

What to do???

1. Once you have conducted a mental state assessment and believe the person warrants hospitalisation, whether formally or informally, remember that the least restrictive alternative is important and is the basis for the Mental Health Act 1996 legislation.
2. The following may help when having to determine what to do when a patient warrants further assessment/hospitalisation:
 - ◆ Ensure that your assessment is based on the patient's history. This includes family, other GPs, police, community workers, mental health history etc. If you require any additional assistance in determining the patient's mental state, call the Mental Health Helpline 1800 332 388 and discuss this with a clinician. If determined between the clinician and yourself, mental health crisis workers may attend to assess the client before hospitalisation is determined and assist with transporting and safety requirements.
 - ◆ If there is a level of risk to others then police may need to be called.
 - ◆ Check the route of transportation to ensure that the patient makes it to the assessment centre. If the patient is formal (when you impose authority under the Mental Health Act 1996), then safe transport is important. If safety is an issue Tasmania Police will transport. If the patient is case managed their case manager may be able to assist. If you are unsure of this, contact the Mental Health Helpline 1800 332 388. If the patient is physically unwell or overmedicated then ambulance transport is indicated with or without police escort. (Police will not transport a patient who is overmedicated).
 - ◆ Notify the ED doctors (dedicated GP line 6222 6660) of the patient's arrival and circumstances along with a written letter that is either with the patient or faxed to ED - fax number 6222 8919.
 - ◆ Notify the Liaison Psychiatry team or Psychiatric Registrar (if after hours), of the patient and their symptoms/circumstances and history.
3. Remember if you are sending a patient to the Assessment Centre involuntarily with an Initial Order completed, you are required to give them and/or their person responsible a statement of their legal rights. ("Your Rights Under the Mental Health Act 1996" – See Section 10)

Disclaimer: The above tips are aimed to assist the GP when dealing with a patient in a mental health emergency. These tips are variable and will not work for all patients that present. It remains the responsibility of the GP and their judgment at the time of consultation regarding the handling of the patient in a mental health crisis.
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