## HOSTILE CLIENT/DE-ESCALATION POLICY

<Organization Name> is committed to protecting its employees, volunteers, and visitors from any potential hazards and/or risks of violence and hostility that may arise.

DEFINITIONS

“Workplace violence or hostility” can be defined as any violent or potentially violent incident that includes:

* Attempted or actual physical assault
* Threatening statements or behaviour
* Any behaviour or statement that gives the employee reasonable cause to believe they are at risk of injury or harm.

For the purposes of this policy, a “client” can be defined as any customer, client of the business, patient, or visitor.

POLICY

In addition to <Organization Name>’s anti-violence policy which outlines a zero tolerance stance on violence and harassment, <Organization Name> will take all necessary steps to safeguard the health and safety of all of its employees and ensure that all employees are prepared in the event of workplace violence or hostility perpetrated by a client or visitor to the workplace.

 Language

Aggressive or abusive/hostile behaviour includes language (whether verbal or written) that may cause someone to feel afraid, threatened, or abused. It could include threats, personal verbal abuse, and/or derogatory or discriminatory remarks.

Additional behaviours include inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not wait to call 9-1-1 if you feel as though your safety or the safety of others in the workplace, including the hostile client, may be compromised.

 De-Escalation Tactics for Employees

In the event of that a disgruntled, hostile, or violent client/visitor/patient/customer poses a threat to employees or other clients in the workplace, employees should take the following steps:

* Remain calm and polite but assertive
* Make your safety, and that of others, your top priority
* If there is a risk of imminent violence, remove yourself and others in proximity from the situation immediately
* Advise the client that you consider their actions to be offensive, unnecessary, and unhelpful
* Ask them to stop
* Appear cooperative, answer the hostile client’s question(s), and let them know you will help them as best as you can when they are calm
* Be aware of your non-verbal communications; ensure your tone, facial expressions, body language, and gestures relay calmness and empathy
* Avoid any rapid movements which may cause alarm
* Speak in a calm tone of voice
* Validate how the hostile client may be feeling “I understand your concern; the manager will review your concerns with you”
* Maintain a safe distance from the hostile client and be prepared to secure yourself and other employees/clients in a safe space if the hostile client is throwing projectiles
* Do your best to de-escalate the situation, approach the hostile individual with an empathetic response and acknowledge their feelings “I understand that you might be feeling really frustrated”
* If there are other clients nearby, advise them to clear out of the space of the hostile individual

 If De-Escalation Isn’t Working

* If applicable, call security for support as soon as necessary
* End the phone call, appointment, or meeting as the case may be
* If possible, terminate all direct contact with the client
* Escalate and refer the client to the manager
* Do not ignore threats of any kind
* Do not antagonize the hostile client
* Do not attempt to disarm or physically restrain the hostile client
* Do not put yourself in harm’s way to protect any merchandise or workplace equipment

NOTE: If you have another person nearby, call for additional support; sometimes having someone else there will deter any potential violence or threats.

After the Incident

* Contact your manager when possible and report the incident
* When possible, document all details regarding the hostile/violent event and request that all witnesses write down any details they recall as well
* If necessary, seek medical attention for yourself, the client, or anyone else who may have been harmed

Record-keeping is critical as multiple incidents will result in the refusal of service to a client. In the event of a single dangerous incident, the client may be refused service immediately at the discretion of <Organization Name>.

Employer Responsibilities

* <Organization Name> will ensure that all potential hazards in the workplace are identified, assessed, and controlled as best as possible
* <Organization Name> will take all steps to safeguard the health and safety of its employees, clients, volunteers, and visitors
* <Organization Name> will ensure that all incidents of violence, harassment, or hostility in the workplace are documented in an incident report and investigated accordingly
* <Organization Name> will ensure that no employee faces reprisals for responding to a violent or hostile situation as best as they can
* <Organization Name> will ensure that no employee faces reprisals for reporting an incident of violence or hostility from a client
* <Organization Name> will provide the appropriate support for any employees who have been faced with hostility or violence in the workplace
* <Organization Name> will uphold the organizational anti-violence policy and ensure all parties that engage in violence or hostility against employees or other clients are met with the appropriate response

<Organization Name> will cooperate with all legal authorities and emergency services that are called to deal with violent or hostile incidents in the workplace.