

Guideline: Critical Incident Communication and Reporting

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure that Critical Incident reporting occurs according to health care institution/agency and educational institution policies, and that relevant protocols related to students, faculty, and staff are implemented as soon as possible.

BACKGROUND:

Critical Incidents may occur in either classroom or practice settings, and may occur outside of the operating hours of the educational institution. When the incident in question poses immediate or imminent danger, it requires a coordinated emergency response, and the emergency response systems of the institution(s) must be activated immediately (e.g. University of Lethbridge; Lethbridge College; Alberta Health Services; Covenant Health).

DEFINITIONS:

Critical Incident – any sudden or unexpected event that has an emotional impact sufficient to overwhelm the usual effective coping skills of an individual student, a group of students, and/or the instructor, and that causes significant psychological distress in usually healthy persons (Caine & Ter-Bagdasarian, 2003).

GUIDELINE SCOPE:

This guideline applies to all NESAs BN Programs instructors, faculty members, and staff members at the Lethbridge College and University of Lethbridge campuses.

All those enacting this guideline are bound by the NESAs BN Programs approved policies, and will take all reasonable steps to protect student/faculty/patient confidentiality to the greatest extent possible.

SPECIFICS OF THE GUIDELINE:

- a. In the event of any Critical Incident, the instructor, faculty member, or staff member who becomes aware of the incident will notify by phone the Program Chair/Assistant Dean at the respective institution as soon as possible, and e-mail a summary of the incident and any related information as soon as possible. The Program Chair/Assistant Dean will determine who else needs to be notified, and will ensure they receive appropriate communication.

- b. If the incident has immediate effects in the practice setting, the practice instructor who becomes aware of the incident will contact the Practice Coordinator or Program Coordinator at the applicable campus. This individual will subsequently contact any other instructors and/or students who may be affected by the incident. On the LC campus, the Practice Coordinator will consult with the Program Chair to establish the most reasonable next steps. On the U of L campus, the Program Coordinator will consult with the Assistant Dean to establish the most reasonable next steps.
- c. The Program Chair/Assistant Dean will consult their respective Associate Dean/Dean as soon as possible.
- d. The Program Chair/Assistant Dean, in consultation with those reporting the critical incident, will ensure that comprehensive and appropriate communication has taken place; i.e. that all instructor(s), faculty member(s) and students involved in or affected by the critical incident have been notified in a timely manner.
- e. The Program Chair/Assistant Dean will consult with other resource personnel as deemed appropriate (e.g. Co-Chair, Practice Coordinator, or Program Coordinator at the other campus) and ensure that appropriate contact with other departments is initiated as needed (i.e. contact with the Wellness Coordinator/Risk Management Officer at the respective educational institution is needed in order to initiate WCB documentation, as appropriate, according to educational institution policy).
- f. The Program Chair/Assistant Dean, in collaboration with the other resource personnel (e.g. Practice Coordinator or Program Coordinator at the other campus) will ensure that students, faculty, and/or staff are made aware of any appropriate supportive resources as required (e.g. counseling services).

APPENDIX:

N/A

RELATED POLICIES/ASSOCIATED GUIDELINES:

Lethbridge College Policies and Procedures:

<http://www.lethbridgecollege.ca/about-us/policies-procedures>

University of Lethbridge Emergency Instructions (2012). Available at

<http://www.uleth.ca/security/content/emergency-instructions-0>

REFERENCES:

Caine, R.M., & Ter-Bardasarian, L. (2003). Early identification and management of critical incident stress. *Critical Care Nurse*, 23(1), 59-65.

NOTE: NESAs Guidelines exist within organizational frameworks of policy for Lethbridge College and the University of Lethbridge, and within agreements established with practice partner organizations. If and when NESAs guidelines are found to differ from such policies and agreements, it is important to note that such policies/agreements will take precedence over NESAs guidelines or policies.

Revised By/date:	Approved by/date:
Policy Review Committee: April 2007	NESA Joint Faculty Council: April 2007
Policy Review Committee: June 2012	NESA Joint Faculty Council: May 2012
Policy Review Committee: April 2014	Not required: editorial and formatting only
Policy Review Committee: March 2015	Not required: editorial and formatting only
Policy Review Committee: April 2016	Not required: editorial only
Policy Review Committee: April 2017	Not required: editorial only
Policy Review Committee: January 2018	Not required: editorial changes only
Policy Review Committee: March 2019	Not required: editorial and formatting only