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Enhance Staff Safety: Comprehensive Risk Assessment for Wearable Duress Buttons in Behavioral Health Facilities



Overview: This checklist is designed to help you determine whether a wearable duress button solution may help enhance staff safety in your behavioral health facility (BHF). You will need some readily available information to complete and score the checklist. There is an additional section to gather violence risk-related data if available to provide additional context for the assessment and decision-making process.

Introduction: Employees within behavioral facilities are at high risk for violence. Patients are arriving in crisis, some may be involuntary admissions, others may have a history of violence, and there may be staffing challenges. All these issues and more place staff at higher risk of experiencing threats, verbal abuse, and physical assaults.

A wearable duress button can provide a much-needed layer of safety for all behavioral health facility staff. No matter where they are working in the facility, staff can activate their duress button quickly and discreetly to summon security and/or colleagues to their exact location. Whether they need help de-escalating an angry family member or they've been grabbed by a patient, staff feel safer knowing that help is just a button press away.



Risk Assessment Checklist

Instructions:

Complete each section to the best of your ability based on available information. For some questions, you will need to talk to staff to get their feedback. We recommend trying to get a representative sample of staff from across each shift if possible. For Section 2, you may want to use simulations to calculate approximate times.

Disclaimer: This checklist is for informational purposes only. You should consult with a professional security consultant if you need an in-depth security or violence risk assessment.

Scoring System:

Assign Points:

- Carefully read each question and evaluation criterion in the assessment.
- Determine the correct number of points for each question and criterion based on the provided guidelines.
- Write the assigned points in the "Points" space provided next to each item.

Calculate Section Totals:

- After assigning points, sum the points for each section individually.
- Write the total points for each section at the end of the respective section.

Calculate Final Score:

- Add the total points from Sections 1, 2, and 3.
- Write the final score in the space provided.

Determine Result and Recommendation:

- Use the scoring chart at the end of the assessment to interpret your final score.
- Based on the final score, review the corresponding result and recommendation.

By Completing This Assessment, You Will:

- Understand the advantages and disadvantages of current options for staff to get assistance in an emergency.
- Identify the average response time for staff emergency assistance.
- Clarify whether staff are confident in the current duress alarm solution.
- Recognize risk factors that impact the ability of staff to summon emergency assistance.
- Gain a clear picture of workplace violence incidents and impacts on your facility operations.

Risk Assessment Checklist

Ultimately, the information you gather and analyze in this assessment will help you enhance safety and security protocols in your behavioral health facility by identifying strengths and areas for improvement. It will also help you identify ways to build on the current process for staff to get help quickly when they feel unsafe.

Section 1: Emergency Assistance Yes +2 points, No +1 point

Do you currently have duress buttons?	Yes	No	Points: _____
If you answered “Yes” above:			Points: _____
• Are they able to be carried by staff?	Yes	No	_____
• Can staff quickly reach them from every location in the facility?	Yes	No	_____
• Do they alert security when pressed?	Yes	No	_____
• Do they alert fellow staff when pressed?	Yes	No	_____
• Are staff confident in the current duress alarm system (i.e.- do they use it)?	Yes	No	_____
• Do you have the ability to send a duress alarm signal to the police?	Yes	No	_____
If you answered “No” above, how do you call security (or colleagues if no security) for help in an emergency?			No points added or subtracted
• Phone call	Yes	No	
• A two-way radio (walkie talkie)	Yes	No	
• Other: _____			
Section 1 Total Points:			

Section 2: Response Time

Response time calculation: Calculate the average amount of time it takes from a violent or potentially violent situation beginning and help arriving. For purposes of this section, assume the incident involves a patient in their room.

Indicate "N/A" for any item that doesn't apply.

Time to locate and activate a duress button	Time:	
If no duress alarms, time to locate a phone/radio and complete a call to security (or colleagues if no security)	Time:	
Average time from calling/pressing the duress button for help to security arriving (or colleagues if no security)	Time:	
Total average response time	Time:	
Scoring: Total time < 1 minute: +3 points; Total time 1-2 minutes: +2 points; Total time > 2 minutes: +1 point		Points _____
Section 2 Total Points:		

Section 3: Environment

Services: Does your facility frequently treat patients experiencing serious mental illness with substance use disorder comorbidity? Do you often treat patients arriving in crisis?	If Yes: -1 point If No: 0 points If Yes: -1 point If No: 0 points Points: _____
Visibility: Are all rooms in each inpatient unit easily viewed from a central location (i.e.- nurse's station)?	Yes No Points: _____
What areas cannot be easily viewed?	Yes +2 points/No +1 point
Audibility: Can staff in distress easily be heard by co-workers if they need help in a patient room or bathroom within each unit?	Yes No Points: _____
What are the areas where staff in distress cannot be heard?	Yes +2 points/No +1 point
Section 3 Total Points:	

Section 4: Violence Data (if available)

This section is not scored. Collecting this information is helpful to understand the frequency, impacts, and risk of violence in your facility. This data can also help justify the need for additional violence prevention and mitigation measures, including wearable duress alarms.

How many physical assaults on staff have occurred in the past two years?*	Year 1	Year 2
How many verbal threats have been made towards staff in the past two years?*	Year 1	Year 2
How many lost workdays were the result of violence-related injuries over the past two years?	Year 1	Year 2
How much overtime was paid as a result of lost workdays or hiring agency staff?	Year 1	Year 2
How many times have the police been called to the facility for violence over the past two years?	Year 1	Year 2

**Note that violence against staff is typically underreported, so actual numbers of incidents are likely higher than data suggests.*

Total Points- Add sections 1, 2 and 3 together: _____

Total Points:	Assessment:
8 or lower	Staff may not be able to get help as quickly as possible. There may also be increased risk factors that can place staff at an elevated risk for violence. A wearable duress button solution is recommended to enhance staff safety.
9-15	Staff have good options to get help in an emergency. There are some risk factors that may increase risk for violence. Improvements could be made to improve response times and staff safety. A wearable duress button solution should be considered to enhance staff safety.
16-21	There are very good options for staff to get help quickly in an emergency and lower risk factors for violence. A wearable duress button solution could be a way to further enhance the current level of staff safety, but may not be needed at this time.

Contact ROAR today to enhance your staff's safety with our state-of-the-art wearable duress alarms!