

Employer Assisted Referrals

Partnership between Employers, the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program, Victoria (NMHP) and Referred Nurse/Midwife

Purpose

- Identify and manage nurse/midwife related alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems or mental health concerns early;
- Provide employers with assistance in supporting nurses / midwives with suspected or potential AOD problems or mental health concerns;
- Provide a voluntary therapeutic alternative to disciplinary action where the concern can be considered a health issue.

Process

This process requires a partnership between employers, nurses and the NMHP; each with their own clear responsibilities.

The Employer

1. Contacts the NMHP, describes their concerns and their observation of the nurse's behaviour (not identifying the nurse at this stage) and receives advice or a referral to an appropriate service, including the NMHP, for further information to assist their assessment and management of the situation.
Note: The NMHP does not assume responsibility of making notifications relating to impaired practice to the NBV based on secondary information. This decision is the responsibility of the organisation.
2. Discusses their concerns with the nurse and suggests or advise that they contact the NMHP for assessment and support.
3. Informs the NMHP of their referral if agreement has been reached with the nurse regarding pathway; and provides the NMHP with a written summary of incidents that lead to referral and current status of employment.
4. Follows their usual internal practice of management if the Nurse fails to contact and engage with the NMHP. In some situations where the health issue is not seen as impacting on work performance it may be appropriate to observe and encourage the nurse to make contact when they feel more ready, in other circumstances more structured observation may be required.
The NMHP is available to provide advice through this process.

The NMHP

1. If the nurse contacts the NMHP, the NMHP ensures that the nurse has agreed to sign a release of information form allowing for appropriate sharing of information between the NMHP and their employer.
2. In the majority of occasions the NMHP will provide an assessment appointment within 3 working days of contact.
3. Once the nurse has agreed to join the NMHP Program, a formal care plan is developed and appropriate referrals made.
4. The NMHP will discuss any aspects of management of the situation with the employer including work arrangement options, rehabilitation options, monitoring and the NMHP and other treatment and support opportunities relevant to the employer.
5. The NMHP will provide ongoing support for the nurse; review the effectiveness of any intervention and monitors the nurse's ability to work with the goals of the care plan.
6. The NMHP will liaise with the employer and provide written progress summaries to employer as negotiated. The nurse, employer and NMHP will agree on time period required for NMHP involvement.

Nb: the NMHP cannot provide a formal return or a ready to work assessment. Such an assessment could be made by a treating Psychiatrist or Doctor or a work supervisor.