

**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER
MENTAL HEALTH NURSING
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 11508
VERSION: 1**

SUBJECT/TITLE: FRESH AIR BREAKS (OFF-UNIT ACTIVITY) - MENTAL HEALTH INPATIENT UNITS

MD ORDER: YES [X] NO []

POLICY: Fresh Air Breaks are to be offered to patients on the inpatient psychiatric units. A physician order, along with a registered nurse's assessment of patient's risk factors are required prior to offering the outdoor activity. It is the department's goal to provide patients with an opportunity to enjoy a fresh air break in the safest manner possible.

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines for escorting patients on the inpatient mental health units to an outdoor area for fresh air breaks.

PROCEDURE:

1. Patients shall be escorted outdoors by staff during off- unit activities. A registered nurse will be assigned as part of the staff group escorting the patients.
2. Nursing personnel shall maintain a log noting the date and names of the patients escorted outdoors daily for fresh air breaks. This log will be available to patients' rights advocates upon request.
3. Prior to leaving the unit, patients are assessed by a registered nurse to determine the number and type of staff necessary to provide supervision.
The nurse will go over the following guidelines with patients:

Guidelines are as follows:

- a. Patients are expected to cooperate with the staff. Any unsafe and disruptive behavior that poses a safety risk to patients and staff will require further re-assessment by the clinical team for readiness to participate in the activity.
- b. Patients must have **ID bands** prior to leaving the unit.
- c. Stops along the way to the outdoor area are discouraged to maintain patient safety and to maximize staff members' ability to observe patients at all times. Patients are encouraged to use the restroom prior to leaving the unit.
- d. No disrobing. The patients must be clothed appropriately for the activity including footwear. Footwear must always be kept on.
- e. Outdoor activities require sweaters/sweatshirts during cold

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- weather.
 - f. No lying or sitting down on the ground on the way to outdoor area.
 - g. Patients are encouraged to use the benches in the outdoor area.
4. A minimum of 2 staff will accompany up to 10 patients.
Any group over 10 patients will require 1 additional staff member for each additional group of 5 patients.
 5. The RN will conduct a head count and assign 5 specific patients to each staff member (maintaining the 1:5 ratio) and will obtain initials and signatures on the Fresh Air Break Log.
 6. The RN will also assign one staff member to take the “Lead” role.
 - a. The Lead will have his/her assigned 5 patients, and will be stationed at the front of the line.
 7. Hospital Security Officer(s) will escort the patients and staff to and from the in-patient unit to the outdoor area. Hospital Security Officer(s) will remain at the area with patients and staff.
 8. RN will conduct a total head count prior to leaving the outdoor area.
 9. RN will document on the log any significant information/events/behavioral issues that may have occurred during the break.
 10. RN will also document on the log reason(s) break did not occur.
 11. RN will communicate to the interdisciplinary team any behavioral issues that may have occurred along with recommendations based on treatment plan and will also communicate the same information during shift hand-off report.
 12. If a patient’s behavior and/or condition does not allow patient to be safely accompanied to the outdoor area, the clinical team will be notified and the justification for denial will be clearly documented in the Denial of Rights form and progress notes. Nursing will obtain a physician’s order for denial of rights to participate in the outdoor activity.

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References:	
California Code, Welfare and Institutions Code (2018) WIC § 5325.1 (h). Retrieved from: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&sectionNum=5325 .	
Approved by: Alex Kopelowicz (Chief Physician), Bonnie Bilitch (Chief Nursing Officer), Frank Colbert (Safety Officer), Georgia Foot'e-Sam (Clinical Nurse Director II)	Date: 04/22/2019
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