

Collaborative care planning

Goal:

Ensure a person-centred and safe plan.

Actions:

- › Include the person in developing their care plan.
- › Coordinate with multidisciplinary team members.
- › Identify triggers and coping strategies with the person.
- › Document goals and strategies in plain language.
- › Review the plan daily and adapt as needed.

Harm reduction focus

Goal:

Reduce risk and promote safety.

Actions:

- › Provide factual, non-judgemental information about substances.
- › Identify safer ways to use if person continues use.
- › Offer practical supports (hydration, nutrition, sleep hygiene).
- › Monitor for potential interactions with medications.
- › Encourage person-led strategies for managing cravings or triggers.

Build rapport and support

Goal:

Strengthen therapeutic relationships.

Actions:

- › Show empathy and genuine interest in the person's story.
- › Maintain consistency in staff interactions.
- › Use humour and warmth appropriately to ease tension.
- › Recognise small achievements or improvements.
- › Offer ongoing emotional and practical support during admission.

Practical strategies for the ward



Early engagement

Goal:

Build trust and gather essential information.

Actions:

- › Introduce yourself and your role clearly.
- › Ask about recent substance use in a non-judgemental way.
- › Listen actively and reflect back what you hear.
- › Explore the person's goals for admission.
- › Document observations and preferences.

Anticipate withdrawal

Goal:

Prevent complications and discomfort.

Actions:

- › Screen for withdrawal risk on admission using standardised tools.
- › Develop an individualised care plan with cultural and medical input.
- › Review current medications that may influence withdrawal.
- › Monitor vital signs and withdrawal scores regularly.
- › Involve the person in planning symptom relief.

De-escalation strategies

Goal:

Reduce distress and prevent crises.

Actions:

- › Identify early signs of agitation or distress.
- › Offer calming techniques (deep breathing, quiet space, grounding).
- › Use clear, calm, and non-threatening language.
- › Provide choices to increase sense of control.
- › Involve colleagues if safety is at risk, using a supportive approach.

Normalise choice

Goal:

Minimise restrictive practices and encourage people to be empowered.

Actions:

- › Explain rules and procedures clearly.
- › Offer alternatives to restrictive interventions where safe.
- › Encourage participation in daily decisions.
- › Validate feelings and experiences, even when setting limits.
- › Reinforce positive behaviours with recognition and encouragement.