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Effective:	05/2021
Last Approved:	05/2021
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Next Review:	05/2022
Owner:	<i>Obella: DIR - CLINICAL SVCS - BH</i>
Area:	<i>Baker Act</i>
References:	

Reasonable Rules Governing Visitors, Visiting Hours, and the Use of Telephones

Scope:

All consumers of treatment

Function:

To assure patients have free and open communication by telephone, mail, and visitation, unless restricted for safety reasons.

Policy:

1. It is the policy of Fort Lauderdale Behavioral Health Center that each person receiving services has the right to communicate freely and privately with persons outside the facility unless it is determined that such communication is likely to be harmful to the person or others. A telephone that allows for free local calls and access to long-distance service shall be made available as soon as reasonably possible to persons receiving services. However, the facility does not pay the costs of a patient's long-distance calls. The telephone is readily accessible to the patient (located in the hallway or at the nurses stations) and is placed so that the patient may use it to communicate privately and confidentially. Fort Lauderdale Behavioral Health Center has established reasonable rules governing visitors, visiting hours, and the use of the telephone, provided that the rules do not interfere with a patient's access to a telephone to report abuse.

Rules:

- Use of the telephone is permitted when the patient is not participating or required to participate in active treatment.
- Use of the telephone is limited to 10 minutes so that all individuals may have access.
- Visitors are permitted during scheduled visiting hours (varies per program). Visitors may be permitted outside of visiting hours with the approval of the treatment team.
- All visitors are required to leave all valuables, purses, wallets, bags, etc., in their vehicles. Visitors must sign in at the front desk and sign a written agreement to confidentiality. Visitors are escorted to by a staff member to the location of visitation.

2. Patients have the right to contact and to receive communication from their attorneys at any reasonable time.
3. Prompt access to a telephone is provided to each patient requesting to call his or her legal counsel, Florida Abuse Registry, or the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities.
4. Each patient is allowed to receive, send, and mail sealed, unopened correspondence; and no patient's incoming or outgoing correspondence shall be opened, delayed, held, or censored by the facility unless there is reason to believe that it contains items or substances which may be harmful to the patient or others, in which case the administrator may direct reasonable examination of such mail and may regulate the disposition of such items or substances.

Outgoing mail is brought to the receptionist by a staff member daily and incoming mail is received from the receptionist by a staff member daily, with the exception of Sunday.

5. If a patient's right to communicate or to receive visitors is restricted, written notice of such restriction and the reasons for the restriction is served on the patient, the patient's attorney, and the patient's guardian, guardian advocate, or representative; and such restriction is recorded on the patient's clinical record with the reasons there for.
 - a. The restriction of a patient's right to communicate or to receive visitors is reviewed at least every 7 days.
 - b. The right to communicate or receive visitors shall not be restricted as a means of punishment.
 - c. If restrictions to communication is imposed, staff inform adult competent patients aware that they have the ability to waive the confidentiality of their presence in a receiving or treatment facility and allowing all or specified persons the patient selects access to free and open communication with the patient.

Fort Lauderdale Behavioral Health Center permits immediate access to any patient, subject to the patient's right to deny or withdraw consent at any time, by the patient's family members, guardian, guardian advocate, representative, or attorney, unless such access would be detrimental to the patient.

Attachments

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
CEO Approval	Llano: CEO - BH	05/2021
COO Approval	Miguel Fernandez: COO - BH	05/2021
Performance Improvement Review	Miriam Force: DIR - PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT	05/2021
Director of Clinical Services Approval	Obella: DIR - CLINICAL SVCS - BH	05/2021



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Owner: Mccarrick-Moore: EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Area: Administration
References:

Special Hospital Post Covid-19 Visitation Addendum

I. Purpose

To ensure that all special visitation provisions in Florida for all F.S. 395 facilities are observed and complied with.

II. Definitions

None

III. Policy

It is the policy of Fort Lauderdale Behavioral Health Center to ensure the rights of all patients receiving care and services.

Infection Control Policy covers infection control and education policies for visitors; screening, personal protective equipment, and other infection control protocols for visitors.

This policy ensures permissible length of visits and numbers of visitors, which must meet or exceed the standards in ss. 400.022(1)(b).

Our organization ensures designation of a person responsible for ensuring that staff adhere to the policies and procedures.

Safety-related policies and procedures may not be more stringent than those established for the provider's staff and may not require visitors to submit proof of any vaccination or immunization.

The policies and procedures allow consensual physical contact between a resident, client, or patient and the visitor where safe and clinically appropriate.

Within 24 hours after establishing the policies and procedures required under this section, providers must make such policies and procedures easily accessible from the homepage of their websites

IV. Procedure

With a physician order and where applicable, the above and following will always be observed:

Essential caregiver: A resident, client, or patient may designate a visitor who is a family member, friend, guardian, or other individual as an essential caregiver. The provider must allow in-person visitation by the essential caregiver for at least 2 hours daily in addition to any other visitation authorized by the provider. This section does not require an essential caregiver to provide necessary care to a resident, client, or patient of a provider, and providers may not require an essential caregiver to provide such care.

- The Intake Specialist shall inform the patient/support person/legal representative of the patient's visitation right.
- The patient/support person/legal representative shall acknowledge understanding of the visitation by

signing the Patient's Acknowledgement form.

- In the event the patient is unable to sign the acknowledgement and there is not legal representative/ support person present, the Intake Specialist shall notify the admitting nurse.
- Once the patient is determined to be in an improved state or the legal representative/support person is available, the unit nurse shall explain the patient visitation right and obtain a signature as evidence of understanding.
- The Intake Specialist shall document the identity of a Support Person/legal representative selected by a patient shall be recorded on the intake assessment form.
- The policies and procedures may require a visitor to agree in writing to follow the provider's policies and procedures. A provider may suspend in-person visitation of a specific visitor if the visitor violates the provider's policies and procedures.

These standards apply by law in the following circumstances in Hospitals:

1. End-of-life situations.
2. A resident, client, or patient who was living with family before being admitted to the provider's care is struggling with the change in environment and lack of in-person family support.
3. The resident, client, or patient is making one or more major medical decisions.
4. A resident, client, or patient is experiencing emotional distress or grieving the loss of a friend or family member who recently died.
5. A resident, client, or patient needs cueing or encouragement to eat or drink which was previously provided by a family member or caregiver.
6. A resident, client, or patient who used to talk and interact with others is seldom speaking.
7. For hospitals, childbirth, including labor and delivery.
8. Pediatric patients.

I. **Documentation**

Patient's Acknowledgement form

II. **References**

408.823, F.S

Attachments

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

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CEO Approval	Llano: CEO - BH	05/2022
	Mccarrick-Moore: EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT	05/2022