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## Use of the Group Room Procedure

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Effective: 29 September 2017

### 1. Guiding Principles

Section 19 of the [WA Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#) imposes a duty of care obligation on the WA Country Health Service to provide workplaces and systems of work that are as free as practicable from hazards and the risk of harm.

Great Southern Mental Health staff and other patients can face a number of hazards related to providing group activities for inpatient mental health treatment which includes those patients whose illness and symptoms may increase agitation and potential for aggression.

In order to promote recovery, activities of daily living are provided to inpatients. These include activities in the Acute Psychiatric Unit (APU) Group Room which is located immediately outside the APU. This room is equipped with a full kitchen and has space for group activities which are generally run by the Occupational Therapy Team during the week and nursing staff on the weekends. It also has an adjacent storage room accessible from the Group Room.

### 2. Procedure

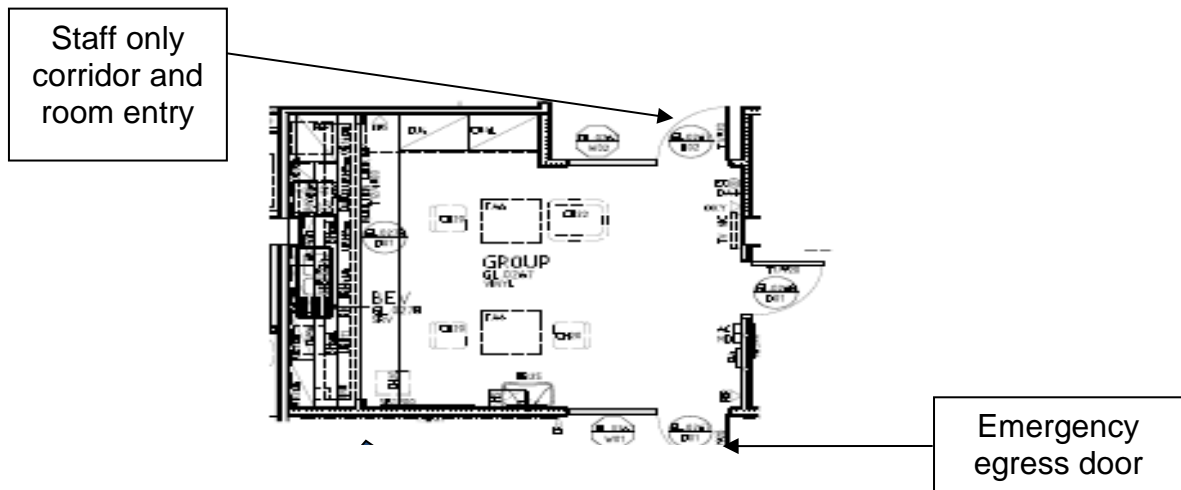
Access to the inpatient group room is via the main entry corridor to the APU or the staff only corridor GL.0130. The exit via either option from the APU and the inpatient group room itself can only be accessed by proximity card.

All patients assessed as suitable to access the group room must be escorted by a staff member whether access is to be via the main corridor or the staff only corridor. Patients are never to be left unattended at any time in the staff only corridor due to the location of the main mental health meeting room and an office space being located off the same corridor.

Due to the presence of ligature points and sharps within the APU group room patients must be under staff supervision at all times. If a staff member is required to leave the room patients must either leave with them or another staff member must be called in to provide supervision. It is preferable that two (2) staff members are present at all times that patients are present in this room.

Before running a group staff must first:

1. notify the shift coordinator of the time of the group, those who will be present and the likely duration
2. assess the mental state of each participant to assess their suitability to participate in the group activities. If significant risk is assessed the patient may be excluded from the group activity
3. ensure that all staff members involved in running the group are wearing a duress pendant and are familiar with how to activate a Code Black.



### 3. Definitions

<b>Code Black</b>	A call for assistance when any individual (staff, patient or visitor) is at personal threat of harm from an act of aggression.
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### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

**Clinical Nurse Manager:** To ensure that staff have been oriented to the safety processes associated with use of the inpatient group room.

### 5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy document may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Employment Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (HSA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

### 6. Evaluation

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be carried out by Clinical Nurse Manager, APU through monitoring of the Clinical Incident Management System and Occupational Safety and Health Reporting tools.

## 7. Standards

National Standards for Mental Health Services :

2.1, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 6.10, 10.1.1, 10.5.2, 10.5.12.

## 8. Legislation

WA Mental Health Act 2014

WA Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984

## 9. References

WACHS Occupational Safety and Health Policy

National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010, Commonwealth of Australia.

Emergency Response - Code Black Personal Threat - Albany Hospital

## 10. Related Policy Documents

WACHS Occupational Safety and Health Policy

Emergency Response - Code Black Personal Threat - Albany Hospital

**This document can be made available in alternative formats  
on request for a person with a disability**

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