

Valley Medical Group, P.C.

Policy and Procedure

Title: Safety Emergencies

Purpose: Valley Medical Group wants to provide guidance for employees or others dealing with persons exhibiting unsafe behaviors, so they can fully understand how to manage the situation or obtain assistance.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees, physicians, and practitioners employed by Valley Medical Group.

Policy:

It is the policy of VMG and the responsibility of its managers and all of its employees to maintain a workplace free from unsafe behavior. VMG will work to provide a safe workplace for employees and for visitors to the workplace. Each employee, and everyone with whom we come into contact in our work, deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect.

NO EMPLOYEE IS EXPECTED TO HANDLE A SITUATION THAT THEY FEEL IS DANGEROUS.

Unsafe Behaviors:

The list of behaviors, while not exhaustive, provides examples of unsafe behavior:

- Persons who are suspected to be intoxicated or under the influence of a substance
- Persons using abusive language or verbally threatening
- Persons being loud and disruptive

Procedure:

1. Identify unsafe behavior or potential risk situation.
2. If comfortable, attempt to diffuse the situation using de-escalation techniques (as attached).
3. If person remains agitated and is still exhibiting unsafe behavior, contact your supervisor and/or the Health Center Manager.
 - a. If there is no response, call a Code Gray –
 - i. Using the overhead paging system, announce Code Gray and the location.
 - ii. Repeat 2 times.
 - iii. Await response of designated staff, which may include; Supervisors, IBH, BH and Practitioner Team Leaders.

- b. If no designated staff respond, call 911
 - i. Provide specific details about the situation
 - ii. Advise who will meet law enforcement
 - iii. Advise which entrance they should use
4. The designated staff will respond to the situation with the goal to contain the situation.
5. The designated staff will determine if the police need to be called.
6. If situation escalates to an Active Threat, the designated staff will initiate a Code White and follow the Active Threat procedures as per policy.
7. At the conclusion of the incident, document all details of the event by completing an incident report and emailing it to the Health Center Manager and qualityreporting@vmgma.com.
8. A debriefing shall occur within one week, to assist all involved to review the situation and discuss what worked well, opportunities for improvement, and other strategies that might have been used. It is also an opportunity for staff to ask questions and validate emotional reactions to unusual or unsafe behaviors.

Author: Rachel Bergstrom, RN and Amy Rice, RN, BSN, MSHA

Approved by: Safety Committee

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De-escalation Techniques

1. Actively Listen
 - a. Let patient speak
 - b. Do not argue or defend yourself
 - c. Use non-threatening body language
 - i. the more a person is upset, the less they listen to your words
 - ii. keep facial expressions, gestures, movements and tone of voice calm
 - d. Paraphrase
2. Be Empathetic & Non-judgmental
 - a. Try to understand the patient's feelings. How the patient is feeling is sometimes more important than the facts.
 - b. Whatever problem the patient is dealing with is important to them.
3. Validate & Acknowledge feelings
 - a. Use empathetic and supportive comments: "I can see how this may be frustrating...", "I am sorry you are having a bad experience...", "I can appreciate why you feel this way".
4. Don't take it personally
 - a. Ignore challenging questions
 - b. Avoid a power struggle
 - c. Don't react emotionally
5. Allow for time and silence
 - a. Give the patient an opportunity to reflect on what their choices are and how they need to proceed
6. Be Professional and rational
 - a. Remain calm. You cannot control the patient's behavior, but you can control your own.
 - b. If you are calm, professional, empathetic and are taking their problems seriously, their need for escalation will be reduced.
7. Set limits
 - a. If a patient's behavior continues to be belligerent, defensive or disruptive, give them clear, simple & enforceable limits.
 - b. Offer concise and respectful choices & consequences
 - c. Remember, there are no absolutes – our goal is to maintain a welcoming atmosphere for all our patients.