

Safewards

Factsheet | July 2022



Safewards Program - 10 things we can do

Clear Mutual Expectations - clients and staff agree on behaviour that is expected when on the inpatient unit. This is then the standard for everyone.

Know Each Other - staff provide information about themselves that they are happy to share (favourite TV show, hobbies, pets). Clients are also encouraged to share these. This helps start chats and “breaks the ice” for everyone in the unit.

Soft Words - visual cues for staff about sensitive and respectful communication especially when declining requests from clients. Soft Words also encourages staff to reflect on the reason for declining requests.

Talk Down - posters for staff displaying the best ways of helping clients to calm down when they are upset, agitated or distressed. Staff also attend annual training in how to use these skills.

Bad News Mitigation - making sure that staff are aware when clients have or may receive bad news. If clients do receive bad news, make sure that they are offered support and a quiet place to express their feelings and be listened to by staff.

Mutual Help Meetings - regular meetings on the unit where clients and staff are encouraged to identify ways of helping and supporting each other.

Calm Down - a box of items that clients can use to feel calmer and more relaxed. These can be tried out on the unit with the help of staff.

Reassurance - events that happen on the mental health unit may cause anxiety or distress. After these events staff talk to clients as a group or one on one to make sure that clients have support and understand what has happened. Staff will also be more actively visible on the unit.

Positive Words - staff remind each other to use positive words about clients at handover and to focus on strengths. Staff also try to gain a better understanding of why some behaviour may be happening.

Discharge Messages - a display of positive and helpful messages written by clients and their carers before discharge. These messages of hope and support can be seen by everyone in the unit.

Working together to make inpatient mental health units safer for everyone

Does Safewards really work?

Mental Health Services in Tasmania have reviewed how it is working in Victoria and overseas. We have also looked at the research supporting the program.

Results show a positive effect over time.

Will it work for us?

We have consulted with staff and clients across our services and they think it will have a positive impact for everyone who takes part.

Will we do all 10 things?

A lot of the actions are for staff to do, and we also need you to take part, as well as carers or other support persons.

Together we will learn more about each of the things we can do, and decide what is most important to do first on each unit. We can then work together to put them in place.

Want to know more?

If you would like more information, have any questions or suggestions, talk with the Nurse in charge on your unit.

You can also contact the Safewards Project Officer on 03 6166 0648,

or visit the website:

www.safewards.net/model-diagram

The Tasmanian Health Service integrates acute, primary and community services. This integration has given service providers the flexibility to ensure people have the best services we can provide, as close as possible to where they live.

Statewide Mental Health Services deliver consumer centred services focused on improving health outcomes. Our services include inpatient facilities and community teams.

About Safewards

Safewards is a program that encourages staff and clients (including carers, family and support persons) to work together to make the ward safer for everyone. Safer means a calmer and more positive place.

Safewards uses 10 simple things that we, staff and clients, can do to decrease conflict.

Why is it important?

Sometimes because of conflict things happen on a mental health unit that can cause distress. This can lead to staff using ways of containing an event such as moving clients to a more secure unit, restraint or at times even seclusion.

Safewards aims to lessen the use of these methods by staff and clients working together to make the unit more peaceful, friendly, and therefore safer, for everyone.

How can I find out more?

Talk with the nurse in charge in your unit if you have any questions or would like more information.

Statewide Mental Health Service welcomes feedback from clients, carers, and family members to help us improve care. Talk to one of our team, fill in a consumer feedback form.



Department of Health
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