
To: All clinical staff working in Canberra Health Services

**Subject: Seclusion of persons detained under the
*Mental Health Act 2015***

Date: 28 February 2024

In response to a request for clarification in relation to the provisions for seclusion under the *Mental Health Act (2015)*, the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist wishes to remind all clinical staff working in Canberra Health Services of the following:

1. Seclusion is a last-resort restrictive intervention that can have traumatic effects on consumers and their supporters and should only be used when all efforts at de-escalation, especially non-pharmacological, have been tried without success.
2. As referenced in the Chief Psychiatrist's Mental Health (Use of Seclusion) Guidelines 2022 (No 1), seclusion is defined as *confinement in any room or area in which a consumer is left alone and cannot freely exit* and includes de-escalation and high dependency areas. Staff should ensure that if the staff member leaves a patient alone in any area, that doors are unlocked or left open in circumstances where there is no need to seclude the consumer.
3. Every incident of seclusion must be appropriately authorised and reported and be accompanied by a debriefing and evaluation process, as per the Canberra Health Services Procedure -Seclusion of Persons Detained under the Mental Health Act 2015.

For any queries, please contact the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist at ChiefPsychiatrist@act.gov.au .



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