

Visitation Guidelines: Group

Our goal is to create a successful, appropriate environment for our patients to participate in activities generously donated by the community. **Groups must always check-in with the designated staff person at the Nursing Station of the unit**

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

Adherence to all guidelines presented by the VA staff, to include respecting the confidentiality of all patients and any contact precautions is expected. Voluntary Service reserves the right to terminate a volunteer or group for any of the following reasons: *Children under 14, inappropriate behavior, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, negative attitudes, poor customer service, taking government property, violating patient confidentiality, taking pictures without authorization.*

ANIMALS

Only certified therapy dogs and certified service dogs are permitted with pre-approval.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Requests to take photos with patients must be approved with Public Affairs prior to the visit. Signed patient consent forms are required.

MEDIA

Both the Hospital Director and Public Affairs must review any media requests at least one week prior to the event date.

PARKING

Parking is available in any legal spot not otherwise designated with specific space or parking lot signage.

FOOD SAFETY

Food distribution must be approved by Voluntary Service and Recreation Therapy prior to the event. Only bring enough food to serve the number of patients on the unit of the pre-approved event. Clinicians review and approve patients attending activities for dietary guidelines, special dietary and safety restrictions, allergies, and other medical conditions that may not be obvious to guests. Patient activities are only open to the designated patients/unit for which the event is approved. Patients from other units should not be invited to activities unless previously cleared by the Recreation Therapy or Nursing staff. Please do not take food to patients in other areas of the hospital.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol is never permitted at any activity at VA Puget Sound Health Care System coordinated by Recreation Therapy or Voluntary Service.

AGE LIMIT

Children under 14 may not visit inpatients.

INFECTION CONTROL

If you are not feeling well, do not visit the inpatient units. Use the hand sanitizers BEFORE entering and AFTER leaving each patient room.

GIFTS

Review any distribution items with Voluntary Service when scheduling your visit! If you and the nursing staff are unable to locate a particular hospitalized Veteran at the time of your visit, please leave their card/gift with the charge nurse.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Only pre-packaged, store-bought food items may be accepted. Any food distributions must be pre-approved with the Charge Nurse on the unit.

REPORT

Remember to report your hours using the donation/activity sheet that should have been provided; similarly, if you provided gifts to patients, please complete the donation form. If you did not receive these forms, please e-mail Voluntary Service (PUGVoluntaryService@va.gov).

When in units with Veteran patients please observe the following:

CHECK-IN

Nurse station staff will know which rooms to NOT visit. Make sure any gift you may be bringing is appropriate and safe; for example, poinsettias are not allowed on the spinal cord injury unit – DO NOT ENTER any rooms marked as “isolation” or listing anything other than “Standard Precautions” without guidance from clinical staff.

VOLUME

Keep your voice low – loud or boisterous talking can be disturbing to patients. Do NOT wake a patient if they are sleeping; just leave them their card/gift. If the patient does not respond, they may be too sick or tired, so just move on to the next Veteran.

KNOCK-TALK-WALK

Knock and announce your name before walking into a room. Try to visit with each patient as you give them a card, gift or other well wishes. Ask them how they are; tell them who you are and what organization you represent.

PATIENT PRIVACY

Protect Patient Privacy and Confidentiality! While we want you to get to know the patients during your brief visit, please keep their names and personal information confidential when talking about your visit afterwards. Due to patient privacy laws, no photos or voice recordings of patients are permitted.

EMERGENCY

If there is a medical emergency that occurs during your visit, pull the call bell and inform staff nearby.