

Bullying and Harassment

Interchange Outer East values a culture of mutual respect and the appreciation of individual differences. All people involved with Interchange have the right to feel safe and supported during their involvement with the program. Bullying and harassment involves a range of behaviours that are undertaken with the intent to hurt or to upset a participant of the service. Bullying and harassment of any participant involved with Interchange interferes with the rights and safety of all participants.

Bullying and harassment includes, but is not exclusive to:

- Verbal abuse, name-calling, racist remarks and teasing.
- Physical attacks, including pushing, hitting, biting, punching, hair pulling, pinching, scratching and spitting.
- Social exclusion, including ostracism, ignoring and alienating.
- Acts that instil a sense of fear or anxiety.
- Aggressive posturing, attitudes or threats which aim to intimidate other participants.
- Verbal abuse.
- Humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults.
- Intimidation.
- Ridiculing someone's opinion.

At times, some of these behaviours (physical attacks) may be present without the intent to hurt another participant. It may be a response developed to communicate a need or want that an individual is unable to articulate in a socially acceptable manner. Whilst pain and suffering may result from the behaviour, the intent of the person displaying the behaviour was not to cause any particular individual harm. This behaviour is not considered as bullying or harassment, however it must be reported in line with the incident reporting policy and an appropriate response developed through a communication support plan.

Anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying, harassment or violence should report it as soon as possible. Interchange Outer East seeks the reporting of any bullying or harassment in a timely manner to enable the agency to deal effectively and efficiently with any incidents. This would include:

- If any participant feels unsafe or has suffered harm from bullying or harassment whilst involved with Interchange
- If any individual is concerned about a participant whom they believe is suffering harm as a result of bullying or harassment

The reporting of bullying or harassment should be conducted through the agency Incident Reporting process or through the Internal Reporting process. Program participants whom are found to be responsible for bullying or harassment will be subject to a disciplinary process that may result in their exclusion from the service or termination of employment.