

Policy Name: Management of Challenging Behaviours in the Inpatient Unit

Policy No: MHS-WCH-CYMHS-049

PRINCIPLE:

- Challenging behaviours, such as harm or threatened harm to self and others, are a major concern on an in-patient psychiatric unit. They can threaten the safety of patients, co-patients and staff.
- Challenging behaviours can take the form of verbal and physical aggression, self-harm, threats of harm to self and others, severe episodes of disorganised behaviour and destruction of property.
- These challenging behaviours will be managed in a way that is both therapeutic, maintains safety of all concerned, respects the rights of patients and is consistent with the legal requirements of the State of QLD.

POLICY:

1. While challenging behaviours are a frequent accompaniment to psychiatric illness, pro-active, preventative measures on an individual and unit level, as outlined below, will be applied to decrease the frequency and intensity of these incidents.
2. Explanation of the ward rules and structure will be given to children, young people and parents/carers throughout the intake, admission and inpatient process. Through this process consent will be obtained, allowing staff to apply such rules and procedures.

WORK INSTRUCTIONS/PROCEDURE:

1. Beginning at intake, moving through pre-admission meetings and during the initial orientation to the ward of patient and parents/carers, explanations and handouts of the ward rules and structure will help to prepare the patient and family to work with us to manage and therapeutically change these behaviours. In addition, during the orientation meeting, patient and parents will be encouraged to provide us with information about what things trigger their anger, & what helps them to manage their anger well and calm down.
2. Children who have a history of challenging behaviours should have an individualised behavioural management plan. This may be written prior to or upon the child/young person being admitted and revised as more information is known.

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3. The principals of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) should be applied in the inpatient setting at all times to reduce challenging behaviours. Specifically, promoting positive relationships with children through the provision of safe, supportive and responsive environment. Attending to children's appropriate behaviour and spending quality time, positive attention, praise, engaging activities and setting a good example are all effective in reducing disruptive behaviours.
4. If a challenging incident occurs which could not be managed preventatively, then a hierarchy of behavioural interventions will be used by staff to encourage the patient/family to learn ways to manage anger. The challenging behaviour should be managed in the least restrictive way. More restrictive interventions may be utilised if lower level interventions are ineffective. - Refer to the separate document: *MCH CYMHS Inpatient Unit Procedures for Time Out, Closed Time Out and Therapeutic Holding*.

REFERENCES:

NSMHS Standard 2.1, 2.4, 11.4e
Qld MHA 2000
Sanders, M. *Every Parent*. Sydney: Addison-Wesley, 1992
Sanders, M. Positive Parenting Programme