



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

POLICY & GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF OBSERVATION AT ELSADENE

The ethos of care at Elsadene encourages an environment for personal growth and stability within a safe, secure and homely environment for residents with severe and enduring mental health problems.

It is recognised by all staff that there are times when patients may require an increased level of care and intervention to reduce potential risk factors. The aim is to prevent potentially suicidal, violent or vulnerable residents from harming themselves or others. It is not simply a custodial activity, but should also be seen as an opportunity to engage on a one to one basis therapeutically.

Nursing observation is defined as “regarding the patient attentively” whilst minimising the extent to which they feel they are under surveillance. Encouraging communication, listening and conveying to the patient that they are valued and cared for are important components of skilled observation. Increased level of observation is one area that can ensure a greater level of input by staff to an individual, ensuring the following:

- A greater degree of personal safety for the individual.
- Increased potential for staff to react immediately to increased risk factors
- Prompt intervention in potential incidents

DEFINITION OF LEVELS OF OBSERVATION, ELSADENE

Level 1 (ONE) – General Level observation.

This is the minimum level of observation for all patients. Their general whereabouts is known to staff, eg. Whether they are at home or gone out (also refer to individual support plans for specific guidelines/interventions.)

Level 2 (TWO) – Intermittent observation

Intermittent observation is 15 – 30 minute intervals, specified in support plan/notes and recorded on observation recording sheet. This level is appropriate when a patient is potentially, but not immediately at risk; however, the nurse in charge should discuss with Dr Simpson or on duty Psychiatrist. Nominated staff member to undertake observation for no longer than 1 hour at a time. Review of timed interval of observation to be reviewed at each handover.

Level 3 (THREE) – Within eyesight:

This is required when a patient could at any time make an attempt to harm self or others. If a patient is assessed as requiring this level of observation, the nurse in charge instigates immediate assessment by Dr Simpson, Dr Youssef or out of hours Duty Psychiatrist with regard to need for transfer to a more appropriate/secure environment. Home Manager/Deputy to be informed.

In the meantime:

- Nominated staff member to remain in visual contact with the individual **at all times.** Any tools or instruments that could be used to harm self or others should be removed.
- Nominated staff member to undertake responsibility of observations for no longer than 1 hour before handing responsibility to another staff member.
- A bathroom and toilet Risk Assessment needs to be instigated immediately to assess the need for staff to be present or not. Toilet/Bathroom doors must **NOT** be locked by the patient on this level of observation and nominated staff must wait outside of the bathroom/toilet for the individual if they are assessed not to be at risk using these facilities without direct observation. When the individual is in bed, nominated staff member can sit outside the room, door ajar, but must maintain visual contact.

LEVEL 4(FOUR – Within arm's length.

Required when highest risk of harming self or others. This level of observation is **NOT** practicable within the Elsadene environment except in an emergency when awaiting the patient to be transferred to a more secure environment.

The nominated staff member is required to stay NO FURTHER than an arms length away from the individual. This includes toilets and bathrooms and when in bed. Nominated staff member is to undertake responsibility of observations for NO LONGER than 30 minutes at a time and it may be appropriate for 2 staff to undertake this level. (see also Elsadene Policy for Managing Disturbed behaviour)

Ref: Dept of Health Practice Guidance 1999.

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