

**Policy and Procedure - Critical Incidents**

**GenYZ Mentoring**

**Purpose**

## Crises and critical incidents are uncommon but we recognise that appropriate responses are necessary when such events occur.

## The intention of this policy is to facilitate the management of a crisis or critical incident, to minimise the risks to people and property, to protect the reputation of GenYZ Mentoring and to set recovery procedures in motion.

**Definition**

A critical incident is a traumatic event or threat that causes extreme stress, fear or injury.

Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to a young person, mentor or staff member experiencing:

* serious injury, illness or death
* suicide or attempted suicide
* being lost or injured during program activities
* severe verbal or psychological aggression
* physical assault
* a serious accident or incidence of violence
* natural disaster, e.g. earthquake, flood, fire, windstorm or hailstorm
* extreme temperatures
* fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
* serious behavioural issues, e.g. sexual assault, drug use or alcohol abuse.

**Policy**

## The management of the physical aspects of any critical incident should be handled according to plans drawn up under GenYZ’s Occupational Health and Safety procedures. The Critical Incident Response Team (see below) will address managerial, media and budgeting issues.

**Responsibilities**

GenYZ’s management will establish and oversee a Critical Incident Response Team consisting of the Chairperson, the Program Coordinator and any program staff assigned to Occupational Health and Safety.

The responsibilities of the team include:

* risk assessment of hazards and situations that 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 or community health services
* 24-hour access to contact details for all young people, mentors and their next of kin
* 24-hour access to contact details for all relevant staff members needed in the event of a critical incident
* ensuring mentors have access to appropriate after-hours phone numbers
* liaising with appropriate emergency services or regulators (e.g. WorkSafe Victoria) – or delegating the responsibility to a suitable person
* development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified
* assisting with implementation of critical incident plans
* dissemination of planned procedures
* coordination of appropriate staff development
* regular review of critical incident plans.

**Procedure**

GenYZ critical incident procedures assign responsibilities to relevant staff, and cover all the actions to be taken and timelines for doing so.

**Immediate response (within 24 hours)**

1. Identify the nature of the critical incident
2. Contact emergency services (if applicable)
3. Ensure safety and welfare of other young people, mentors and staff
4. Young people and mentors are to notify program staff as soon as practicable
5. Program staff are to notify a member of the Critical Incident Response Team as soon as practicable
6. Secure the area (if applicable), ensuring that the area is not disturbed until the Police/WorkSafe have provided authority to do so
7. Program staff are to notify the critical incident team leader of the incident and await further instructions

Those further instructions may include the following actions:

1. Implement appropriate critical incident plan
2. Liaise with emergency services, regulators (if applicable), hospital and medical services
3. Manage media and publicity (refer to the Media Relations Policy)
4. Contact and inform parents/guardians or other next of kin
5. Identify young people, mentors and staff most closely involved and/or at risk
6. Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved.

**Secondary response (48–72 hours)**

The following should only be undertaken at the direction of the Critical Incident Response Team:

1. Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved (ongoing)
2. Provide young people, mentors, staff and other stakeholders with factual information as appropriate
3. Arrange debriefing for young people, mentors and staff most closely involved and/or at risk
4. Restore the program to regular routine and delivery as soon as practicable
5. If instructed to do so by the Critical Incident Response Team, complete a critical incident report and forward to any relevant parties (e.g. DHS Child Protection).

The following reporting guidelines will be observed:

* The incident report will be written as soon as possible after being instructed to do so by the Critical Incident Response Team and should:
* deal only in facts
* offer no opinions or comments
* offer no discussion about liability or blame.

**Ongoing follow-up response**

The following should only be undertaken at the direction of the Critical Incident Response Team:

1. Notify the insurer as soon as possible about any actual or potential claim against the program or any program participant(s)
2. Identify any other persons who may be affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services where appropriate
3. Maintain contact with any injured and affected parties to provide support and to monitor progress
4. Monitor relevant young people, mentors and staff for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder; arrange for specialised treatment as necessary
5. Evaluate and review critical incident management
6. Plan for and be sensitive to anniversaries
7. Manage any possible longer-term disturbances, e.g. inquests or legal.