serious work, health and safety (WHS) risk.

Critical Incident Team

The critical incident team assigned to assist the Chief Executive Officer in the prevention and management of critical incidents at Australian College of Nursing (ACN) include:
1. Director Academic Studies (Critical Incident Team Leader)
2. National Director, Education
3. Director Professional Development
4. Manager, Education Development
5. Manager Customer Services

The responsibilities of the team include:
- risk assessment of hazards and situations which may require emergency action
- analysis of requirements to address these hazards
- establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, community emergency services, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services

- 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their emergency contacts
- 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident e.g. critical incident team leader, Chief Executive Officer,
- development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified
- assisting with implementation of critical incident plans
- dissemination of planned procedures
- organisation of practice drills
- coordination of appropriate staff development
- regular review of critical incident plans

PROCEDURE

In the event of a bomb threat and emergency site evacuation, refer to C.3.3 Emergency Procedures Manual.

ACN's critical incident plan assigns responsibilities among relevant staff members and covers all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

Immediate Response [within 24 hours]
- Identify the nature of the critical incident
- Notify the Team Leader or the most senior staff member available
  o Contact emergency services (under no circumstances are students/staff to be transported in private vehicles)
  o If applicable secure the area
  o Ensure safety and welfare of staff and students
- Call 000 if appropriate to the incident
- Convene critical incident team
- Implementation of appropriate critical incident plan
- Liaison with emergency services, hospital and medical services
- Managing media and publicity if applicable
- Contact and inform staff and/or student emergency contacts as required
- Identify students and staff members most closely involved and at risk
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

Secondary Response [48–72 hours]
- Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved
- Provide staff and students with factual information as appropriate
- Arrange debriefing for all students and staff most closely involved and at risk
- Restore ACN to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as practicable
- Completion of critical incident report

Follow-up Response
- Provision of accurate information to students and staff
- Maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and to monitor progress
- Monitor staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of posttraumatic stress disorder; providing specialised treatment as necessary
- Evaluation of critical incident management
- Plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries
- Manage any possible longer-term disturbances e.g. inquests, legal proceedings

Media Releases

ACN recognises that each critical incident is unique and the dynamics of each situation will need to be assessed when it occurs. To protect the privacy of individuals and to ensure the provision of accurate information, ACN has developed an agreed approach to media management.

CEO handles all media releases and;

- gathers information, checks all facts, and determines the official response;
- ensures training/advice is provided for all staff to respond to telephone or occasional enquiries following a critical incident

CEO may delegate media liaison to another member of staff.

Evaluation and Review of Management Plan
After each critical incident, a meeting of the critical incident team will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications as required.

The evaluation process will incorporate feedback gathered from all staff, students, and local community representatives.

An evaluation report will be made available to the Education Management Committee and the wider ACN community.

Record Management
ACN must maintain a written record of all critical incidents and any remedial action taken for a minimum of two (2) years after the student ceases to be an enrolled student.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
C.3.3 Emergency Procedures Manual

Responsibility for Review	Critical Incident Team
Ratification	Education Management Committee
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