

Guidance About Emergencies for Caregivers

ATTEND TO SAFETY ISSUES

How can the person in crisis, staff, other residents and the environment be kept safe?

- Use existing successful strategies to manage escalating behaviours
- Can the person with developmental disabilities (DD) be safely contained in a quiet, safe place?
- What changes can be made in his/her environment to make him/her, other people, and the environment safe?
- Is there “as needed” or PRN medication that generally helps the person, and that can safely be given?
- Physical restraint is against policy, and not a legal option in group homes

KEEP IN MIND

- Person with DD and caregiver preferences in decision-making process
- Attend to uniqueness of the person with DD

POINT OUT

- Any possible medical symptoms that family/staff may have noticed, for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Department (ED) staff
- How the person typically communicates pain and distress

IF SENDING THE PERSON WITH DD TO EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OR CALLING 911:

- Complete and send Essential Information for Emergency Department (ED)
- Attach list of all **current medications** from Medication Administration Record (MAR) or pharmacy list and bring medications
- **If PRN medication** is already part of the behavioural management, consider whether an **additional PRN** would assist the person with DD prior to going to the ED
- Consider bringing photos or video showing how this person acts when calm and not calm

WHEN CONTACTING 911

- Explain that the person has a developmental disability
- Alert EMS staff to any special needs, for example:
 - Best way to communicate
 - Importance of caregiver presence to help the person feel safe and comfortable
 - Sensitivity to sensory issues (e.g., noise, lights, textures, personal space)
 - Sensitivity to restraints
 - Reaction of the person with DD to uniformed police, and other people in uniforms or strangers

PATIENT COMFORT PACKAGE FOR ED/HOSPITAL VISITS

Encourage patient/caregivers to bring:

- Comforters (e.g., security blanket, stuffed animal, favourite book, photos)
- Favourite food/drink and snacks (the wait can be long and food may be limited)
- Communication strategies that work (communication aids)
- Someone who knows the person well and knows how hospitals work
- Ways (e.g., photos - video/digital) to illustrate what the person with DD is usually like
- Explanation about how hospitals work (social story appropriate for the person’s developmental level)

Bring all medications for the next 12 hours as ED will not dispense regular medications.