

# Bringing Safety to Life: Staff Safety Initiatives at a State Psychiatric Hospital



**Eastern State Hospital**

MANAGED BY UK HEALTHCARE

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## BACKGROUND

Workplace violence is a pervasive and pressing concern in healthcare settings, particularly in psychiatric hospitals and units. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the incidence rate of nonfatal intentional injury by other person is nearly 10 times higher in psychiatric hospitals compared to all hospitals (124.9 versus 12.8 per 10,000 full-time workers) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Furthermore, the risk of workplace violence is highest in psychiatric hospitals and rehabilitation units, where assaults resulting in moderate or severe injuries are most common (Doucette, 2023).

Between 2019 and 2020, violence-related workplace injuries among nurses increased by 32.9%, with nonfatal injuries and illnesses resulting in days off work rising by 291% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). Moreover, on average, two nurses are assaulted every hour, according to a Press Ganey analysis (Doucette, 2023).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project was to establish a comprehensive and proactive framework for managing patient-to-staff aggression events and ensuring the safety and well-being of all staff members involved in direct patient care.

## INITIATIVES

- Creation of a front-line staff-driven advisory council
- Development of a policy that outlines overall safety program and various initiatives, training, and measures
- Annual staff safety survey regarding patient-to-staff assault
- Creation of Initiatives to address prevention and support: post-aggression timeout, post-aggression leadership follow-up, revitalization of Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression, emergency assault review, and patient-to-staff aggression incident report
- Collection of Patient to Staff Assault rate and Patient to Patient Assault rate

	FY23	FYTD	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24
Total # of Aggressive Events	13.58	16.70	21	16	12	28	22	10
# of Staff Assaulted	16.50	21.00	22	19	12	42	27	12
# of Injuries	10.00	7.50	13	7	1	16	9	4
# of Major Injuries	0.00	0.10	0	0	0	0	0	1
Type II Violence Assault Rate	0.14	0.16	0.20	0.15	0.11	0.27	0.19	0.09
# of EAR's Conducted	3	2.00	1	1	2	4	4	1
Patient to Patient Assault Rate	0.34	0.23	0.22	0.14	0.22	0.36	0.25	0.16

## RESULTS

Staff safety initiatives yielded significant improvements across several key areas. Specifically, improved data collection and tracking, enabling us to better understand the nature and scope of patient-to-staff aggression incidents. Moreover, staff are now provided with a break-off unit after experiencing type II violence. Additionally, ESH achieved 100% leadership follow-up, ensuring that all staff members receive prompt and supportive responses after being involved in aggressive incidents. The revamped DASA program has been designed to provide unique interventions tailored to the individual risk assessment tool, providing a more effective and targeted approach to managing patient aggression. Finally, our 2023 annual staff safety survey results show a significant improvement from the previous year, indicating a positive impact on staff safety, well-being, and ESH culture.

## IMPLICATIONS

By reducing the risk of physical and emotional harm to staff, hospitals can improve morale, reduce turnover rates, and increase job satisfaction, ultimately leading to better patient care and outcomes. Additionally, a safer work environment can also lead to improved patient safety, as staff who feel supported and protected are more likely to be focused on providing high-quality care. Furthermore, reducing the risk of staff injury can also lead to significant cost savings for the hospital.

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