

**EAST COAST FORENSIC  
HOSPITAL  
PSYCHIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE Unit  
HANDBOOK FOR  
FAMILIES  
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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is written for families who have a loved one in the East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH)\* in the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)\*. The word family can refer to anyone the person decides is important to them. The purpose of the handbook is to tell you about what happens when a person comes through our doors. It explains treatment, along with things you will need to know when you visit. We use the words patient, client, and person to describe your relative in the hospital. Patients at the hospital have a mental illness. If you would like information about the illness, please ask one of the team members or visit [ourhealthyminds.com](http://ourhealthyminds.com) online.

The events that happen when someone enters a psychiatric intensive care unit may be stressful for families. We know that families have an important role in helping their loved one get better. We would like to offer some support for you. We hope this handbook will answer some questions and let you know who to contact for more information.

You will find many hospital terms used in this handbook. To help you get used to these, a Word List can be found on page 12. Terms that are defined in the Word List are followed by a star \*.

The East Coast Forensic Hospital is part of the Capital Health Mental Health Program. Qualified clinicians at the hospital we provide assessment and treatment for people with mental illness.

A Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at the ECFH is a six bed unit. Patients admitted to this unit are involuntary\* and are acutely ill and may be at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Every patient in the hospital has rights and responsibilities. A Patient Representative can help patients and family members with their concerns. The contact number is 473-2133. Patients admitted to the hospital are given a pamphlet about their rights and responsibilities. We have included one in this binder for you. An involuntary patient under the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA)\* also has rights. Patients admitted to the PICU are given a pamphlet about their rights. We have included one in this binder for you.

## PSYCHIATRIC REVIEW BOARD

The Psychiatric Review Board is a panel of people that will review matters in respect to the status of your loved one. They may consider any or all of the following:

- When they have been held in the hospital against their wish under the Involuntary Treatment Act;
- When they have been found incapable of making decisions about their care;
- When someone other than the patient has been appointed to make decisions about their health care; or
- When a *Community Treatment Order* or *Certificate of Leave* has been cancelled.

Below is the information for the Capital Health Patient Representative Services:

- Local Number: 473-2133
- Toll Free Number: 1-800-799-0990
- Email: [health\\_careexperience@cdha.nshealth.ca](mailto:health_careexperience@cdha.nshealth.ca)

## **INPATIENT HOSPITALIZATION**

The inpatient hospital stay begins once your loved one has been assessed involuntary by the psychiatrist or when one or more physicians believe your loved one requires a psychiatric assessment. For further information please contact The Patient Rights Advisor Service at (902)404-3322 or 1-866-779-3322.

The PICU is located on one of our Rehabilitation Units at the hospital. PICU patients will be located in a six bed unit at ECFH. As involuntary patients, at risk to harm to self or others, PICU patients will not have access to the hospital grounds or community, except for required medical or psychiatric assessments, and in the direct accompaniment of staff. PICU patients will have access to an airing court\* to allow for fresh air and exercise. Nurses are on the units 24 hours a day. Staff members make sure that the units are a safe place for everyone. Some of the safety rules are listed in Appendix A. When a person comes to PICU they are given a tour of the unit and provided with the same information pamphlets that are included in your binder.

A person's stay in PICU is designed to be short term. Once the acute phase of a person's illness has settled arrangements will be made to have the person return to their referring agency to continue their treatment process and safe return to the community.

### **The Team Members**

Each person on PICU will be assigned a psychiatrist, medical doctor and a nurse. Other team members that work in Occupational Therapy, Social Work, Recreational Therapy and Spiritual Care will be available on a consultation basis.

Family members are an important part of a person's health care team. The support of family and friends can help a person settle into the unit and work towards getting better. Family members may have details about a person's illness and the events that brought them into hospital. This can be helpful to the team and patient.

You can contact any team member to provide information.

You may want to know who is working with your relative. It may be helpful to complete the following list of team members so that you will know who to call.

Team Member:	Name:
Medical Doctor:	_____
Nurse(s):	_____
Occupational Therapist:	_____
Psychiatrist:	_____
Psychologist:	_____
Recreation Therapist:	_____
Social Worker:	_____
Spiritual Care Clinician:	_____

To contact any of the team, you can call the switchboard at 460-7300.

## Visits

Family visitation will follow ECFH policy, and is encouraged subject to safety considerations. Visitors are required to bring photo identification with them and sign in at the front desk and you will be provided a visitors tag. All personal items such as handbags, cell-phones, coats etc. will be required to be locked in a locker in the lobby, you will be provided a lock and key by reception staff. Once your visit is completed you will return your visitors tag and collect all personal items from the locker and return the lock and key to reception.

No food items, drinks, cameras or recording devices are permitted inside the hospital.

Visits are booked by calling Master Control at 460-7370. Prior to your visit please contact the unit by calling 460-7300 to see if the visit is able to take place, this is important to prevent family and friends from being disappointed if this is not a good time for the patient to receive company.

Visitors will be limited to immediate family or to individuals that have been identified as family; two people at one time are accepted during a visit.

If a contact visit room is unavailable, a non-contact visit may be an option. Please check with nursing staff.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

In this handbook we have tried to cover information that will help families have a better understanding of a hospital stay at the PICU. If you have questions after reading the handbook or if you would like to speak to any member of the treatment team, the contact information is listed below.

Switchboard (902) 460-7300  
Fax number (902) 460- 7337

East Coast Forensic Hospital  
88 Gloria McCluskey Avenue  
Dartmouth, NS B3B 2B8

<http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/facilities/ecfh/index.html>

We would like to hear about how you have found the handbook. Please see the last page for a form to fill out to help us improve it for other families.

## APPENDIX A

# Inpatient Hospital Safety Rules

- 1) There is no smoking at the East Coast Forensic Hospital or on its grounds. (This is a policy at all Capital Health sites.)
- 2) Certain items are not allowed in the hospital. These items are called Contraband\* and include matches, lighters, alcohol. See Appendix C for a list of Contraband items.
- 3) Food and drinks cannot be brought into the hospital.
- 4) Families cannot visit on the units. Special rooms for visiting can be used. Families can call the nursing unit (460-7300) to set up a time. Visits can be contact\* or non-contact\*. The staff who work in Master Control\* help with the visits.
- 5) Families are allowed to give information to staff about their loved one at any time.
- 6) All patients are searched before entering the units and must walk through a metal detector.
- 7) Visitors are given a locker with a key to store purses, cell phones, camera, etc. before going to the visit rooms. Visitors are not searched and do not walk through a metal detector.

## APPENDIX B

### Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) Can we bring in money?  
Yes, there is a trust fund\* (like a bank) at the hospital where a person can safely keep their money.
- 2) Can we bring in food?  
No, it's always a good idea to check with nursing staff before you bring any items to the hospital.
- 3) Is smoking allowed in the hospital?  
No, smoking is not allowed at the East Coast Forensic Hospital or on the grounds. This is a policy at all Capital Health sites. In order to smoke, the person must have a pass to leave the hospital grounds.
- 4) What can patients buy in the hospital?  
There is a small canteen where people can buy healthy treats, stamps. There is a clothing shop, where people can get used clothing and buy personal items, such as underwear and socks for a small charge.
- 5) When can I visit?  
The answer to this question varies for each person. To arrange a visit, you can contact the nursing unit by calling 460-7300.
- 6) Can I take my family member away from the hospital for a visit?  
No they are an involuntary patient and will not be permitted to leave except for medical or psychiatric assessment and be in the accompaniment of staff.
- 7) What happen at a Hospital Review Board Hearing  
Please contact The Patient Rights Advisor Service by calling 404-3322 or 1-866-779-3322

- 8) How long will the person be in the PICU?  
Once the person is well enough to return to the referring agency arrangements will be made to transfer the person or if they no longer meet the criteria for involuntary admission
  
- 9) Who can I talk to about the person's care?  
You are free to get in touch with any of the person's team members or nursing staff. In order to receive details about the person's care, you must be the person who has given permission for the person to be treated.
  
- 10) Is there a way that I can talk to the person on the phone?  
The best way to arrange this is to contact nursing at the hospital. Call the Switch Board number, 460-7300 and ask to speak to the nurse who is caring for your relative.
  
- 11) What can I bring to the person I am visiting?  
Personal clothing will be limited to three (3) changes please don't bring extra items as storage is very limited .Radios and TV are available on the unit.
  
- 12) Are patients locked in their rooms?  
No.

## APPENDIX C

### Contraband

Contraband is any substance or item that patients cannot have in hospital (**see Section B**) / or items that must be kept with Nursing Staff to be signed out for usage (**see Section A**). Please check with staff before bringing items into the hospital.

Some examples of Contraband include:

#### **Section A - Items kept by Nursing Staff and Signed Out**

- Sharp items of any kind (tins, glass mirrors, needles)
- Any alcohol product (perfume, cologne, aftershave, shoe polish, mouth wash, CD/tape cleaner)
- Guitar strings
- Scissors, tweezers
- Matches/lighters
- All aerosol cans
- All musical instruments, including attachments
- Dental Floss

#### **Section B - Not allowed on Units**

- Metal coat hangers
- Metal blades
- Ropes, tourniquets
- Medication of any kind (eye drops, ointments, pills, syrups)
- Recording devices/ Dictaphones, laptop computers
- Individual electrical appliances (kettle, teapot)
- Cell phones
- Cameras
- Picture frames with glass
- Prepared foods

- Steel Toed Boots or Shoes

## APPENDIX D

### Word List

Airing Courts - Airing courts are open spaces within ECFH that are like court yards. Some have basketball nets, benches, and flower boxes. It is a place to get some fresh air while on the units. This is helpful for patients who do not have passes to go outside. Smoking is not allowed in the airing courts.

Contact Visit - With a contact visit, the patient and visitor(s) are in the same room. The rooms are usually booked for one hour. There is a camera in the room that is watched by the Correctional Workers in charge of safety and security. Visits can be booked with hospital staff. See non-contact visit.

Contraband - Contraband is any substance or item that patients cannot have in hospital/ or items that must be kept with Nursing Staff to be signed out for usage. A list of contraband items is in Appendix C.

Correctional Workers - They are hospital staff who look after the safety and security of the hospital and all patients, staff, and visitors.

East Coast Forensic Hospital - The East Coast Forensic Hospital provides assessment and care to people who have come into conflict with the law. The word forensic refers to the legal specialty of the hospital.

Involuntary - A person who is unable to make decisions about their treatment or admission and their mental illness is expected to worsen if they are not in the hospital.

IPTA- Involuntary Patient Treatment Act

Master Control - This is a room where Correctional Workers have special monitors and equipment that provide safety for patients, staff, and visitors 24 hours a day.

Non-Contact Visits - With a non-contact visit, the patient and visitor(s) are separated by a window which prevents contact. They talk with a phone. They can be booked with hospital staff. See Contact Visits.

PICU- Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit

Trust Fund - A system that holds money like a bank for patients at the hospital. People can put money in and take it out.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Family Education Group would like to know what family members think about this handbook. Please take a few minutes to complete the questions below. We don't need your name, just your ideas. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. We value your help to make this handbook better.

Was this handbook helpful to you? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
What was helpful?

What could be improved?

Is there information missing from this handbook? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
If yes, what?

Could you read this handbook and understand it easily? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
If not, how can we make it easier to read?

Were all your questions answered? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_  
If not, what questions do you still have?

Thanks again for sharing your ideas with us!  
You can return this page to the hospital by mail or by giving it to any of the staff.