



Vulnerable Patient Procedure

Effective: 24 August 2015

1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The National Standards for Mental Health Service require that the optimal safety of the consumer is maintained and that they are protected from abuse and exploitation.
- 1.2 The Broome Mental Health Unit (BMHU) [Patient Bed Flow Procedure](#) describes admission criteria.
- 1.3 Where a young person or older adult is admitted to Mabu Liyan / BMHU while awaiting transfer to a specialist facility, and where admission to the general hospital is not suitable, they may be considered a vulnerable patient.
- 1.4 Vulnerability is considered in the context of risk assessment and management planning.
- 1.5 For patients who are of Aboriginal¹ origin or are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, understanding is to be facilitated where appropriate by:
 - leaflets / signs / visual aids
 - an approved interpreter service
 - involvement of an Aboriginal MH Liaison Officer
 - involvement of family carer(s).

2. PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The following factors are to be considered by the treating team to assess patient mix and location of patients on the ward. This includes:
 - vulnerability to sexual predatory behaviour
 - patient age
 - male and female co-location
 - cultural considerations
 - financial vulnerability.
- 2.2 Where a patient is assessed as high risk of vulnerability, this is to be discussed with the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) and Consultant Psychiatrist or the on call Consultant Psychiatrist or Psychiatric Registrar prior to admission.
- 2.3 The following management strategies may be used to manage the risks associated with the admission of a young person or older adult:
 - One to one chaperone, boarder or nurse special
 - Management in a room close to the staff base
 - Increased visual observations

¹ Within Western Australia, the term Aboriginal is used in preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, in recognition that Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Western Australia. No disrespect is intended to our Torres Strait Islander colleagues and community.

- Appropriate equipment or furniture to be sourced (e.g. patient who is at increased risk of falls)
- Consultation and advice from the relevant specialist team e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Psycho-Geriatrics
- The treating team are to engage the family /carer(s) in the development of a management plan for young people
- Ensuring that patients identified as vulnerable are aware of unit rules regarding patient access to other patient bedrooms.

2.4 Documentation

- The management plan must be documented in the patient health record.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Clinical Director

The Clinical Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that services are delivered in accordance with this procedure.

3.2 Consultant Psychiatrist

The Consultant Psychiatrist is responsible for the medical management of patients in accordance with this procedure.

3.3 Clinical Nurse Manager

The Clinical Nurse Manager is responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

3.4 All Staff

All staff are responsible to work within policies, guidelines and procedures.

4. COMPLIANCE

Those who fail to comply with this procedure may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.

5. EVALUATION

- 5.1 Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be reviewed every two years.
- 5.2 This procedure is to be reviewed following the implementation /proclamation of the *WA Mental Health Act 2014*.

6. REFERENCES

- 6.1 National Safety and Quality Service Standards: 1.2.2; 1.5.2; 1.8.1; 1.8.2; 1.18.1;
- 6.2 EQulPNational Standards: 11.5.1; 12.1.1; 12.3.1
- 6.3 National Standards for Mental Health 1.1; 1.10; 2.1; 6.2;
- 6.4 WACHS Great Southern Albany Mental Health Unit Treatment procedure
- 6.5 National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013: 1.1; 1.16
- 6.6 Department of Health [Operational Directive OD0346/11 WA Health Language Services Policy](#)

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 7.1 BMHU Mabu Liyan [Patient Admission Procedure](#)
- 7.2 BMHU Mabu Liyan [Patient Bed Flow Procedure](#)

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