Crisis and Chaos- Counseling in Acute Care Settings

The Basic Information

**What is Acute Care?**

Psychiatric Acute Care Hospitals are facilities where a patient will receive active but short-term emergency treatment for a severe mental health issue.

* Acute Care settings are 24 hour-care that focuses on safety and medication stabilization
* Average length of stay ranges from 3-10 days with a target of 5-7 days.
* It’s the highest tier for mental health aka Emergency Room for Mental Health Care

**Admission Requirements**

* Recent Suicide Attempt
* Recent threats to harm others, aggressive behaviors that risk safety and homicide ideations
* Recent self-harm or self-mutilation
* Hallucinations or psychotic or bizarre behaviors

**Discharge Requirements**

* Patient no longer displays imminent danger to self or others
* Patient can be treated safely at a less restrictive level of care
* Patient has reached treatment goals and objectives
* Safety plan is in place and documented
* POA for continued care
  + The Basic Tiers to Mental Health Care
* AcuteCare
* PRTF/Long term care
* PHP/IOP
* Out-Patient/Private Practice

**Acute Care Hospital Staff**

Inpatient treatment is the most intensive level of care and requires 24-hour secure and protected environment which means locked doors and staff around the clock. Hospitals are required to have a certain number of staff to patients. The ratio will depend on the acuteity of the population.

**Who works in an Acute Care setting?**

Direct Care Staff include

* Psychiatric Doctors
* Medical Doctors
* Corner
* Nurse Practitioners
* RNs and LPN
* Social Workers and Licensed Professional Counselors
* Medical Technicians

Counselor Might Expect

Timeline of a patient who enters the hospital

1. Admission Department will evaluate patient for appropriateness of the care
2. Patient will be admitted to the unit and personal items check in or stored for safety
3. Medical Doctor and Psychiatrist will evaluate
4. Corner will evaluate
5. Charge nurse will evaluate and acclimate patient to the unit
6. Counselor will begin the process with

* PSA
* Securing consents
* Treatment planning- long and short-term goals
* Session rounds usually 3 in total
* Lead groups (all disciplines conduct groups)
* Family session
* Treatment Team
* Discharge planning including securing appointments for medication and counseling as well as housing and transportation
* Safety planning

Depending on the size of the hospital and staffing counselor can expect to have a caseload of no less than 6 patients and usually no more than 14.

Revolving Door for the chronically ill patient is a major issue. Readmission rates are common and usually occur within 30 days and 1 year. Hospitals range from 15% to 35% readmission.