



anf policy

australian nursing federation

nurses and midwives and hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances

It is the policy of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Registered and Enrolled nurses and midwives practise nursing and midwifery in accordance with relevant legislation, codes of ethics and conduct, and local policies and guidelines and protocols, to ensure they meet their duty of care responsibilities.
2. Hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances has the potential to compromise performance at work and adversely affect the health and safety of self and others, including people receiving nursing and midwifery care and co-workers.
3. Where the hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances is identified, all staff including - nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing should be assisted to participate in programs of assistance, support, education and/or rehabilitation.
4. Each workplace should provide accessible, non-punitive and confidential assistance and support programs for nursing and midwifery employees when necessary.
5. Where the hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances is identified, nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing have a right to confidentiality and advocacy, as well as grievance and conflict resolution procedures as necessary.
6. Employers should, in conjunction with nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing and relevant experts, develop, implement and review policies and protocols relating to the management of nursing and midwifery staff known to have alcohol, drug and other substance misuse issues.
7. The random or regular testing of employees for alcohol and other drug use is opposed.
8. Nursing and midwifery staff have a responsibility to report, staff who are reasonably suspected of being affected by hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances. This should be brought to the attention of their immediate manager however may also require mandatory notification to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) as required under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Victoria) Act 2009*. Nursing and midwifery staff must be cognisant of their obligations outlined in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) *Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications*¹. Any reporting must not be malicious and should be supported by a detailed description of the alleged behaviours.
9. Nursing and midwifery staff who report unsafe or inappropriate clinical practice or occupational health and safety hazards which they have reasonable grounds to suspect are related to the hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances by other employees should be provided with appropriate support and must not be subject to victimisation or reprisal.
10. Nursing and midwifery staff have a responsibility to advocate on behalf of individuals and groups whose care and safety may be compromised through the suspected hazardous and harmful use of alcohol, drugs and other substances by another employee or contractor.

endorsed june 1998

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reference

1. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA). *Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications*. Available at <http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines.aspx>