

Developing a Work Instruction for the Identification and Inpatient Care of Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Patients at Princess Alexandra Hospital

Authors:

Tapsall D¹, Gray L¹, Walsh C¹, Henderson F¹, Truasheim S¹, Rohloff Z¹, Parrott G¹, Vick J¹

¹Princess Alexandra Hospital

Background:

Adolescent and young adults (AYAs) have unique healthcare needs that differ from paediatric and adult populations. Princess Alexandra Hospital, a tertiary care facility that does not provide paediatric or obstetric services, has lacked dedicated spaces, services, and policies for AYAs. Feedback from consumers and clinicians underscored the need for a structured, consistent approach to improve the identification, care, and safety for AYA patients. An AYA multidisciplinary working party of allied health professionals and nursing was formed to address these gaps in service.

Approach:

The AYA working party reviewed existing policies, guidelines, and gathered input from AYA patients and healthcare providers. This feedback formed the basis of the development of a work instruction to guide the identification of AYA patients upon admission and generate automatic referral to social work services. The instruction prompts clinicians to advocate for appropriate room placement of AYA patients including single rooms, shared rooms with same-gender peers, and/or rooms near the nurses' station.

Outcome:

The dedicated work instruction for AYA patients at Princess Alexandra Hospital has filled a crucial gap in service provision. AYA patients are identified at admission and acknowledged as having developmental needs impacting their engagement in health care needs. It enhances AYA safety and comfort, while mitigating organisational risk.

Innovation and Significance:

The implementation of the work instruction provides example of quality improvement leading to consistent identification of AYA patients, automatic referral to social work to ensure AYA psychosocial assessments are completed. This initiative improves psychosocial support and ensures that the inpatient environment is more conducive to the unique needs of AYA patients. This structured approach sets a precedent for other hospital health services to enhance AYA patient care. Future steps include evaluating the impact of these changes on patient outcomes and refining the work instruction based on ongoing feedback and best practices.