OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate the provision of a safe environment for patients, staff, Physicians, and visitors within Addiction & Mental Health inpatient units.

- To identify potential hazards including potentially harmful and lethal means and to take appropriate and timely remedial action to reduce the risk of harm to patients, staff, Physicians and visitors.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this procedure is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary) working in Addiction & Mental Health Inpatient Units.

PROCEDURE ELEMENTS

1. Environmental Risk Assessment, Action Plan and Mitigation Strategy

   1.1 A written environmental risk assessment using the Alberta Health Services Modified Mental Health Environment of Care Checklist shall be completed at a minimum of every two (2) years and submitted to the appropriate facility and Zone leadership, and the senior leadership of provincial Addiction & Mental Health.
a) Consideration shall be given to using an interdisciplinary team to complete the assessment.

1.2 A review and update of all environmental assessment documentation shall be reported, at a minimum, on an annual basis to the appropriate facility and Zone leadership and the senior leadership of Addiction & Mental Health.

1.3 Written documentation shall identify priorities, requested actions and associated follow-up, appropriate timelines, and mitigation strategies.

1.4 All documentation must be retained on the unit per the Alberta Health Services Records Management Policy and Records Retention Schedule, record code 680.

2. Promoting a Safe Physical Environment

2.1 On every shift, staff shall monitor the inpatient environment for elements related to safety. Local processes shall outline how the monitoring is to be conducted (e.g., safety rounds, safety huddle).

2.2 All staff shall identify potentially harmful and lethal means in the environment and take appropriate and timely action regarding these harmful and lethal means, including reporting of observations and actions to the Unit Supervisor. Such harmful and lethal means may include, but are not limited to, cleaning supplies, extension cords or sharps containers.

2.3 Any modification in the patient's personal environment and/or removal of the patient's personal items shall be clearly explained to the patient and his/her alternate decision-maker (e.g., guardian, agent, nearest relative), if any, and documented in the patient's health record.

2.4 Unobserved areas, including interview, conference and seclusion rooms, shall be locked when not in use.

2.5 When modifications or renovations occur on a unit, consideration should be given to minimize environmental hazards and to mitigate remaining risks.

2.6 All new structural or other building/plumbing fixtures or fittings shall meet the standards of the Modified Mental Health Environment of Care Checklist.

DEFINITIONS

Agent means the person(s) named in a Personal Directive who can make decisions on personal matters according to the wishes expressed by the patient.

Alternate decision-maker means a person who is authorized to make decisions with or on behalf of the patient. These may include, a specific decision-maker, a minor’s legal representative, a guardian, a ‘nearest relative’ in accordance with the Mental Health Act (Alberta), an agent in accordance with a Personal Directive, or a person designated in accordance with the Human Tissue and Organ Donation Act (Alberta).
Guardian means where applicable:
   For a minor:
   a) as defined in the *Family Law Act* (Alberta);
   b) per agreement or appointment authorized by legislation (obtain copy of the agreement and verify it qualifies under legislation) (e.g., agreement between the Director of Child and Family Services Authority and foster parent(s) under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (Alberta); or agreement between parents under the *Family Law Act*; or as set out in *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* regarding guardians of the child to be adopted once the designated form is signed);
   c) as appointed under a will (obtain a copy of the will; also obtain grant of probate, if possible);
   d) as appointed in accordance with a Personal Directive (obtain copy of Personal Directive);
   e) as appointed by court order (obtain copy of court order; e.g., order pursuant to *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*); and
   f) a divorced parent who has custody of the minor.

For an adult: An individual appointed by the court to make decisions on behalf of the adult patient, when the adult patient lacks capacity.

Harmful and lethal means means items and/or substances that have the potential to cause significant harm or death, either accidentally or deliberately. Identification of harmful and lethal means should consider multiple modes of use, including but not limited to asphyxiation, ingestion and laceration/puncture.

Health record means the Alberta Health Services legal record of the patient's diagnostic, treatment and care information.

Nearest relative means, in the *Mental Health Act* (Alberta) and in this document, with respect to a formal patient, or a person who is subject to a Community Treatment Order:

   a) the adult person first listed in the following list, relatives of the whole blood being preferred to relatives of the same description of the half-blood, and the elder or eldest of two or more relatives being preferred, regardless of gender:
      • spouse or adult interdependent partner;
      • son or daughter;
      • father or mother;
      • brother or sister;
      • grandfather or grandmother;
      • grandson or granddaughter;
      • uncle or aunt;
      • nephew or niece;

OR

   b) any adult person the Alberta Health Services Governing Body designates in writing to act as nearest relative if there is no nearest relative within any description as above, or
if, in the opinion of the Alberta Health Services Governing Body, the nearest relative
would not act or is not acting in the best interest of the formal patient or the person
subject to a Community Treatment Order.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - Consent to Treatment/Procedure(s) Policy (#PRR-01)
  - Consent to Treatment/Procedure(s) Formal Patients and Persons Subject to Community
    Treatment Orders under the Mental Health Act Procedure (#PRR-01-04)
  - Records Management Policy (#1133)
  - Records Retention Schedule (#1133-01)
  - Safety Precautions Policy (Addiction & Mental Health) (#AMH-03)
  - Searching Patients and/or Patients’ Property and Visitors’ Belongings Procedure
    (Addiction & Mental Health) (#AMH-03-02)
- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - Modified Mental Health Environment of Care Checklist
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act (Alberta)
  - Health Information Act (Alberta)
  - Health Professions Act (Alberta)
  - Mental Health Act (Alberta)

VERSION HISTORY

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