

SAMPLE SITTER GUIDELINES

The patient that you have been asked to “sit” with is being monitored because they are either a danger to themselves or others, or their behavior is unpredictable and requires that someone stay with them at all times. Your responsibilities are listed below. Please be sure that you ask the Nurse if you do not understand what these responsibilities mean. It is important that you understand your role and when to notify the unit Nurse.

READ THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO “SIT” WITH THE PATIENT.

1. ALWAYS get a report from the Nurse prior to “sitting” with the patient. Ask questions if you are not clear about the information that you are given.
2. Be sure to always position yourself in the room so that YOU are closest to the exit in case of emergency.
3. Always stay a safe distance from the patient, but not so far away that you cannot quickly intervene if you need to. This includes following the patient to the bathroom and standing at the door with it a few inches open so that you can monitor the patient’s activity.
4. If the patient is alert, it is fine for you to have a conversation with them. Do not reveal any personal information about yourself or attempt to answer their questions about their care or treatment course.
5. If the patient request to “take a walk” or “take a shower/bath”, be sure to get prior approval for this activity by the nursing staff.
6. If the patient wants to engage in an activity, i.e., drawing, playing cards, etc..., always check with the nursing staff first.
7. Look around the area where you are monitoring the patient and make sure there is nothing that the patient can readily harm themselves or others with. This may include wires, pencils/pens, string, plastic bags, medical equipment, etc...If you observe these items, alert the nursing staff to see if these items should be removed. You can never be TOO safe when monitoring the patient.
8. NEVER leave the patient alone. If you need to leave for any reason (to use the rest room, to get something to drink), contact the nursing staff so that they can provide a replacement during your absence.
9. If the patient gives you information that seems important, like: “I don’t feel safe”, “I feel like I want to hurt myself (or someone else), “I need to tell you something that I have never told anyone else”, etc..., IMMEDIATELY alert the nursing staff. Follow the nursing staff’s directions.
10. DO NOT get items that the patient may request unless you have been specifically directed to do so by the Nurse. This may include clothing, hygiene items, pens, pencils, hair pins, etc...Access to these items is limited due to the patient’s condition and should not be given to them.
11. If the patient becomes excessively agitated, alert the nursing staff IMMEDIATELY. They may be in need of medication or some other medical attention.

12. Should the patient attempt to use an article to harm themselves or someone else, IMMEDIATELY notify the Nurse. This may include the patient using a sheet, pillow case, plastic bag, belt, etc... to attempt to hang themselves or harm someone else.
13. If you feel threatened by the patient at any time, notify the Nurse IMMEDIATELY. It is important that you are kept safe, as well as the patient.
14. Be sure to document the patient's whereabouts and behavior every 15 minutes on the observation flow sheet.

(This is a SAMPLE ONLY. It may be modified for use by the organization to meet their needs. Provided to you by Quality Plus Solutions LLC (www.qualityplussolutions.com). Please contact us if you have questions or comments.