

NUR 323: MILIEU ASSESSMENT

Clinical Area Assessment Tool for Milieu Project

Agency:

Unit :

Date of Assessment:

Student:

Milieu Assessment:

The environment feels appropriate for mental health patients in a general sense in that it contributes to a calm and orderly atmosphere. However, it also seems too bland or stifling for children -- it looks and feels institutional in a way that may prevent children from feeling at ease.

Physical Layout:

The nurse's station is near the entrance of the unit. The unit is organized in the form of hallways moving in either direction, with patient rooms toward the end of each hall and activity areas near the nurse's station. Unit is designed for the segregation of patients by age and gender, although currently young children are being placed in rooms near older adolescent females. The outside activity area is fenced in, and features both pavement and a grass area. Activity rooms seem bare, and contain little other than a mounted TV, chairs, and desk for staff.

Lighting, color, décor:

The walls are beige throughout most of the unit. In the main hallway, the flooring appears to be laminate in a woodgrain pattern. In activity rooms, the floor is tile. I did not notice any décor on the unit apart from a poster in one of the activity rooms and drawings on dry erase boards. Lighting was dim in the common areas, and provided by overhead fluorescent bulbs in thick plastic covers.

Pace, activity level:

Indoors, the pace is mostly slow and orderly. Hallways do not have much traffic between regimented group movements. The younger children in groups are energetic at times. During outside activity time, many clients are actively playing.

Emotional atmosphere:

The general vibe is best described as "muted." The environment feels calm and controlled, but not relaxing - something like being in a library with occasional disruptions.

Factors that are contributing to the emotional atmosphere:

Contributing factors include low ambient noise, subdued color scheme, low lighting, and structured activity times.

Typical clients who use this service:

Age: (average and range)

Gender:

Cultures:

Socioeconomic status:

Education level:

Reading ability:

Varies with age. Adolescent clients appear to read and write at an appropriate level for their age.

Communication ability:

All clients observed speak fluent, coherent English. With the exception of the younger children, all clients could write their goals for the day in English.

Reasons for using this agency/service?

In all reviewed client cases, the impetus for admission was either a risk to themselves (particularly suicidal ideation) or to others.

What could a nurse do to improve the milieu today on this unit? (Use extra pages if necessary)

My impression is that the suboptimal aspects of this unit's milieu, for the most part, would require the approval of administration to substantially alter. The lack of décor on the unit, for instance, is likely the result of policy that a nurse cannot unilaterally override. However, assuming that administration would approve, a nurse could implement a wall-mounted dry erase art board in a common area where clients could draw pictures or write daily affirmations under nurse supervision. Music played at a low volume in common areas might also help make the environment feel less institutional.

What needs are being focused on by the staff? (Physical, vocational, social, spiritual, emotional, etc.)

My observation was that staff is involved in addressing the physical, social, and emotional needs of clients. Nursing staff is available 24 hours a day. Dietary and hygiene needs are also met. Clients are given the opportunity to get staff-monitored exercise outside when weather permits, and physical safety of clients is a high priority. It is also my understanding that The Pavilion Foundation also has a school that provides for the educational needs of children and adolescents, which, for these age groups, would be analogous to meeting vocational needs. The group regimen dynamic of the unit encourages social interaction between clients, and staff is able to offer emotional support to distressed clients. The Pavilion does utilize counselors in its interdisciplinary team, and addressing many aspects of spiritual needs would fall under their purview. Furthermore, to practice nursing holistically would include planning to address the spiritual needs of clients. With specific regard to religion, it was not clear what accommodations are made for clients – for instance, if they are able to view services remotely or have visits from members of their church.

Honor Code: "I have neither given nor receive, nor will I tolerate others' use of unauthorized aid".

Signature  Date: 6/10/20

Instructor Comments:

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