

NURSING SERVICE GUIDELINES INPATIENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Guideline: Runaway precautions



Policy Number Superseded:

Responsibility: RN's, MHT's, and any other trained inpatient behavioral health staff

Effective Date:
June 2023

Purpose of Guideline: To provide safety for the patient and others in the environment.

Initial Effective Date:
July 2005

Equipment: Availability of a locked area and special report sheet.

PROCEDURE	POINT OF EMPHASIS
(1) Assess patient for the need of safety, i.e., any threatening or harmful behaviors, thought process or verbalization of intent to run or negative feelings about being hospitalized.	Provide a safe environment until a physician or staff nurse can make a thorough assessment. Some studies have shown that 48% of patients indicated they do not mind doors being locked and 13% indicated they felt safer with the door locked. (Adams, 2008)
(2) Obtain an order for elopement precautions from physician VO, PO, or written, for a specific length of time, and reviewed at the end of its time.	This may be obtained from the charge nurse or RN until a written order can be obtained.
(3) Monitor patient continuously. Documentation of behavior with patient will be made in the medical record each shift, day and night.	Must be closely monitored by a trained staff member within Kobacker whenever moving from one area to another.
(4) Notify the patient's other team members who are involved with the therapy of the patient, of patient's elopement potential.	Patient never to be outside of building. Patient may not be able to participate in scheduled activities off the unit if high risk for flight.
(5) Remind the patient frequently that they are safe and will be cared for in a special way. Assist the patient to develop	Assign journal topics according to patient's cognitive level addressing positive coping strategies.

<p>positive coping mechanisms vs. runaway behavior.</p>	
<p>(6) Restrict activities to inside the building only and will be observed closely when near exits. May be transported off the unit for essential clinic appointments. Must be escorted 1:1</p>	<p>Utilize the tunnel system underground to transport to and from appointments on UTMC campus. May utilize campus police for transport.</p>
<p>(7) Flag the chart of patient being on runaway precautions to make all staff aware of precautions.</p>	
<p>(8) Notify the following if a runaway occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Campus security - give a picture and a description of patient's clothing and circumstances. (b) Begin to fill out AWOL form. (c) Toledo Police Department if necessary. (d) Nurse director, house supervisor, and behavioral health administrator. (e) Therapist. (f) Parent/guardian. (g) Hospital administration, if available. (h) Social worker, if available. (i) Unit medical director. (j) Utilize identification picture as necessary. 	<p>Campus security will notify Toledo Police and the Sheriff if needed. Will notify family and/or legal guardian if not already done so by charge nurse.</p>

(A) Documentation.

Describe patient's mental status at the time patient is placed on runaway precautions. Document in medical record when and why patient was placed on runaway precautions. Include whether or not patient attempted to run, or verbalized intent to run. Assist patient with learning positive ways to express self and document if patient verbalized an understanding. During and after the

precautionary period, identify whether the patient utilized one of the methods to express self.

(B) References.

Keily, B., Migdal, T. R., Vettam, S., & Adesman, A. (2016). Prevalence and correlates of elopement in a nationally representative sample of children with developmental disabilities in the United States. *PloS one*, *11*(2), e0148337.

Anderson, C., Law, J. K., Daniels, A., Rice, C., Mandell, D., S., Hagopian, L., & Law, P. A., (2012). Occurrence and family impact of elopement in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Pediatrics*, *130*(5), 870-877.

Developmental Disabilities in the United States. *PloS one*, *11*(2), e0148337.

Brumbles, D. & Meister, A. (2013). Psychiatric elopement: Using evidence to examine causative factors and preventative measures. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, *27*(1), 3-9.

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April 2008
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