

Nursing Service Guidelines Inpatient Behavioral Health



Title: **RUNAWAY PRECAUTIONS**

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

Responsibility: RN, MHT's, and any other trained personnel with Kobacker.

Equipment: Availability of a locked area, Special Report Sheet

Procedure

Point of Emphasis

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| 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 with Kobacker whenever moving from one area to another. |
| 4. Notify the patient's other team members, of patient's elopement potential, who are involved with the therapy of the 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 positive coping mechanisms vs. runaway behavior. | Assign journal topics according to patient's cognitive level addressing positive coping strategies. |
| 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 | Utilize the tunnel system underground to transport to and from appointments on UTMC campus. May utilize campus police for transport. |
| 7. Flag the chart of patient being on runaway precautions to make all staff aware of precautions. | |
| 8. Notify the following persons if a runaway occurs: | 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. |
| a. Campus Security - give a picture and a description of patient's clothing and circumstances. | |
| b. Begin to fill out AWOL form. | |
| c. TPD 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

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.

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Resource person: Vickie Geha, M.Ed., RN.

Reviewed by Policy & Standard Committee, 8/10, 8/14., 7/17, 7/2020, 6/2023

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.
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