Managing abusive client/patient behaviour - Resources for health care workers

Anxiety can be the basis of many conflicts or confrontations in healthcare settings. At times of uncertainty such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the sudden and unwanted life change your clients and family members now face may cause them to feel more anxious than they would ordinarily, and this can be reflected in their dealings with health care staff. Being in close contact with others, including healthcare providers may also heighten the client or their family member's concern/anxiety regarding COVID-19 infection.

Whatever the reason, anxiety can manifest itself in the client and/or family member through certain behaviours, which can include anger, swearing, sarcasm, threats, withdrawal and dismissive behaviour toward healthcare providers. How you help in the management of a client emotions and conduct can make all the difference. Let's be clear: no health care provider should be asked to tolerate threats or abusive behaviour and here are some tips and resources from credible sources that may help healthcare workers to manage workplace conflicts and to best support clients under stress or feeling anxious.

Resources are a guide to help prevent and manage workplace health and safety risks.

Tip Sheet	Managing abusive client/patient behaviour - Tip Sheet (WQPHN) 2 pages	www.wqphn.com.au/resources/wqphn-publications (other documents)
Article	Preparing and supporting your team for possible encounters with difficult or abusive patients (AGPAL) 3 pages	https://www.agpal.com.au/
Training	The Australian Practice Nurse Association (APNA). Online learning course: Bullying and Harassment for employees. 60 mins. Member and non-member fees apply.	www.apna.asn.au/education
Website	The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care. Communicating for Safety resource portal.	https://c4sportal.safetyandquality.gov.au/
Resource	Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's document *"Prevention and Management of work-related violence and aggression in health services"* Provides guidance on how to identify risks, implement control measures and respond to improve prevention. 90 pages.	https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/82822/Prevention_management_health_services.pdf