

# MENTAL ILLNESS AND ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG RELATED HARM ARE COMMON IN OUR COMMUNITY

## KNOW HOW TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN YOUR VENUE

In your venue, you may encounter an individual exhibiting aggressive or problematic behaviour as a result of a mental health or drug-induced episode. If you do, you can use these steps to assess and respond to the situation:

### ASSESS FOR SAFETY: Use the traffic light system

#### **GREEN behaviours:**

- cooperative
- anxious, restless, excessive talking
- able to respond to questions and direction (e.g., to move to a quieter or safer environment)

#### **Response:**

- engage in de-escalation
- monitor your safety

#### **ORANGE behaviours:**

- loud outbursts
- frequent non-purposeful movements (e.g., pacing, lip-smacking, repeated hand movement)
- difficult to engage (e.g., partial listening, partially follows instructions, preoccupied)

#### **Response:**

- attempt de-escalation
- monitor your safety

#### **RED behaviours:**

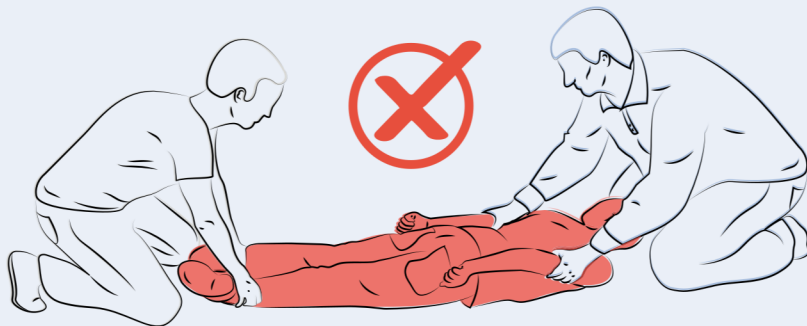
- uncooperative (e.g., refusing to follow staff instructions)
- aggressive or combative
- lacking capacity to make decisions

#### **Response:**

- call '000'
- avoid approaching the individual
- maintain your safety and that of other people in your venue

### AVOID PHYSICAL RESTRAINT IF POSSIBLE

- ▶ All physical restraint involves some possibility of physical and psychological injury, such as laceration, bruises, broken bones, brain injury, and death.
- ▶ Individuals may have unknown health vulnerabilities that make even minor attempts at physical restraint more dangerous and life threatening.
- ▶ Any form of restraint should only ever be used by professionals with proper medical training.



### NEVER USE PRONE RESTRAINT

Prone restraint refers to face down, floor restraint, with or without pressure applied to the stomach and back:

- This increases risk of restraint-related 'positional asphyxiation', which occurs when a person's airway is blocked, reducing oxygen intake.
- Positional asphyxiation or any blockage of air flow to an individual can result in brain injury or death, even if airflow is only momentarily obstructed.

DO ✓



Keep yourself and others safe



Use de-escalation if safe to do so



Comply with your responsible service of alcohol obligations



Call 000 if necessary

DON'T ✗



Attempt to diagnose mental illness or substance use disorder



Engage with an aggressive or agitated individual if unsafe to do so



Use physical restraint !

The effective use of de-escalation strategies reduces the need for physical restraint, and use of de-escalation can result in satisfactory outcomes for all individuals without risk of physical harm or death.

## 5 TIPS TO ENGAGE IN DE-ESCALATION

1

### Communicate with the individual:

- ask for and use their name
- ask them how they are and listen
- validate and summarise what the individual is saying
- attempt to unite by finding common goals and setting clear boundaries

2

### Keep calm:

- keep a calm voice, pace your speech and be concise
- never threaten, argue, yell or shout
- repeat yourself often
- avoid negative statements

3

### Reduce stimuli:

- respect the personal space of the individual, do not get too close or block exits
- lower music volume
- respectfully ask others to move away

4

### Offer and empower choices:

- identify the individual's needs and wants
- try to accommodate reasonable requests
- be optimistic
- offer to call the individual a taxi or 000

5

### Think about next steps:

- have a plan to avoid further escalation
- review the incident and discuss any learnings with staff
- ensure all incidents are recorded in your venue's incident register

## Did you know?

- ▶ Approximately 1 in 5 Australians aged 15+ have a current mental health disorder, or have suffered one in the past 12 months.
- ▶ People of all ages, backgrounds and socio-economic levels can be affected by mental illness.
- ▶ Up to 1 in 3 adults consume alcohol at problematic levels that puts them at risk of alcohol-related disease and injury.
- ▶ There is a link between problematic alcohol use and other mental health conditions, especially for mood disorders (e.g., depression and anxiety).
- ▶ Up to 45% of adult Australians report having experienced a substance use, mood or anxiety disorder in their lifetime.
- ▶ People living with a mental illness are no more likely to be violent than anyone else in the community.