



ABUSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Sometimes volunteer counsellors/employees will experience calls that for some reason are 'difficult'. These may include angry callers, calls from people self-harming and/or contemplating suicide, hoax calls and abusive calls. This policy sets out the policy on abusive calls. (see also policies on Self Harm and Suicide).

We take the view that any form of violence, aggression or abuse towards any employee/volunteer is unacceptable and we operate a 'zero tolerance' attitude to abuse. Our employees should not be expected to tolerate unacceptable, aggressive and/or abusive behaviour from callers/clients.

All employees have the right to be able to perform their duties without fear of abuse or threats of violent acts. No volunteer counsellors/employees should consider aggression or abuse to be an acceptable part of their work.

Procedure

It is recognised that each individual volunteer counsellors/employees will have a differing threshold and perception of what they consider as 'abusive' and we therefore wish to support the principles of equality and respect.

Once it has been identified that a call/meeting is of an 'abusive' nature, volunteer counsellors/employees should advise the person that their behaviour or language is not acceptable and ask that they modify this.

If the behaviour is not modified, the caller/client should be advised that continued abusive behaviour will result in the call/meeting being terminated, and that a record of the incident will be retained on file for future reference (see Abusive/Aggressive Incident Form)

If the abusive incident has included a personally directed threat, a volunteer counsellor or employee should, at the earliest opportunity, inform the Trustees who will consider what further action may be appropriate including in the extreme, contacting the police. This should also be taken to and explored in Clinical Supervision.

Appropriate time out (or time off-line) should be taken by the volunteer counsellors/employees to reflect on any abusive incident. Before returning to work, an '**Abusive/Aggressive Incident Report Form**' which must be completed and submitted to the Trustees for review.