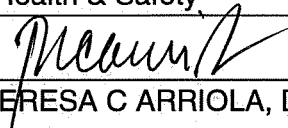


Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center		
TITLE: Personal Searches	POLICY NO: AD-HS- 04	Page 1 of 3
RESPONSIBILITY: Health & Safety		
APPROVED BY:  THERESA C ARRIOLA, DIRECTOR	DATE OF ORIGINAL APPROVAL: 3/27/17	LAST REVIEWED/REVISED 6/24/20

PURPOSE:

- A. To promote the safety of clients, staff and visitors at the Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC) by identifying and preventing dangerous items (contraband) from entering into the therapeutic environment especially in the Crisis Stabilization Unit
- B. To provide guidelines in conducting screening and personal searches.

POLICY:

- A. GBHWC recognizes that patients have the right to privacy, dignity and use of personal property. However, consumers, staff and visitors also have the right to a safe and therapeutic environment, which under certain circumstances necessitates taking steps to ensure patients are not in possession of items that may present a hazard to personal safety or therapeutic environment. In order to maintain a safe and therapeutic environment, as well as privacy of other consumers, GBHWC may place limits on items coming into the facility.
- B. Guards shall conduct bag searches of suspicious individuals coming into GBHWC facility, any contraband found shall be confiscated.
- C. Searches of consumers in the Inpatient Unit and the living quarters of consumers in the Residential Recovery Program homes are permitted in order to ensure safety, only when situations warrants a search. This will be carried out in a professional and courteous manner recognizing the intrusion to personal privacy that occurs.

DEFINITIONS:

Screenings: as used in this policy screenings are the routine actions designed to identify contraband or potentially dangerous items upon consumer admission or return to the facility, and visitors entering facility.

Contraband: a term used to describe prohibited or unauthorized items. A hazardous item or substance which may be used in a dangerous way or is perilous to the well-being of a consumer or staff member. (see AD-HS 03 Contraband Policy for list of contraband items)

Searches: As used in this policy, searches are actions taken by GBHWC staff when;

1. there is a reasonable belief that contraband may be present on a person or in an area that could endanger the health or safety of patients, staff or visitor,
2. In routine safety rounds of crisis stabilization units and residential homes
3. At any time, there is a reasonable belief that there is an imminent threat.

PROCEDURE:

A. Screening:

1. All patient related items are to be screened by the receiving unit personnel. Note: Screening may also occur at the Main Entrance by the Guards if deemed necessary or warranted. (see: *Guard Section Manual on Personal Bag Check Protocol*)
2. Consumers admitted to Crisis Stabilization will be screened and ask to surrender contrabands and personal belongings to the staff nurse for safety. Other belongings not needed by the consumer in the Crisis stabilization unit shall be given to the family or guardian of the consumer.

B. Searches:

NOTE: All searches shall be conducted by at least two staff members of the same sex for safety, accountability and reporting.

1. If a staff member notices an item that could be considered contraband, he/she shall immediately address any related safety issues, and promptly notify the direct supervisor and the Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible.
2. Searches shall be carried out professionally and courteously recognizing the intrusion to personal privacy that occurs. For patient searches, the search may not be any more intrusive than necessary to ensure the patient is not in possession of any contraband. (see *attachment I Pat Searches Protocol*)
3. If there is an imminent threat to safety, the search may be carried out by staff members and notice provided to the physician, program service manager, or nurse in charge immediately afterward. Otherwise staff members will obtain authorization from a physician, program service manager, or licensed nurse in charge before searching a patient for possessions of contraband.
4. Searches are conducted as well when indicated in accordance with other relevant policies and procedures (e.g., suicide precautions, self-mutilate precautions, inventory control). At least two staff members shall be present when conducting searches of patients or their living quarters.
5. Consumer room searches will be conducted with consumer present unless
 - a. If there is cause to believe a highly dangerous item (i.e., could be used as a weapon immediately) may be hidden in the room;
 - b. The consumer declines to be present,
 - c. The consumer interferes with the search or
 - d. The consumer is not able to be present due to clinical or medical issues. In these situations, the room search may take place without the consumer present. All non-contraband articles shall be put back in an orderly manner.
6. Any illegal items found during such an examination will be confiscated by the facility and given to law enforcement for further disposition. Other contraband shall either be released to a person of the patient's choosing (e.g., parent, guardian, and friend) or be held in safekeeping and returned to the patient upon discharge depending on the nature of the item, except that no medication shall be released without the authorization of a physician.
7. Any body cavity search other than the mouth or ears must be authorized by a physician specifying the type of search. If authorized, a body cavity search may only be conducted by a physician, nurse or licensed independent practitioner.

C. Documentation:

1. An incident report shall be completed prior to the end of the shift whenever searches in the unit are conducted or contraband is identified.
2. The incident report shall include a record of the search; reason for the search, scope of the search, who conducted the search, the manner in which it was conducted, all findings and any action taken.

SUPRSEDES:

DMHSA #10.09.107 Personal Bag Checks; Director Wilfred Aflague, 1/17/2012

RELATED POLICY:

AD-HS-03 Contraband 9/20/19; Director Theresa C. Arriola

ATTACHMENTS

I. ADHS-04.1 Pat Down and Strip Searches Protocol



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REVIEW AND ENDORSEMENT CERTIFICATION

The signatories on this document acknowledge that they have reviewed and approved the following:

Policy Title: Personal Searches

Policy No: AD-HS-04

Initiated by: Environments of Care

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