


Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center		
TITLE: Contraband and Personal Searches	POLICY NO: AD-HS- 04	Page 1 of 3
RESPONSIBILITY: Health & Safety		
APPROVED BY:  REY M. VEGA, DIRECTOR	EFFECTIVE: 3/27/17	LAST REVIEWED/REVISED

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 and Residential Recovery Program Housing.
- B. To provide guidelines for staff regarding contraband brought into the Crisis Stabilization Unit and Residential Recovery Program Housing

POLICY:

- A. GBHWC recognizes that patients have the right to (1) privacy, dignity, and to be free from unnecessary searches; and (2) retain and use 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. When the situation warrants, searches of consumers and their living areas are permitted in order to ensure safety. This will be carried out in a professional and courteous manner recognizing the intrusion to personal privacy that occurs.
- C. All consumers admitted to the Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) shall surrender their personal belongings that are considered contraband, to the staff or security guards.
- D. Other items can be considered contraband if staff believes the item may be used by a consumer to harm themselves or someone else or if an item poses a safety risk or interferes with the rights of others as determined by the Mental Health Provider and or Safety Officer.

DEFINITIONS:

- 1. 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. The following items are considered contraband: Samples provided may not be limited to the list below;
 - a. **Weapons** (firearms, knives, clubs)
 - b. **Tobacco and Tobacco-related Products** (cigarettes, cigars, loose tobacco, chewing tobacco, rolling papers, pipes)
 - c. **Explosives** (black powder, fireworks)
 - d. **Toxic substances** (alcohol based products, nail polish and remover, aerosol cans, household chemicals, paints, perfume, cologne, model glue)
 - e. **Alcohol**
 - f. **Flammable substances** (lighter fluid, matches, fuel, paint thinner)
 - g. **Unidentified substances** (vials, powders, pills, liquids)

- h. **Sharp Objects** (scissors, nail clippers, knives, needles/pins, razor blades, ice pick)
 - i. **Hanging Risks** (ropes, electrical wires, cords, scarves, nylon, string, dog leash)
 - j. **Metal Cans and lids**
 - k. **Illegal substances and items** (street drugs)
 - l. **Medications** (non-controlled substances, over the counter, personal medications)
 - m. **Glass Items**
 - n. **Office supplies associated with danger risk** (metal spiral notebooks, paper clips, letter opener, staplers)
 - o. **Jewelry associated with danger risk** (long chain necklaces, large buckles or rings.
 - p. **Clothing associated with danger risk** (tied waistband or cuffs, large belt buckles, nylons scarves, items with long straps)
 - q. **Personal Grooming Items associated with danger risk** (coloring agent)
 - r. **All pornographic materials**
 - s. **Electronics**
2. Searches: As used in this policy, searches are actions taken by GBHWC staff when;
- a. 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,
 - b. In routine safety rounds of crisis stabilization units and residential homes
 - c. At anytime there is a reasonable belief that there is an imminent threat.
3. Imminent Threat: As used in this policy describes an immediate threat to personal safety created by reasonable suspicion or direct observation that a patient possesses contraband that could be used to harm himself/herself or someone else.

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 for safety, accountability and reporting.

1. If a staff member notices an item that could be considered contraband, he/she shall take immediate action to address any related safety issues, promptly notify direct supervisor and the Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible (not to exceed 1 hour), and start an incident report for that supervisor's review, that will be completed prior to the end of the shift.
2. When it is necessary to conduct a search, it will be carried out in a professional and courteous manner 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. Unless there is an imminent threat, staff members will obtain authorization from a physician, program service manager, or licensed nurse in charge prior to searching a patient or patient possessions for contraband.
4. 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.
5. Searches may also be conducted 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 areas.
6. 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.
7. Any illegal items found during such an examination will be confiscated by the facility and given to law enforcement for further disposition. Any 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.
8. Any search of body cavities other than the mouth or ears must be authorized by a physician's order specifying the type of search. If authorized, a body cavity search may only be conducted by a physician or licensed independent practitioner.

C. DOCUMENTATION:

1. Whenever searches are conducted or contraband is identified, this triggers an incident report.
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.

RESCISSION/SUPERSEDES:

ATTACHMENTS

I. AD -HS-05 Pat Down and Strip Searches Protocol

