

EXCERPTS FROM THE BY-LAWS AND RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE MINNESOTA HOSPITALS FOR INSANE AT ST. PETER, ROCHESTER, AND FERGUS FALLS. ALSO RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING INSANE ASYLUMS AT HASTINGS AND ANOKA. (Adopted January 6, 1900). Fergus Falls: Journal Printing and Publishing Company, 1900.

NURSES

...In their association with patients they are expected to bear in mind constantly the delicate nature of their duties, and to allow nothing in their manner or bearing to suggest the idea of authority or dictation.

They are to treat the patients, everyone having business at the hospital, and each other, with respect and courtesy.

They must endeavor to inspire patients with respect and confidence in the officers and convince them of the true character of the institution, and its leading object.

Nurses must expect that the complaints of patients will be carefully heard and inquired into, and their testimony relative to any occurrence taken for what it is worth.

In many cases patients who have recovered are quite competent to give a correct account of what occurred during their disturbed condition, and of the treatment they received from those about them.

It is hoped that in all cases patients will leave the hospital with pleasant recollections of their stay in it and with respect for those under whose immediate charge they were.

As the Nurses have the immediate and constant supervision of patients, and are so largely responsible for their welfare and comfort, a few general facts and principles should be constantly kept in mind:

1st. Insanity is a disease dependent on a derangement of a bodily organ, the brain and nervous system.

2nd. There is a full appreciation of all acts of kindness or cruelty, and a general recollection of them after restoration and in after life.

3rd. There is usually a partial loss of the sense of moral obligation, ability to distinguish between right and wrong, and hence they are held irresponsible for their words and actions.

4th. There is usually a morbid or exalted sensitiveness in relation to what is due them in attention and general deportment, and hence they are irritable and excitable, often offense at imagined neglect or improprieties of treatment.

5th. The frequent recurrence of excitement aggravates and perpetuates the disease, and hence should be avoided if possible.

6th. Delusions should never be alluded to by nurses, for the more the mind dwells upon hallucinations or delusion, the more permanently are they fixed; and the more they are driven from the mind by occupation with other thoughts and ideas, the sooner do they disappear altogether.

These few principles are the basis of the following rules and regulations for nurses:

Deportment to patients. In all their intercourse with the patients they must treat them with respect and civility, address them in a mild and gentle tone of voice, avoid all violence and rudeness or undue familiarity, nicknames or disrespectful terms. All civil questions must be promptly answered, and all reasonable requests promptly attended to. They must never speak to patients of their delusions, nor to others in their hearing; never allow them to be laughed at or ridiculed or harshly spoken to on account of their delusions or peculiarities.

Deception is never to be used, no promises made that cannot be filled.

They should never manifest fear of a patient, never show anger under any provocation, never scold, threaten, or dictate authoritively. When firmness and decision are required, it should be with mildness and kindness. Force will seldom be necessary; but when it is, let be exercised with tact and kindness, and accompanied with cheerful and explanatory words and sympathizing manner.

Restraint. The use of restraining apparatus is productive of so much evil that none will be permitted except by express permission by the Superintendent, Assisting Superintendent, or Assistant Physicians. Whenever a patient becomes boisterous or noisy on the ward, he can be temporarily secluded in his room until excitement is abated. In case of great violence, or where the patient is dangerous, some form of restraint can be applied by the nurses, but the case must be immediately reported to the medical officers. Force should always be applied in a mild and gentle manner and accompanied by explanatory words, when necessary.