

# ATMS GUIDELINE

## Dealing with Adverse Reactions

### Preamble

All healthcare practitioners have a primary responsibility to ensure that clients are protected from harm that may arise as a result of the clinical treatment that they provide. Occasionally, reactions to complementary medicines or therapies can occur. This may involve a direct adverse reaction to a treatment or medicine, an aggravation of the client's illness, or an interaction between a one or more complementary medicines or one between a complementary medicine and a pharmaceutical medicine. In most cases, such reactions are avoidable if the complementary medicine therapist has a good understanding of the therapies or medicines that she or he is using and the inherent risks that they may pose to clients, the potential that some clients may have for sensitivity to some medicines or therapies, and the potential for interaction between complementary medicines and pharmaceutical products.

While it may be possible to interpret some adverse reactions as a manifestation of a healing process, it is the client's response to this that is the primary issue, and this must be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

In dealing with adverse reactions, all responses must occur in a timely manner with the needs of the client receiving the Member's primary focus.

Members must ensure that appropriate first aid is available to deal with any adverse reaction and use this effectively as required.

### Dealing with Adverse Reactions

- If a client experiences an adverse reaction, you should openly and honestly communicate with the client in reviewing what has occurred. If at any time during this communication, the relationship between you and the client becomes ineffective or compromised, the client should be referred to a registered medical practitioner for assessment and treatment.
- In the event of an adverse reaction occurring, you must ensure that the client, or the person responsible for the client, is fully informed of what has occurred and is allowed to exercise their right of choice in determining an appropriate solution to the adverse event.
- You must take appropriate and timely action to stop the adverse reaction from continuing and mitigate the extent of the injury to the client.
- You must obtain appropriate emergency assistance where any serious adverse reaction has occurred.

- Ensure that the client is aware of her or his right to make a complaint and has access to information about how to make a complaint in relation to the adverse reaction. For more on this, see the ATMS Policy on Dealing with Complaints.
- You must ensure that, where appropriate, the cause of the adverse reaction is clearly identified and appropriate measures taken to minimise the risk of the reaction occurring again in the future.
- Any adverse event that occurs as a result of treatment provided by you must be properly documented. This report must be accompanied by a properly documented report on the response to the event and all remedial measures taken to reduce the risk of recurrence. Carefully record all details of adverse reactions in client files. These documents must be securely stored and secure copies of these files stored appropriately.
- Adverse reactions to medicines or devices, particularly serious adverse reactions, should be reported to the adverse reaction reporting authority within the Therapeutic Goods Administration.