



JOINT COMMISSION JEWELS

NPSG #15: The organization identifies safety risks inherent in its patient population.

015.01.01: Identify patients at risk for suicide.

Who may be at risk: Individuals with:

- A recent history of suicidal gesture/attempt
- Suicidal ideations with or without a definite plan
- Severe depression and/or feelings of hopelessness
- Self-destructive behavior
- Auditory and/or visual command hallucinations to harm self
- Recent loss (may be relational, social, work and/or financial)
- Significant change in health status (may be due to terminal illness, HIV/AIDS diagnosis etc.)
- Traumatic events (such as sexual and/or physical abuse)

Protecting patients at risk:

- Inform the patient that visitors will be told not to provide the patient with potentially harmful items.
- Allow the patient his/her right to refuse visitors thus promoting patient confidentiality
- Assign a nursing staff to accompany patient off unit for tests and procedures
- Relocate the patient to a room close to the nurse's station
- 1:1 supervision until evaluated by a psychiatrist
- Restrict the patient to his/her room
- Secure a safe environment
- Post sign outside of door instructing visitors to STOP: Report to Nurse's Station before entering.

Secure a safe environment: Remove the following from the patient environment:

- Matches and lighters, razors and other sharp objects
- Shoelaces, phone cords, call bells, light cords, belts, etc.
- Plastic bags/garbage bags
- Any items that may possibly be used by the patient to harm his or her self
- Alert nursing staff on unit, housekeeping and dietary

Nurses Notes: Upon identification of risk, document:

- Name of the attending MD and consulting psychiatrist notified
- Notification of the nurse manager/supervisor
- Placement of patient on "Suicide Precautions"
- Description of the patient's behaviors, communications, recent past history that indicate suicide risk
- All actions taken to ensure a safe environment
- Each shift document psychosocial assessment and actions taken to ensure a safe environment