



Nursing Service Guidelines Inpatient Behavioral Health

Title: Search for Contraband/Patient Belongings

Responsibility: Department Directors/Lead Nurses/Detox Floor Nurses/Designees

Purpose of Guidelines: To provide a safe and therapeutic environment that remains free of contraband.

Procedure:

- 1) All patients and their belongings will be searched upon admission to the detox unit*.
- 2) If any hazardous or illegal materials/substances are found during search, staff will notify security/campus police immediately. (ex: Weapons/guns, street drugs)
- 3) Staff will fill out patient belongings sheet and have patient sign.
- 4) Patients will be able to keep in their possession: clothing, shoes, and reading materials only. Patients are responsible for all items in their possession.
- 5) All other belongings will be secured in a storage bin and locked in a cabinet in a storage room until discharge.
- 6) All personal hygiene items will be provided for the patient.

***Search Process:**

- Patient will change into a hospital gown or pj's upon arrival. Staff will then search all the clothing and belongings removed from the patient and search the room in which the patient changed.
- Staff will use a metal detector and wand over the patient. The patient will extend arms out, spread legs apart and staff will move wand approx. 1 inch from patient's body. Patient may be asked to squat and/or demonstrate other methods to show no contraband is present.
- Staff will only pat down a patient if there is evidence of a foreign body present, and if there is a need for patient to be touched, a witness will be present at all times. Staff will not ever touch/pat any private areas of the patient for any reason.
- After staff determines no contraband is present, the patient can redress in their clothing.
- After all other allowed items are searched, they can be returned to the patient. All items that are not allowed on the unit will be locked up as stated in line 5.

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Reviewed by Policy & Standard Committee: