

PSYCHIATRIC WARD

SIGHTS

General Ward: (hospital-like hallways with plain walls and flooring, double doors between wards with security pads for exiting, rooms with nameplates (laundry room, medication room, therapy room, cafeteria, etc.), a common "day" room (magazine and books on a shelf, tables and chairs, games), wheelchairs, orderlies checking on patients and monitoring them, nurses and doctors making the rounds and distributing medications, security personnel walking the ward or working out of security stations, bubble mirrors at hallway intersections so personnel can see down each hallway, trays with paper medication cups holding pills, locked doors, secured drawers and cupboards, a crisis stabilization unit for emergencies, patients wearing color-coded wrist bands that indicate possible risk factors (a history of assault, an eating disorder, a flight risk) with a scannable code containing information about medication, meals served with plastic utensils, animals brought in for supervised pet therapy sessions, a basic fitness room and outside recreational area that can be utilized, personal counseling sessions)

Patient Rooms: Doors with a small window insert, covered lights (with a dim setting for overnight monitoring purposes), a hospital bed (with a plastic mattress cover, white sheets, blanket, and padded restraints if necessary), a basic set of drawers and a desk, journal books with no spiral bindings, extra thick pencils that cannot be broken and used to harm oneself, heavy curtains pulled across a secured window, a bathroom (shower, tiled floors, a sink and mirror, a toilet, some may also have bubble mirrors for monitoring high risk patients), orderlies searching drawers for contraband or dangerous materials, patients being checked on the first few nights with a flashlight or woken up by a nurse with a needle as she takes blood for testing

SOUNDS

Doors opening and closing, fists banging on doors, echoing footsteps, a squeaky laundry cart being pushed down the hall, the beeps of monitoring equipment, the exhale of a blood pressure cuff, a plastic mattress cover crinkling as one shifts at bedtime, buzzing florescent lights, people (talking to themselves, humming, singing, muttering, crying or screaming), arguments between patients, music used to calm patients during certain sessions (like art therapy), the whisper of cloth (if shoes are not allowed on a ward), air conditioning or heaters that click and rattle, coughing, codes being called over a speaker system, the calming voice of a nurse, orderly or therapist, patients making repetitive noises (throat clearing, clicking, or swearing) associated with certain disorders, secure doors opening with a click as a nurse swipes an access card over a reader

SMELLS

Food smells around mealtimes (gravies, oils, bread, spices, meats), disinfectants, sweat, deodorant, bleach-scented sheets and towels, astringent hand sanitizer foam, urine, vomit, alcohol swabs, musty air conditioning

TASTES

Bland hospital food (meals that meet nutritional values but lack flavor), juice, water, vending machine pop or chocolate (if one has obtained special privileges for progress and good behavior), chalky or plastic-tasting pills

