

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE BUSINESS RULE SESLHDBR/42

Name	Support of South Eastern Sydney Recovery and Wellbeing College (SESRWC) Students Experiencing Distress		
What it is	This business rule outlines the processes for Recovery and Wellbeing College Educators (Peer and Clinical) follow when a student is experiencing distress. SESRWC courses are held at several locations, including St George and Sutherland Community College, City East Community College, the SESRWC Training Room and some courses are available online		
Risk Rating	Medium	Review Date	January 2028
What it is not	It is not a comprehensive SESRWC education guide. It is not a guideline on the management of mental health consumers.		
Who it applies to	This business rule applies to all students of the SESRWC. It is to be used by all Educators delivering courses for the SESRWC.		
Background	<p>The SESRWC provides educational courses underpinned by the philosophy of mental health recovery and trauma informed care. The SESRWC is open to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People 16 years and over with a lived experience of mental distress or suicidal crisis and who live in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD). • The families, carers and other support people of the above group. • Staff, students and volunteers of the SESLHD. • Staff of SESRWC partner organisations. • Staff of organisations within and outside the SESLHD catchment area, and consumers and their families who reside outside of the area (charges apply). <p>People with a lived experience of mental distress are considered students rather than clients or patients. Students learn alongside other students including carers and health staff. The adoption of a co-learning educational recovery paradigm recognises and makes use of students' skills, experiences, talents, strengths and resources and emphasises the reciprocal relationships between clinicians, people with lived experience, their families and carers.</p> <p>Recovery and Wellbeing College Educators draw on professional expertise and lived experience to provide co-produced education. Each course is facilitated by at least two Recovery and Wellbeing College Educators, a Peer Educator</p>		

	<p>who has personal lived experience and a Clinical or Professional Educator who has appropriate content knowledge. SESLHD clinical staff and partner organisations provide education at the Recovery and Wellbeing College. At the beginning of every course the Educators negotiate a learning agreement with the students and acknowledge that the transformational learning process can create some personal discomfort.</p> <p>It is recognised that a student may, at times, experience distress that goes beyond this anticipated discomfort. This distress may be related to an individual's mental health concerns, past experiences, family disruption, social or financial difficulties or issues raised during the course.</p>
<p>What to do</p>	<p>Provision of Support for a Student Experiencing Distress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If online, the <i>Course Agreement and Safety Script for Online Courses</i> is to be utilised (Appendix A) • Empathy, respect, due diligence and care needs to be afforded to any student experiencing any type of distress. The approach used will depend on the level of distress the student is experiencing and consideration of safety for the individual and others. • Upon noticing that a student is experiencing distress, the Educator(s) use(s) active listening skills and empathy to provide the student with the opportunity to express their concerns, and take action to decrease the distress if possible. • The Educators are to use their discretion to assess whether to provide support during class time or wait until the end of the session. Educators may consider one person leaving the classroom to provide support to the student, to limit any disruption of class time. This should be negotiated between the two Educators present. • Where appropriate, the Educator(s) should support and engage the person to link with their treating clinician or duty officer to provide suitable support. • If required, the Educator(s) should support the person to link with the Acute Care Team, or other suitable support options. • If additional support is required to manage the situation, the Educator(s) should contact the SESRWC Manager. All Educators are provided with the relevant contact details. • All Educators must follow the standard emergency management procedures of the teaching venue at all times. • Educators are reminded that, in the context of the SESRWC, people with mental health concerns are students, not clients or patients. It is not the role of the Educator to become the primary clinician in the event of a student experiencing distress.

	<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any critical incidents or accidents should be reported to the SESRWC Manager, who will ensure appropriate SESLHD Mental Health Service procedures are followed as per SESLHDPR/748 Incident Processes for Harm Score (HS) 2, 3 and 4 Incidents required to be reported to the MHS General Manager and NSW Health PD2020_047 Incident Management.
When to use it	This business rule must be used by SESRWC Educators whenever a student experiences emotional distress.
Why the rule is necessary	<p>The rationale for the business rule is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable effective support at the SESRWC for students experiencing distress. Ensure Educators provide support to students experiencing distress that is in keeping with the educational environment, whilst providing due diligence and care for all students.
Who is responsible	<p>The SESRWC is responsible for ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators are provided with information on the emergency management procedures of teaching venues. Appropriate procedures are followed in the case of a critical incident or accident. <p>Educators are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing suitable support for students who have experienced distress. Reporting critical incidents or accidents to the SESRWC Manager. Following the emergency procedures of the venue.
Functional Group(s)	Mental Health
Ministry of Health / SESLHD reference	<p>Other References</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standard 2 Communication that supports effective partnerships (2.08, 2.09, 2.10) PD2020_047 Incident Management SESLHDBR/095 Clinical Escalation Processes of SafeHaven Guests SESLHDBR/085 Safety guidelines for Recovery College and KBIM Office Shop 2, 20/24 Belgrave Street Kogarah SESLHDPR/748 Incident Processes for Harm Score (HS) 2, 3 and 4 Incidents required to be reported to the MHS General Manager
Executive Sponsor	General Manager, Mental Health Service
Author	Recovery and Wellbeing College Manager

Version and Approval History

Date	Version Number	Author and approval notes
July 2014	0	Endorsed by SESLHD MHS Clinical Council.
July-Sept 2016	1v1	Document reviewed by SESR&WC Manager and Expert Advisory Committee.
Oct 2016	1v1	Endorsed by SESLHD MHS Clinical Council.
May 2018	1	Risk rating changed from High to Medium – approved by Executive Sponsor.
September 2020	v2.0	Routine review commenced
October 2020	v2.1	New eligibility criteria added
October 2020	v2.2	Held for publication pending cross referencing with SESLHBR/095 Clinical Escalation Processes of SafeHaven Guests
November 2021	v3.0	Addition of Appendix A “Course Agreement & Safety Script – Online Courses” Endorsed out-of-session MHS DDCC Endorsed MHS Clinical Council Approved by Executive Sponsor
November 2024	3.1	Routine review commenced. All links checked and updated.
16 January 2025	3.1	Endorsed for publication by Executive Sponsor.

Appendix A: Course Agreement and Safety Script: Online Courses

All Recovery & Wellbeing College (RWC) courses facilitate a course agreement at the commencing of the session.

Students are asked:

- What do you need to ensure this online course is safe and allows for effective learning?
 - The group decides collaboratively on the agreement, however the following are points for discussion:

Group discussion and agreement then to occur to address the following:

- How we will deal with technology issues including what will occur if a person or facilitator is disconnected?
- Should other devices off phones or on silent?
- Is it OK to have other people in the room with you?
- Confidentiality and in relation to using telehealth for this group. (Facilitators and participants **do not** have permission to record these online sessions in anyway, including screenshots)
- Listening while others speak- especially needed when in online format
- Muting microphones during the group?
 - What are the pros and cons of this?
- Sharing the air-space
 - What about asking questions and talking during the session?
- Appreciating different learning styles (visual, reflective, kinesthetic, aural)
- Importance of purposeful storytelling
- Respect for diversity of lived experience
- What if you feel overwhelmed during the session?
- It is alright to leave?

Safety Script

The educators will then advise students:

- If a student leaves the session unexpectedly, the educator will make contact to check on the students' wellbeing.
- If the educator is unable to get in contact with the student, the educator or another RWC representative may phone the contact person, or, if it is determined to be an acute mental health issue the educated will escalate to the Acute Care Team and/or emergency services.
- Students are reminded of the Mental Health Access Line 1800 011 511.

Facilitators can also write the NSW Mental Health Access Line 1800 011 511 into chat feature