

NURSING SERVICE GUIDELINES INPATIENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Guideline: Care of the patient who has an anxiety disorder



Policy Number Superseded:

Description: Anxiety is a diffuse, highly unpleasant, often vague feeling of apprehension, accompanied by one or more bodily sensations. For example, pounding heart, perspiration, headache or the sudden urge to void. Anxiety is an alerting signal, it warns of impending danger and enables the person to take measures to deal with a threat. Anxiety is in response to a threat that is unknown, internal, vague, or conflicting in origin.

Effective Date:
October 2023

Initial Effective Date:
September 1993

Purpose of Guideline:

The patient will understand, accept, and learn to live with anxiety. The patient will learn methods and skills to cope constructively with anxiety.

PROCEDURE	POINTS OF EMPHASIS
(A) Assess level of anxiety. Observe for behavioral characteristics of anxiety, restlessness, easily fatigued, problems concentrating, irritability, tension and sleep problems. Anxiety is a normal response to situations, however, it becomes a problem if it interferes with adaptive behavior, causes physical symptoms.	To identify anxiety. Changes in vital signs could occur such as blood pressure increases, increase in pulse, respirations, tightening of throat, epigastric pain. Work with the patient on identifying issues early in hospitalization so that treatment interventions can begin.
(B) Ask, "what are you feeling?"	To help the patient name the feeling.

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<p>(C) Connect the feeling with behavior. Patient will attend scheduled groups and address the following issues in those groups:</p> <p>(1) Explore with the patient what happened prior to feeling anxious.</p> <p>(2) Discuss alternatives for dealing with the situation (cause).</p> <p>Assessments, nursing care, and patient teaching must be documented on the daily assessment checklist and nursing progress notes.</p> <p>Assist patient in identifying precipitating factors to reduce frequency and intensity of anxiety.</p>	<p>To discover the cause.</p> <p>To improve patterns of handling anxiety.</p>
<p>(D) Reduce stimuli as it can create confusion, also increasing anxiety. Speak in short, clear sentences.</p>	<p>As anxiety progresses, it results in decreased concentration and difficulty in decision-making and problem-solving.</p>
<p>(E) Teach alternatives to handling anxious situations such things include:</p> <p>(1) Breathing techniques.</p> <p>(2) Imaging.</p> <p>(3) Visualization.</p>	<p>Help patient gain control over situation and decrease anxiety.</p>
<p>(F) Teach/educate parent(s) and the child about the anxiety disorder.</p>	
<p>(G) Educate parent(s) and the child regarding outpatient treatment.</p>	

References

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Connolly, S.D., Nanayaleleara, S.D. 2009. "Anxiety Disorders in Children and Adolescents: Early Identification and Evidence-Based Treatment". *Psychiatric News*

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Initial effective date:

September 1993

Review/Revision Completed by:

Inpatient Psychiatry Administration

Review/Revision Date:

April 1996

April 1999

March 2002

May 2005

June 2008

March 2010

June 2010

August 2014

September 2017

September 2020

October 2023

Next review date:

October 2026