

# Welcome to Psychiatric Emergency Services Unit (PESU)

**A handbook created by staff and patients of PESU at Toronto  
Western Hospital**

Read this handbook to learn about:

- The PESU treatment team
- What happens when you first enter the PESU
- Questions about being in the PESU
- Where to find more information



The Psychiatric Emergency Services Unit (PESU) is located in the Toronto Western Hospital Emergency Department and is part of the University Health Network. The PESU is a safe and secure place that provides services to people having a mental health crisis. The PESU can have up to 6 patients at a time.

## **Where to find us**

Toronto Western Hospital  
399 Bathurst Street, Toronto, ON M5T 2S8

Important phone numbers

Nursing station: 416 603 5751

Patient phone: 416 603 5800 ext. 2028

See [www.uhn.ca/corporate/Directions](http://www.uhn.ca/corporate/Directions) for maps and directions.

## **My treatment team**

During your stay in PESU, you will work with a team of health professionals. Here is what they do.

**Staff Psychiatrist:** A doctor who assesses patients and treats mental illness. This doctor works with you and the team to choose your treatment.

**Psychiatry Resident:** A medical doctor training in Psychiatry who works with the staff psychiatrist to assess patients and make decisions about your care.

**Emergency Medical Doctor:** A doctor who checks you for any injuries or illnesses.

**Registered Nurse:** A nurse with mental health training who:

- asks you questions about why you are in the emergency department
- gives you medicine
- gets you ready to take tests
- checks on you often

**Crisis Clinician:** A mental health practitioner who can give you information about community resources and the skills you need to help you deal with a mental health crisis. The clinician also assesses patients, liaises with the emergency room doctor and psychiatric team.

**Students:** University Health Network is a teaching hospital. This means there are students from many professions (such as, nursing, social work, or medicine) who may be helping with your care. All students are closely supervised and work with a mentor, such as a doctor or nurse.

## About the Mental Health Act

PESU is considered a psychiatric facility under the *Mental Health Act*. Under the *Mental Health Act* of Ontario (1990), there are specific hospitals (such as the University Health Network) which are set up to assess and treat people living with mental illness.

You may be here **voluntarily**. This means:

- you chose to come to PESU
- you are able to make decisions about how you would like to get treatment
- you agreed to stay in the hospital after seeing a doctor

Sometimes a doctor or Justice of the Peace (judge) requests that a person is assessed at a mental health facility such as this one. In some cases you may be at the hospital **involuntarily**.

This means:

- you did not choose to come to PESU
- a doctor or judge may have ordered you to stay in the hospital to be assessed by a psychiatric team
- you cannot leave until the doctor believes it is safe for you to leave

## Why we search your belongings

Our staff checks each patient that arrives in PESU. Any items you have that could be used to hurt yourself, other patients, staff or visitors must be stored in the nursing station or with security. These items include sharp objects, scissors, glass, lighters, matches, medication, cords. All other items are stored in lockers in the care area.

The staff carefully make a note of all items collected for safety. When you leave PESU, your items are returned to you. If you are transferred to another unit or hospital, all of your belongings will go with you.

Safety checks and storing items that could hurt others are just a few of the many ways we make sure you, other patients, staff, and visitors stay safe. For more information please ask any member of the team. UHN is not responsible for missing or damaged items.

## **Triggers and coping skills**

Many situations can lead to a mental health crisis. Things that can lead to a crisis are called triggers. Please tell the staff if you know any of your triggers. Many people have ways to cope with a crisis. For example, they do deep breathing exercises. If you know your coping method, please tell the staff so they can help you. (See My Recovery Empowerment Record on page 10).

Sometimes in PESU patients may have a mental health crisis and other team members, including security, may come to the unit. When that happens, wait in your room until the crisis is over.

## **Staying safe**

Each room in PESU has a red panic strip along the wall. The panic strip is for staff to alert other team members when help is needed. The staff also wear personal panic alarms to quickly call for help.

Each patient room in PESU and the lounge area has a camera to make sure that all patients, staff and visitors stay safe. The cameras are connected to screens inside the PESU nursing station and the security office. Each camera can be turned off for privacy (for example, when a patient is changing).



## Questions you might have

### **How long do I have to wait to be seen?**

After being seen by the emergency room doctor you may or may not need to see a psychiatrist.

### **When are meal times?**

Only patients who are admitted or staying overnight will receive a meal tray. Patients awaiting assessment will receive a light snack at meal times. Meals are delivered 3 times a day:

Breakfast	8:00 am
Lunch	12:00 pm
Dinner	5:00 pm

Tell your nurse:

- If you are not allowed to eat certain foods (such as sugar or salt)
- Which foods you like to eat
- If you have any food allergies (such as peanuts)

A staff member will hand out the food trays once they arrive on the unit. Snacks or drinks such as juice, milk, tea, instant coffee, sandwiches, and biscuits are often available.

You can also ask a family member or friend to bring you food.

### **Can I use my cellphone on the unit?**

Using cameras and video recording on your cell phone is not allowed in PESU or UHN. Cell phones to call or text may be allowed on a case by case basis at the discretion of staff. Charges and cords are not allowed in the patient care area but staff can charge the phone for patients in the team station.

### **What if I want to use a phone?**

If you need to make a phone call, you can ask one of our staff for our patient phone. They will plug in a phone in the lounge. You can make free local calls by pressing "9" before dialing the phone number. This phone does not make long distance calls. The phone is put out in the morning and removed by 11:00 pm.



### **What if friends or family want to call me?**

Your family and friends can call you directly by dialing 416 603 5800 and then the four digit extension 2028 to speak with you in the PESU unit or the extension 5751 to reach the nursing station.

### **What if I need an interpreter?**

If you prefer to use a language other than English, UHN offers free interpretation in person and over the phone all day and all week. Please speak with the nurse if you need this service.

### **Why is the door locked?**

PESU has locks on its doors to keep patients, staff, and visitors safe. Staff members have to swipe their security cards to open the doors. Visitors may speak with the nursing station by using the intercom found by the main PESU door. If the unit is busy, there may be a short wait until someone answers the intercom.

### **Can I have visitors?**

Since we are always open, visitors may come at any time.

### **As a patient on our unit, you may have up to 2 visitors at a time.**

You can also refuse to see someone who has come to visit you. If you do not want visitors or callers to know you are in the hospital, please tell your nurse.

Sometimes visitors may be asked to leave if the unit gets too crowded or for other safety reasons.

### **What do visitors need to know?**

All visitors should follow the hospital's rules and remember that patients need rest and quiet. If a visitor does not follow the rules they will be asked to leave the hospital.

All visitors must check in with staff and report what they are bringing to the patient. Some items may be kept in our nursing station during the visit.

A visitor must not give any patients:

- objects with sharp or pointed edges
- medicine (even herbal remedies)
- recording devices
- any other item that may make others unsafe

### **How can a visitor help me?**

A visitor can help you with your everyday needs, especially if you must stay in our unit. You may want your visitors to take your valuables home or bring you outside food. To keep the area clean, we cannot refrigerate food.

### **Is there a television?**

Yes, there is a shared television in the patients' lounge.

### **How do I stay safe in the hospital?**

Patient safety is our main goal at Toronto Western Hospital. Below are ways you can work with the team to keep yourself safe.

## **Hand hygiene**

Wash your hands well and often during your stay in the hospital to help you stay safe by stopping the spread of germs.

## **Positive patient identification (PPID)**

Before giving you medicine or doing a test, staff must check your identity with your name and date of birth. You can help us by wearing your wristband at all times on the unit. Staff members will ask to see your ID band often.



## **Stopping falls**

Falls in the hospital can lead to serious injury. You can help stop falls by not leaning on tray tables and asking for help if you feel dizzy or weak.

## **Can I smoke in the hospital?**

You cannot smoke in the hospital. Staff can give you nicotine replacements such as a patch, gum or an inhaler.

## **Can I give you feedback about my stay?**

Yes, you can give feedback to any team member or call the Patient Relations Department at 416 340 4907.

## **Where can I find more information about my illness?**

In PESU we have many brochures available on mental illness. Ask the staff for these brochures and any information you need.

### **For more information visit:**

Paul E. Helliwell Patient and Family Library

Location: TWH Main Atrium – West Wing (Rm 1-421)

Hours: 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Phone: 416 603 6277

Email: [twpfl@uhn.ca](mailto:twpfl@uhn.ca)

Ask our Librarian for help finding reliable information in different languages for you or your and family.

## My recovery empowerment record

Please use this page to write down how you cope with a crisis (see page 5) and to remember other important information.

PESU Recovery Empowerment Card	
Main support	Phone numbers
Family, friends and others	
Psychiatrist	Family doctor
Case Manager or Worker	
How I cope best	

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