



Fostering Wellbeing and Responding to Distress within NTGPE

1. Scope

1.1 Application

This policy applies for and to any person directly associated with NTGPE¹, including staff, learners, trainers (in some circumstances) and Directors.

1.2 Limitations

Nil.

This is a Board Policy.

1.3 Related Standards, Policies and documents

AGPT policy and procedure

RACGP Registrar in Distress policy²

Risk Management Policy and Plan

Occupational Health and Safety Legislation and Statutes

Emergency contact and response procedures for medical students

Incident Report Form

Incident Report Register

1.4 Effective from

14th April 2005

2. Purpose

NTGPE will foster wellbeing, including taking preventative action for, and responding to assist, NTGPE learners, staff, trainers or Directors in distress.

3. Principles

- 3.1 NTGPE has a duty of care to ensure people associated³ with it are working in a safe and supportive environment and not in danger of distress or other damage.
- 3.2 NTGPE will strive to create workplaces that promote wellbeing and are productive.
- 3.3 NTGPE also has an obligation to respond promptly and comprehensively in cases when an associate experiences distress.
- 3.4 Different forms or causes of distress may require different responses.
- 3.5 A variety of people or positions associated with NTGPE may be able to assist an associate in distress, and strategic selection of appropriate support is required. Flexibility in providing the best support, as far as that can be determined in advance or at the time, and clearly identifying how that might be done, will be beneficial.
- 3.6 Documenting cases of distress, how to avoid it, or how it can be managed well if it occurs will improve future avoidance and/or response.

¹ Northern Territory General Practice Education Limited, NTGPE.

² This is the policy that NTGPE uses for GP Registrars, pending the ratification of this policy

³ These include staff members, learners or trainees in NTGPE's programs, Directors, and trainers in some situations.

4. Policy

- 4.1 NTGPE will comply with the letter and spirit of Occupational Health and Safety, OH&S Legislation and Statutes to ensure there is negligible occupational hazard or risk for associates.
- 4.2 NTGPE will go beyond OH&S provisions to ensure that its workplaces and its interactions foster wellbeing, and actions taken by staff are focused on promoting associates' wellbeing as well as achieving organizational goals. This will include all staff being attentive to when an associate is or may be in distress, and responding in whatever way is likely to restore wellbeing as a priority.
- 4.3 NTGPE will engage a professional external agency that learners, staff and Directors (and in certain situations, trainers⁴) can independently and confidentially consult in times when they experience NTGPE-workplace-related and other distress. This is a key, self-initiated opportunity for all learners, staff and Directors.
- 4.4 NTGPE will facilitate a visit(s) to their General Practitioner or equivalent for all learners on commencement of a major NTGPE program and/or about to embark on placements in excess of eight weeks, and consultations related to the placement, during and after such placements on an as-needed basis.
- 4.5 NTGPE staff holding primary responsibility for monitoring wellbeing of people associated with NTGPE programs, and ensuring NTGPE responds in a case where an associate is, or may be in distress are as follows:
- | <i>Associate</i> | <i>Staff member responsible</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4.5.1 Learner in NTGPE Program | Program Coordinator or TA ⁵ |
| 4.5.2 Trainer of NTGPE learner | A nominated ME ⁶ |
| 4.5.3 Staff member | Nominated supervisor |
| 4.5.4 Executive or other Director | Chair |
| 4.5.5 Chair | Deputy Chair |
- 4.6 A staff member responsible may call on the independent professional agency (4.3), other staff and/or associates as is appropriate to assist in providing a response that creates or restores wellbeing in the minimum time.
- 4.7 Notwithstanding the identification of staff holding responsibility for ensuring NTGPE takes appropriate action:
- 4.7.1 All staff will be vigilant to ensure their actions promote wellbeing for associates;
- 4.7.2 Staff will be proactive in a case when an associate is, or may be in distress, when it appears that no other action has occurred. This will include checking the associate's wishes and/or contacting the staff member responsible, according to which is more appropriate;
- 4.7.3 Any staff member will contribute when requested and/or is appropriate to assist in promoting wellbeing and/or responding to an associate in distress.
- 4.8 Each associate has normal rights to privacy and confidentiality that, under this policy, includes:
- 4.8.1 a right, on their request, to have no NTGPE intervention; and
- 4.8.2 confidentiality in a case related to or dealing with distress.

⁴ In a case when a GP Trainer is in distress as a result of circumstances directly a result of their work with NTGPE, then they also have access to this service. In doubtful cases, the Executive Director would decide.

⁵ Training Advisor, TA, for a GPRs. Staff act in collaboration with practice-based trainers, who respond first

⁶ The Medical Educator, ME, does not hold direct responsibility. It is the Trainer's supervisor and/or employer

5. Procedures

5.1 *Fostering Wellbeing and Preparing to Respond to Distress*

- 5.1.1 All staff will act in accordance with OHS Legislation and Statutes, and NTGPE's Risk Management Policy and Plan, to ensure the NTGPE workplace is free of hazards, and that risks are kept to safe and manageable levels. The Office Administrator will ensure relevant Legislation and Statutes are available on 'staffweb' and references provided on the Employment Manual
- 5.1.2 All staff will additionally act to ensure that NTGPE's workplaces foster wellbeing for associates, and actions taken are focused on promoting associates' wellbeing as well as achieving organizational goals. This is a responsibility for all designated supervisors. While acknowledging that assessments of this state of wellbeing require mature and specialised professional judgement, staff will use as a guide that associates are
- provided with annual or more frequent reviews of progress,
 - content in their work with and for NTGPE,
 - facilitated as far as possible in seeking to achieve their goals,
 - supported when they require assistance or further development,
 - recognised for their efforts and achievements.
- 5.1.3 The Executive Director will ensure that NTGPE learners, staff (trainers in certain circumstances, see above) and Directors have free access to specialist professional counselling and/or wellbeing services, and that the conditions for their use are facilitative and communicated.
- 5.1.4 At each orientation of a group of learners, the Program Coordinator will ensure the learners are made aware of, and provided with contact details for the professional service referred to in 4.3 and 5.1.3, any additional emergency contact arrangements put in place for their program, and other appropriate emergency services such as Bush Crisis Line.
- 5.1.5 NTGPE, through the Director will provide training for staff in provision of workplace safety, and recognition and promotion of wellbeing in the workplace, including cultural wellbeing. Staff orientations and the Employment Manual will contain advice about wellbeing consultations and emergency contact details for distressing situations.
- 5.1.6 In instances when an associate is in distress, the staff members identified in 4.5 will act promptly to ensure that the distress is reduced or eliminated as soon as possible.
- 5.1.7 The Executive Director will ensure that NTGPE provides training for staff with designated responsibilities in 4.5 to ensure processes that responses to distress are as effective as possible.
- 5.1.8 NTGPE will celebrate demonstrations of its contributions to being a safe workplace, and wellbeing for associates.

- 5.2 *Responding when a learner in an NTGPE Program is in or at risk of Distress*
- 5.2.1 Learners in all programs will be encouraged to contact the Program Coordinator (TA in the GPR Program, or ME or CE if this is more appropriate) as early as possible should they experience distress which they are not comfortably able to manage following consultation with their on-site trainer. The Program Coordinator will ensure each learner has contact details, including in case of an out-of-hours emergency.
- 5.2.2 The learner's trainer may be the first to identify distress, and should normally be the person who responds to remove it. The supervisor will contact NTGPE's Program Coordinator for additional assistance, if required.
- 5.2.3 In a case where the supervisor is unavailable, unable to resolve the issue, or not the most appropriate contact, the Program Coordinator will provide the learner with assistance. If appropriate this may involve reference to the learner's GP, referral to the professional agency in 4.3, or contact with an appropriate ME or Training Advisor and/or and appropriate CE.
- 5.2.4 In any case when a learner has experienced distress and required assistance and resolved the matter on-site, the trainer will document the situation and advise the Program Coordinator, who will place the record on file, paying due regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.
- 5.2.5 In any case when a learner has experienced distress and required assistance within NTGPE⁷, the Program Coordinator will document the incident, paying due regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.
- 5.2.6 When the learner is a GP Registrar (GPR) and it is appropriate, the Program Coordinator will consult the Training Advisor (TA), Training Liaison Officer, TLO and/or Registrar Liaison Officer, RLO. The TLO would be consulted if the source of concern relates to a training site.
- 5.2.7 When the learner is a junior doctor, the ME with responsibility for the doctor's program would normally be consulted.
- 5.2.8 When the learner is a medical student, the respondent will also refer to and comply with the emergency contact and response procedures.
- 5.3 *Responding when a Trainer⁸ of an NTGPE learner is in or at risk of distress*
- 5.3.1 The trainer's workplace colleagues and/or supervisor may be the first to identify distress, and should normally be the source of the person who responds to remove it. The training location may contact NTGPE's TA, Program or Medical Education Coordinator (PC or MEC) for additional assistance, if required.

⁷ Duplicate recording under 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 is not required

⁸ May be a trainer supervising of a GP Registrar, Overseas Trained Doctor undertaking a training program, junior hospital-based doctor on a placement program; or a medical student on a placement.

- 5.3.2 NTGPE's MEC will coordinate an annual process resulting in the nomination of an NTGPE ME to provide assistance to and regular contact with each trainer. (This process has been identified separately elsewhere as a contribution to improved support for training locations, and communication between then and NTGPE).
- 5.3.3 In a case where a workplace colleague or supervisor is unavailable, unable to resolve the issue, or not the most appropriate contact, the nominated NTGPE ME will provide the trainer with assistance, when requested. If appropriate this may involve reference to the trainer's GP, referral to the professional agency in 4.3, or other appropriate contact.
- 5.3.4 Trainers will be encouraged to contact the nominated ME as early as possible should they experience distress which they are not comfortably able to manage. The ME will ensure each trainer has direct or substitute contact details, including in case of an out-of-hours emergency.
- 5.3.5 In any case when a trainer has experienced distress and has required assistance, the ME will document the incident, paying due regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.
- 5.4 *Responding when a staff member is in or at risk of distress*
 - 5.4.1 The staff member's supervisor may be the first to identify distress, and should normally be the person who responds to remove it.
 - 5.4.2 In a case where the supervisor is unable to resolve the issue, unavailable, or not the most appropriate contact, the Executive Director will respond, or identify another staff member who will respond. If appropriate this may involve reference to the staff member's GP, referral to the professional agency in 4.3, or contact with an appropriate other person.
 - 5.4.3 Staff members will be encouraged to contact their supervisor as early as possible should they experience distress which they are not comfortably able to manage.
 - 5.4.4 In any case when a staff member has experienced distress and required assistance, the supervisor will document the incident, paying due regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.
- 5.5 *Responding when a Director is in or at risk of distress*
 - 5.5.1 The Director's workplace colleague may be the first to identify distress, and should normally be the person who responds to remove it. The Director's colleague will contact the Chair or Executive Director for additional assistance, if required.
 - 5.5.2 In a case where a Director's workplace colleague is unavailable, unable to resolve the issue, or not the most appropriate contact, the Chair or Executive Director will provide the Director with assistance. If appropriate this may involve reference to the Director's GP, referral to the professional agency in 4.3, or contact with an appropriate other person.

5.5.3 Directors will be encouraged to contact the Chair as early as possible should they experience distress which they are not comfortably able to manage, and require assistance. The Chair will ensure each Director has contact details, including in case of an out-of-hours emergency.

5.5.4 In any case when a Director has experienced distress and required assistance, the Chair will document the incident, paying due regard to confidentiality and privacy requirements.

5.6 *Documenting cases where assistance has been provided*

5.6.1 An incident report will be created in situations when an associate has experienced distress which they are not comfortably able to manage, and has been provided with assistance under this policy

5.7 *When assistance provided has not been appropriate*

5.7.1 When the assistance provided in any case in 5.2 – 5.6 has not been appropriate, the associate may register a complaint through NTGPE's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures, and seek to have the matter better resolved.

6. Approval and Authority, Version

The Board, through the Chair, will be the authority for this policy and its underlying procedures.

Version, 1.1

D Lloyd

Executive Director

14th April 2005