

**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER
REHABILITATION SERVICES
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 1700
VERSION: 2**

SUBJECT/TITLE: OUTDOOR THERAPEUTIC HORTICULTURE ACTIVITY

POLICY: A supervised therapeutic horticulture activity is provided to inpatients admitted to the Mental Health Unit and long-term Infectious Disease Unit.

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines and regulations to ensure staff observe all safety procedures for patients during outdoor therapeutic horticulture activities.

**DEPARTMENTS: REHABILITATION SERVICES, PSYCHIATRY, MEDICINE, NURSING
LA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

DEFINITIONS: Therapeutic horticulture is the purposeful use of plants and plant-related activities to promote health and wellness for an individual or group. There are many facets of gardening that can assist an individual(s) in developing skills such as cooperation, responsibility and follow-through. Overall, therapeutic horticulture is a pleasurable and social activity for individuals to enjoy doing outdoors.

PROCEDURE:

List of Equipment and Supplies

1. Elevated/vertical gardening bed(s)
2. Water spigot(s)
3. Light weight hose with a plastic spray nozzle
4. Plastic watering container
5. A variety of safe gardening tools
6. Disposable gloves
7. Non-toxic plant soil
8. A variety of non-toxic packets of plant and flower seeds

Storage Requirements:

1. All nursery items (plant soil, seeds, water container and hand tools) are safely stored in a locked deck box.
2. All long-handle tools will be safely stored and locked in the storage pavilion.
3. All storage areas remain locked at all times and are only opened by an authorized staff member.

Safety Guidelines for the Horticulture Activity

1. Only non-toxic plant soil and plant/flower seeds are selected for the garden. All plant soils and plant/flower seeds intended for the horticulture activity

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must be reviewed and deemed safe (*non-toxic*) prior to being used in the patient care area.

2. Gardening activities will be provided in the safest manner possible, which is as follows:
 - An elevated gardening bed is used in place of ceramic or terra cotta pots or planters
 - A plastic hand trowel is used in place of a metal hand trowel. Long-handled tools are not safe for the mental health patient population.
 - A few select long-handled tools can be made available for patients in the Infectious Disease Unit.
3. Seeds that produce fruits or vegetables are prohibited from being grown in the garden.
4. All patients are closely observed during all horticulture activities, particularly when using gardening tools.
5. Staff provide close supervision to ensure patients don't take any plants or flowers out of the gardening area.
6. Patients are closely monitored to ensure there is no soil exchange between patients during group activities.
7. Patients are taught proper hand-washing technique and they are instructed to wash their hands prior to and after the gardening activity.
8. Patients from the Infectious Disease Unit must wear their isolation mask at all times.
9. Patients who may be sensitive to dust are offered an isolation mask.
10. Staff must wear disposable protective gloves when handling plant soil and after gloves are removed, hands must be washed.
11. All work surfaces and gardening tools are sanitized between activities according to our department's policy on "INFECTION CONTROL PLAN FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES"
12. Gardening activities will be temporarily suspended if the ground becomes muddy following rainy and/or inclement weather.

Benefits of Horticultural Therapy

Cognitive:

- Enhance cognitive functioning
- Improve sensory awareness
- Improve goal achievement
- Improve concentration

Psychological:

- Improve quality of life
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve sense of well-being
- Reduce stress
- Alleviate depression
- Increase feelings of calm and relaxation

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- Increase sense of pride and accomplishment
- Improve personal satisfaction

Social:

- Improve social interaction
- Provide for healthier patterns of social functioning
- Improve group cohesiveness

Physical:

- Improve range of motion
- Improve bilateral integration
- Improve fine/gross motor and eye-hand coordination
- Improve standing balance and endurance
- Improve strength
- Promote physical health

Other Benefits:

Horticulture activities:

- Provide an opportunity for patients to enjoy a feeling of normalcy. It gives the patient a sense of getting away for a brief period from an institutionalized environment.
- Aid in the patient's process of reintegration back into the community. They may join gardening organizations and/or participate in gardening at home as a leisure activity.

Accessibility-ADA and Universal Design:

1. ADA accommodations are provided to enable safe and comfortable use for people regardless of age, ability or preference. Some examples of ADA accommodations for horticulture area are as follows:
 - An adequate open space will be maintained for a wheelchair to fit through the fenced off gardening area.
 - Elevated and/or vertical gardening beds allow individuals a variety of heights to work from during standing and/or sitting gardening activities.

Schedule:

1. The recreation park is open for activities Monday through Friday. If there is the appropriate level of staffing, this area can also be made available on weekends.
2. The patients on the Mental Health Unit are scheduled for activities in the outdoor recreation park from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Activities conclude promptly at 10:45, patients and staff return to the unit by 11:00 a.m.
3. The patients from the Infectious Disease Unit are scheduled from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. Departure time from the area is at 11:45 a.m.

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References:	
Approved by: Carolyn Rhee (Chief Executive Officer), Dellone Pascascio (Chief Nursing Officer), Rima Matevosian (Chief Medical Officer)	Date: 11/25/2014
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