

# PATIENT & FAMILY GUIDE

## FOR THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH UNIT AT MONTEFIORE NYACK HOSPITAL

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Our Behavioral Health Unit is a 26-bed adult unit that offers a supportive and safe environment for our patients requiring short-term treatment for acute mental health problems. Admissions are designed to stabilize acute symptoms, thereby beginning a recovery process. During your stay, a treatment team comprised of a Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Social Worker and other team members - Registered Nurses, Behavioral Health Counselors, Activity therapists and Pharmacists will address your mental health needs. We will provide you and your family with resources to support your recovery upon discharge. We encourage your involvement and partnership with your team for optimal care during your stay.

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## Inpatient Mental Health Services

As an acute care adult inpatient psychiatric unit, The Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) at Montefiore Nyack Hospital offers a full spectrum of psychiatric services and medical care. We treat those coping with depression, psychosis and other mental illnesses. Medical concerns often co-exist with mental illness, so we focus on caring for the combined needs of our patients.

Our unit offers a warm and welcoming environment, and our staff provides expert, personalized care. Patients work with an interdisciplinary team of highly trained physicians, nurses, counselors, social workers and activity therapy staff during their stay. Together, we will determine the best treatment options to help each patient achieve their recovery goals.

### Admission Process

Most of our patients come from the emergency department and go to the BHU. They may have come voluntarily or involuntarily; the initial nursing admission process remains the same. The new patient will be assigned to a registered nurse to oversee the admission process, which may include taking vital signs (blood pressure, respiration, oxygen saturation, temperature) and other essential information like body weight, height, body mapping, etc. In addition, the Nurse will perform a full psychiatric nursing assessment and document the information obtained in the electronic medical record.

**Belongings Check:** The staff assigned will search your belongings in your presence to ensure your safety with items permitted on the unit. Any items not permissible on the unit will be labeled with your name and securely stored. These items will be returned to a loved one with your consent or kept safely and returned on discharge. All valuables (i.e., money, jewelry, credit cards, etc.) will be kept in our Security office and released to loved ones with consent or to the patient on discharge.

**Unit Orientation:** Your Nurse or the nursing support staff will show you around to help you become familiar with the layout of our unit.

## Code Of Conduct

This document that our new patients sign on admission details the behavior expectations for patients on the BHU.

## Your Treatment Team

The patient is at the center of what we do. You are encouraged to:

- Discuss your needs, ideas, problems, concerns and goals.
- Provide complete and accurate information about your background
- Actively participate in your treatment. Patients may designate someone trusted to be part of their care team. Examples are family, friends, care managers, clergy, etc. The patient must sign a consent form for information to be shared. The cooperative participation of family/significant others in the overall treatment and discharge planning is valued.

## Team Members and Responsibilities

**Psychiatrist:** The Psychiatrist is the head of the treatment team, who assesses, diagnoses and treats mental health disorders. The Psychiatrist checks your progress and works with you and the team to decide on your treatment. The Psychiatrist collaborates with the treatment team daily on the plan of care. Weekly treatment team meetings are held with the patient to discuss the care plan.

**Psychiatric Social Worker:** Social workers will coordinate discharge plans to ensure a smooth transition from inpatient to community resources or outpatient care. Ensuring patients receive comprehensive care focused on addressing both their mental health needs and their broader psychosocial requirements. *The Psychiatric Social Worker will be the primary point of contact for the designated family member with whom the patient agreed to share health information.*

**Registered Nurse:** (RN - navy blue scrubs) Nurses work with you on the unit according to the treatment team care plan with medication administration, monitoring, safety and therapeutic one-to-one engagement.

**Patient Care Associates:** (PCA -burgundy scrubs) PCAs provide direct assistance to patients while supporting the nursing team on the unit.

**Behavioral Health Counselors:** (BHC) These counselors specialize in helping BHU patients deal with emotional challenges and provide direct support to patients.

**Activity Therapist:** These therapists use recreational and activity-based interventions to improve the physical, cognitive, emotional and social well-being of individuals with illnesses or disabilities.

**Pharmacist:** Pharmacists play a key role in collaborating with the Psychiatrist in the form of medications that best suit each patient. Pharmacists also work closely with other clinical personnel to safely treat BHU patients, monitoring dosages, side effects, therapeutic lab results, etc.

*Physical and occupational therapists, nutritionists, etc., are available on an as-needed basis based on the provider's clinical assessment.*

## **Our Services**

Our services and treatment options follow the best physical and psychiatric wellness practices, emphasizing the mind-body connection.

- Medication management and education
- Dietary education
- Group therapy
- Individual therapy
- Activity groups
- Journaling groups
- Guided relaxation
- Patient community meetings

## **Pastoral Care**

Our multi-faith department provides for the religious and spiritual needs of patients. Please inform a treatment team member of your faith-based request, and we will contact the Pastoral Care/Chaplain team to assist.

## **Security and Safety**

To ensure your safety while in our care on BHU, we follow several practices to keep everyone safe. Doors leading into the unit are locked, and you can only leave the unit upon discharge. On admission to the unit, your belongings will be reviewed, and non-permissible items will be sent home

or safely stored. The nursing team may remove additional items at their discretion if they feel they pose a risk to you or others. No plastic packing materials are allowed in the unit.

While you are on the unit, there may be times when you feel overwhelmed by your thoughts or feelings. Before they become overwhelming, we recommend you talk with staff, go to your room to decrease stimulation or request medication. If these interventions are not effective and you become physically threatening, staff may need to use de-escalation techniques to help you regain control.

### **Items Not Permitted During Your Hospital Stay**

The main goal of the inpatient unit is the safety and optimal recovery of our patients. Items not permitted on the behavioral health unit include:

- Sharp objects: scissors, nail clippers (can be used with nursing team approval and supervision), knives, needles/pins, razors and razor blades, pencil/makeup sharpeners.
- Belts, ropes, scarves, nylon stockings/pantyhose and knee highs, shoelaces, drawstrings of any kind (e.g., sweatshirts, sweatpants, jackets), bags with long handles or straps.
- Glass items: bottles, jars, mirrors and office supplies associated with danger risk (metal spiral notebooks, metal paper clips, letter openers, spring clips, tape dispensers, staplers).
- Some grooming items: coloring kits, hair removal products or chemicals, metal files, sharp hair accessories, nail polish/remover, flat or curling irons.
- Metal items: cans and lids (soda can, potato chip can lid, pull tabs).
- Toxic substances: alcohol or alcohol-based products such as mouthwash, nail polish/remover, aerosol cans, paints, glue.
- Tobacco and tobacco-related products: cigarettes including e-cigarettes, cigars, loose tobacco, chewing tobacco, rolling papers, pipes; flammable substances (lighter fluid, lighters, matches, fuel, paint thinner, flints).
- Electronics: cell phones, PDAs, pagers, Kindles, personal computers, iPads, AirPods, headphones and similar devices; cameras (film, digital, and video cameras, recording devices).

- Wallets, cash, checkbook, credit cards (should be held in our security safe)
- Medications/herbal supplements: Will be sent home or to the hospital pharmacy.
- Miscellaneous: plastic bags of any kind, jewelry chains. No outside food or beverage.

### **Suggested Items to Bring to Your Hospital Stay**

- Clothing (no drawstrings) and undergarments (no wired bras)
  - Patients who may be an elopement risk will wear a hospital gown for safety reasons.
  - Laundry can be managed on the unit.
- Slide-on shoes (no shoelaces)
- The hospital will provide toiletries, but if you need something specific, it will be stored at the Nurse's station.
- Disposable razors are supplied by the hospital and used with staff supervision.

### **BHU Routine**

The routine on the BHU is structured and easily followed. We have a unit timetable to help guide activities and services. Notable time for some activities are below.

#### **Meals and Snacks**

Breakfast: 7:30 a.m.

Lunch: 11:30 a.m.

Dinner: 4:30 p.m.

Snack time: 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

**Note:** Patients must complete menu selections to ensure their meals are within dietary restrictions.

**Medications:** Medications are dispensed as required or during general medication administration times:

Morning: 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Evening: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Night: 8:00 – 10:00 p.m.

**Safety rounds** are conducted every 15 minutes to ensure everyone is safe.

**Laundry:** Per Unit Schedule with the assistance of the BHCs/PCAs

**Lights out:** 10:30 p.m.

**Patient phones:** 845-348-7319; 845-348-7320 – Limit of 5 minutes per call.

**Nursing Station:** 845-348-7360; 845-348-7365

**Group time:** Per Unit Schedule

**Shower time:** Most showers are in the morning, but exceptions will be permitted with staff permission and supervision. We supply toiletries on BHU but may allow some safe personal grooming items with nursing and safety approval.

**Shaving:** There is a safety access period of two days on the unit before a patient can shave.

**Room/Bed:** Room assignments include considerations for compatibility and therapeutic reasons. Patients are not allowed to visit other patients/peers in their rooms.

**Dining/Public Spaces:** The BHU model works best in a communal setting. Our dining room is used for all meals, except for health and some social reasons. The dining room is locked after each meal. Other spaces are open to patients and are locked as appropriate.

**Food:** Patients are encouraged to adhere to mealtimes, as food is returned to the kitchen on a schedule. On infrequent occasions, we will save food on the unit. We do not want food poisoning. In addition, we have a unit microwave that is permissible for staff only to warm up meals.

**Smoking:** Patients are not allowed to smoke on BHU. Smoking materials, including cigarettes and e-cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco or tobacco in any form, lighters, and matches, will be removed upon admission, locked up and returned to you at discharge. As a practice, we discourage smoking for health reasons and will give you information on how to quit smoking. We have tobacco replacement therapy if a patient does not want to pursue quitting tobacco-related products.

**Physical Contact and Gestures:** Healthy boundaries are the hallmark of what we encourage in our program. Physical contact, flirtations, provocative behaviors and gestures are not permitted.

## **Discharge**

BHU is an acute unit with the goal of a short stay to stabilize our patients who actively participate in their discharge planning. Your psychiatrist, the head of the treatment team, will set the actual discharge date. The social worker assigned will assist with scheduling follow-up care and appointments for the patient. It is not unusual for patients to form relationships during their stay at BHU, and they may want to follow up on the relationships after discharge. We respectfully ask our discharge patients not to visit for at least six months after discharge.

## **Family And Visitation Information**

Visiting your loved one is a welcomed layer of support, but it must be orderly and safe during this time. Visits are held in a secure area, which is monitored to ensure the safety of patients, visitors and staff.

Visiting hours are daily: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Please ring the bell at the visitor entrance upon your arrival.

Two visitors, aged 18 or older, are permitted at one time. Patients and visitors must follow program rules to ensure safety and social courtesy. Visitors are not allowed to bring in food from outside during their visit. If visitation rules are not followed, future visits may be jeopardized.

Visitation guidelines are subject to change. Please refer to our website with up to date information.

[www.montefiorenyack.org/patients-visitors/visitor-resources](http://www.montefiorenyack.org/patients-visitors/visitor-resources)

## **Privacy And Confidentiality**

Your privacy is protected by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) provisions. Our staff are trained in this critical regulation and maintain our patient confidentiality. BHU patients are to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of others by refraining from going into other patients' rooms.

*Montefiore Nyack Hospital complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or age. Montefiore Nyack Hospital does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or age.*