Copley Memorial Hospital
Policy & Procedure

Title: Code Armstrong: Response for
De-escalation of Threatening/Aggressive Persons
At Rush Copley Medical Center

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Purpose
- To provide a guideline for hospital staff to ensure immediate and proper response in the handling of interactions with persons displaying threatening and/or aggressive behaviors or requiring intervention which may result in physical contact and/or restraint.

- To outline the roles and responsibilities of the hospital Code Armstrong team and those individuals that may become part of a situation requiring interventional techniques.

Policy
Aggressive or threatening behavior will be addressed in a positive manner, attempting to deescalate the situation using verbal communication and specific listening techniques, respecting the individual's rights and liberties, while ensuring the safety of the Code Armstrong team, staff, patients and visitors.

Code Armstrong Team

Designated persons will participate on the Code Armstrong team and be required to successfully complete training in de-escalation and physical restraint. Education in these techniques as well as the legal aspects of the use of force and definitions of situations where force is warranted is designed by the Crisis Prevention Institute.

The Code Armstrong Team will at all times avoid injury while attempting to intervene with an aggressive or threatening person. If a person is suspected or known to have a weapon, staff will protect themselves and those in the immediate area. If such a situation should be encountered, the Aurora Police Department will be contacted immediately.
Refer to policy: Code Silver.

Education and Training

All clinical and direct patient care staff, will complete the hospital based de-escalation education annually, entitled De-Escalation, Code Armstrong, and Patient Restraint, available for review in Net Learning.

Code Armstrong team CPI training may be conducted by in-house trainers who have had instruction in non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

Documented CPI competency, while desirable, is not an absolute requirement to participate in de-escalation of a volatile situation in the absence of a trained staff member.

Procedure

1. Staff should maintain awareness of the signs and indicators of an escalating situation that may result in threatening and/or aggressive behavior. These signs and indicators may include elevated voice levels, profanity, aggressive body language, aggressive posture, distance between persons, and facial expressions.

2. As an event begins and if able to do so, have a co-worker alert your immediate supervisor of the situation. If deemed necessary, call a Code Armstrong by contacting the hospital switchboard operator on extension 3333.

3. Remain calm, stay engaged, and attempt to lower the emotional level of the situation. Do not take sides or attempt to understand what the issues are until the Code Armstrong team is present.

4. The Code Armstrong team should consist of:
   - 2 Members of the security staff
   - Nursing Administrative Supervisor or other available CPI trained staff
   - A fourth staff member, preferably a unit or department based leader, designated on scene by Security, to implement safety procedures as described below.

5. Safety procedures:
   - Isolation of the area in the vicinity of the encounter, including limiting traffic and spectators, and limiting transportation of patients
   - Close patient doors in the immediate vicinity
   - Assign staff to enter adjacent patient rooms to reassure and accompany patients while the de-escalation progresses
   - Remove items from the area that could be used as a weapon.

6. The Code team will introduce themselves to the person involved and will assume the role of facilitator to de-escalate the situation by applying behavioral de-escalation techniques.

7. Code team members not verbally engaged with the person will not surround him/her but will remain in the immediate area, being aware of the activities in the event intervention or take down actions are required.

8. Should interventional or physical take down using force be required, the minimum force necessary will be applied. Such action will be initiated upon the signal of the Code Armstrong team leader only.

9. Once the situation is resolved, Security will ask switchboard to announce "Code Armstrong (unit or area designation), all clear".

10. At the conclusion of the event, Security will prepare an occurrence report via the Midas incident reporting software, recording the details of the event for possible future use.