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The aim of the policy is to provide all staff of Oxford Psychiatry Group with the expected standards of practice in the promotion of privacy, dignity and respect, which affects all healthcare providers and users. Oxford Psychiatry Group is committed to providing high quality care to all healthcare users at all times. Responsibility for protecting healthcare users' privacy, dignity and respect does not lie with one individual or group but with all staff at every level.

Respecting privacy and dignity is not an addition to care provision, but an integral part of high-quality care.

Definitions in Accordance with this Policy:

Privacy refers to, “freedom from intrusion and embarrassment and relates to all Information and practice that is personal or sensitive in nature to an individual.

Privacy is a key principle, which underpins human dignity, and remains a basic human right and the reasonable expectation of every person.”

Dignity, “is concerned with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the worth or value of themselves and others. To treat someone with dignity is to treat them as being of worth, in a way that is respectful of them as valued individuals, being of equal value and worth irrespective of differences such as age, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, social background, health or marital status, disability, religion or political conviction.”

Respect, “is positive regard shown to a person as a human being as an individual, by others, and demonstrated as courtesy, good communication, taking time and equal access.”

Privacy, dignity and respect are built into the care delivered as well as the environment in which it is delivered. Staff should deal sensitively with the various circumstances in which privacy, dignity and respect may be infringed. However, in all areas of this policy, clinical emergency should be given priority.

Objectives

1. This policy is to be applied to all staff in order to meet individual need by recognising and preventing barriers to care. These barriers can be related to stereotyping and stigma associated with age, ethnicity, disability, faith, sexual orientation and gender.
2. All staff should, at all times, treat patients, their relatives and/or carers in a manner that makes them feel valued and respected and act in a way that maintains their privacy, dignity and respect.
3. All patients should receive care in a manner which recognises their individual values, beliefs and personal relationships. The personal space of healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers should be respected at all times and likewise staff should expect healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers to grant them the same courtesy.

4. All patients should be cared for in an environment that actively promotes their privacy, dignity and respect.
5. All patient information is confidential. Specifically, all information about diagnosis and care will, in the first instance, be discussed with the patient or their legal guardian as privately as possible. This information will only be shared with others following the agreement of the patient. However, while it is important that a patient's right to confidentiality is respected, it is also important to ensure that this does not result in a failure to provide healthcare users with the appropriate care.

Roles and Responsibilities when working with Interpreters

Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR Ref: access, use and handling of patient data

6. Within care settings, private and accessible rooms should be available for healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers to discuss their concerns with each other staff.

Standards of Practice

- Our staff should care for individuals in a smoke free, clean, safe, accessible and welcoming environment that actively promotes and maintains individuals' rights.
- Personal space should be respected and protected. Disturbances and interruptions to healthcare users should be minimised.
- Staff should avoid displaying healthcare users' personal information in public areas, unless this information is required for maintaining and promoting the healthcare users' safety.
- The privacy, dignity and respect of patients should be maintained at all times, through the effective use of private rooms, curtains, screens, blankets and appropriate clothing.
- Consideration should be made to minimise offensive odours and unsightly stains
- Staff should ensure that patients feel valued and do not experience any negative or offensive behaviour. We should ensure that they are positively promoting equality and diversity.
- The preferred name which the healthcare user wishes to be known should be determined and recorded.
- Staff should be aware of the possible negative effect of non-verbal communication/body language and gestures.
- Staff should be aware of the needs of patients for whom English is not their first language.
- Patients physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs should be determined and regularly reviewed.
- Staff should be aware of patient sensitivities about personal contact/touch and personal boundaries. These issues might arise as a result of gender, culture and ethnicity.
- Staff should introduce themselves on initial contact with patients and/or carers, stating their names and roles.
- All communication between staff and healthcare users should be in a manner that displays respect for their individuality.
- Staff should ensure that they are aware of the communication needs of patients and are able to ensure that any communication is understood.
- Clear explanation should be given to the patient by the appropriate staff member, before any action or procedure is commenced.

- Staff should also restrict conversations involving their own personal information to non-clinical areas.
- Any written information regarding healthcare users (e.g. patient notes) should be treated with privacy and respect, with high regard to confidentiality.
- Staff should clearly identify themselves and/or make their presence known before entering screened areas or rooms.

Training and Awareness

The Board is responsible for ensuring that staff receive the following in order to support the delivery of this policy. It is the responsibility of the line managers to ensure that their staff have access to the following:

- Induction Programme
- Clinical Governance
- Equality and Diversity Awareness Sessions

Compliance Statement (August 2025): This policy has been reviewed and updated to comply with current UK legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 (as amended), Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, Mental Capacity Act 2005 (as amended), and the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, as well as the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulatory guidelines.

