

Personal safety: Policy and guidelines

Policy

All staff at Telford Mind need to make appropriate assessments of the situations in which they operate, make appropriate decisions about the situation and take appropriate courses of action.

The key messages for all members of staff:

- You, as an individual, matter. Your safety is important.
- You can influence the outcome of a situation. There are three factors in a violent situation that interact: the aggressor, the victim and the context.
- Protect your own space.
- Be aware of the impact of your own behaviour on service users and staff alike.
- Be confident and calm in your dealings with people.
- The emphasis is on recognition, prevention, and positive responses and interventions.

Guidelines

Signing in

Always sign in on the sheets in the foyer – next to the glass window to the office. Use the 'In' and 'out' board: this helps to keep track of staff movements and tells us all which volunteers are on duty.

Lone working

If you are the only member of staff on duty at Telford Mind please make adequate arrangements to ensure you are safe - especially when new or unknown people visit. This might include:

- **Being careful** not to tell anyone that you are alone in the workplace. (This applies to people who telephone or e-mail you, as well as to visitors).
- **Locking** yourself in if you are alone in the centre during non-opening hours.

Locking up: once alone in the building at the end of the day, check the building **IS** empty and lock yourself in. Check that all windows are closed (and equipment turned off) and then unlock the door just before setting the alarm, leave the building promptly and then lock up.

- **PLAN**
 - P** - Plan to meet first time visitors, if possible, when you are not working alone.
 - L** - Log in your visitors
 - A** - Avoid situations which could be difficult
 - N** - Never assume it won't happen to you
- **Safe working out of centre.** If you are going out of the centre on Telford Mind business (particularly if going to a private address), your supervisor / coordinator must have agreed a procedure with you in the event of your not returning when expected. If you are going to a different location to that agreed then ring in with your new location.

Assessing risk

- **Consider how** your work could be made more secure and advise your line manager or supervisor. Do your own risk assessment and question any working practice that put your safety in danger. Any loss of keys must be reported.

- **Incident reporting.** It is important for staff to report incidents or near-incidents to the Service coordinators. We work closely with the local police (PC Simon Dales, Malinslee)

Managing risk

In the event of an emergency call the police on 999

Alarms:

- **Personal panic alarms:** alarms are issued to staff who request them. To use your alarm just pull the black cord and the alarm will sound.
- **Building alarm:** the main office has an alarm that is direct to the police. The alarm hangs on the light switch on the wall to the left of the telephone (next to the door to the drop-in).
- **Fire:** On hearing the alarm (which is a continuous series of rising wa-wa sounds) please evacuate the building calmly and promptly. Do not go back for personal possessions. Go to the muster point at the entrance to the car park (the end nearest Mind.)
Discovering a fire. Alert all around you and sound the alarm which is in the foyer next to the Telford Mind policy board. If it is a small fire then use a fire extinguisher. These are: in the foyer, in the Drop in, at the end of the corridor beside the bottom office and in the kitchen. The kitchen has a fire blanket too. Each fire extinguisher has a picture and tick chart above it to show you whether it is for a paper, fluid or for an electrical fire.

General Safety Tips:

1. If you are a car driver, park in well lit spaces where possible. Always have your car keys ready for quick access to your car.
2. Have your keys ready before reaching the door to Telford Mind or on return home.
3. When in a new area, in a lonely street or near a 'gang' stay calm and act confidently. This does impact greatly on your chances of becoming a victim. (Research from Equality and Diversity websites and groups is useful for information on this).
4. If you find it hard to stay calm try Tension Control (the ability to relax under stress is an essential part of personal safety).

Let your breath go, blowing out forcibly; feel your shoulders drop
Slowly breathe in, one long breath, filling your lungs
Breathe out slowly, imagining yourself deflating

This is a means of managing tension so that we can think more clearly about the situation
Clear thinking means that we can

- make appropriate **assessments** of the situation
- make appropriate **decisions** about the situation
- take an appropriate **course of action**.

With thanks to the Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Signed:

Date: / /08