

Subject:	Code White (Violent/aggressive behavior)	Date Approved:	October 5, 2017
Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date Revised:	
Specific to:	All Staff and Board of Directors	Next Review Date:	September 2020

**PRINCIPLE:**

North Huron Family Health Team (NH FHT) aims to provide a safe and secure environment for all patients, residents, visitors, staff, physicians, students and volunteers. NH FHT's Code White aims to coordinate a safe and effective response to a violent or aggressive behavior from any person that may potentially harm others or him/herself.

Not all of those exhibiting violent behaviour are patients, or have a history of mental illness. Others who might present such behaviours might be disgruntled employees or ex-employees, unhappy family members, estranged spouses, non-custodial parents, or those interrupted while engaged in criminal behaviour.

This policy is adopted from the Listowel-Wingham Hospitals Alliance (LWHA) Code White policy.

This policy is in accordance with the NH FHT's Violence and Harassment Policies.

**POLICY:**

The NH FHT recognizes its responsibility for the safety of patients, visitors, and staff.

The NH FHT believes that an individual's right to dignity, autonomy and freedom to control their behaviour should be protected as much as possible even while managing abusive behaviour.

The NH FHT believes and supports in planning ahead for individual situations. This starts with employing verbal techniques, physical or outside assistance as required.

**Duties of employers**

- Provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker
- Take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances for the protection of a worker
- Prepare and review at least every three (3) years (unless legislative changes) a written occupational health and safety policy and develop and maintain a program to implement that policy

**Duties of supervisors**

- advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker

### **Duties of workers**

- Report to his or her supervisor any contravention of the occupational health and safety act or regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she know. This requirement is to be interpreted to include any threat of violence or presence of a violent person

### ***Precipitating Factors:***

The following factors may lead a person to lose control and act out verbally or physically:

- displaced anger
- attention seeking
- fear of the unknown or consequences
- loss of self esteem
- loss of personal power
- unresolved hearing/vision
- impaired
- lack of understanding of treatment
- literacy/language difficulties
- invasion of personal space
- weak social interpersonal skills
- recent visible physical disability

### Five Conditions that Mark Pending Aggression:

- high noise level
- crowding
- closeness when giving personal care
- following transfer from familiar surroundings to unfamiliar surroundings
- invasion of personal space

### **Development of Crisis Behaviour:**

#### Key behaviours to recognize:

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| -anxiety                               | -refusal            |
| -noticeable change in behaviour        | -non-compliance     |
| -questioning                           | -irrational         |
| -challenging or manipulative questions | -emotional outburst |
| -acting out                            |                     |

### **Procedure:**

1. For staff protection at the NH FHT no staff member is to be alone in the workplace while patients are in the building. At least two staff members must be present in the building at all times while the clinic is open and/or patients are present in the building.
2. If you are in a situation that a patient becomes violent try to position yourself so that you are not cornered. Always try to have an unobstructed exit. E.g. make sure you are sitting between the patient and the door.

3. Use your personal FOB, if available, which is a direct call to the police when the button is pushed.
4. In an Emergency situation any employee needing assistance with an abusive/aggressive patient you can activate "Code White" by dialling 5800 - main floor reception, to request a page "Code White" and give the location.
5. Main floor reception will announce "Code White" to both floors, and give the location, three times. This will bring available staff to your assistance.
6. Should further assistance be required you can use any or all of them at your discretion depending on the situation. They are:
  - o Wingham Police Service– 519-357-1214 or 911
  - o Call local ambulance personnel at 911.
7. When the situation has been defused, a member of the Occ. Health & Safety Committee or designate will announce "All Clear" by announcing it on the paging system for everyone in the building to hear.
8. In a case involving injury to the patient or staff, an incident report will be completed.
9. If an incident is taking place in the parking lot, the staff member will dial '911' first, and then dial '0' to Wingham District Hospital to lock doors immediately due to Code White in the parking lot.

### **What are some tips for working with patients?**

- Review the patient's profile before meeting. Take note of any potential concerns and use precautionary measures if necessary (e.g., have another person in the room).
- Approach patients in a non-threatening, respectful manner.
- Provide the right information at the right time. DO NOT overload patients or family members with too much medical information or technical jargon.
- Clearly and fully explain to the patient before and during the procedure; for example,
  - o What is involved
  - o How long it will take.
  - o Whether it will hurt.
- If you feel threatened, DO NOT conduct intimate examinations of patients alone. Arrange to have a colleague in the room or close by.
- If you can, leave the door open during any potentially violent consultation to allow for visual or verbal contact with other staff.
- Record instances of abuse immediately following the event so that details are not forgotten when reporting.
- If a patient becomes hostile during a procedure, stop what you are doing if possible.
- Ask the patient to tell you what is wrong.

### Related Policies:

Violence in the Workplace Policy

Harassment in the Workplace Policy