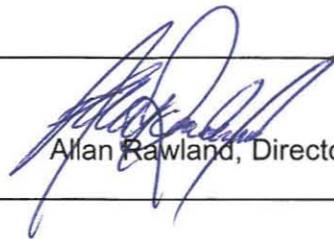


**County of San Bernardino  
Department of Behavioral Health**

**Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP) Policy**

**Effective Date** 07/94  
**Revision Date** 07/18/11

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Allan Rawland, Director

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**Policy** It is the policy of the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to effectively address assaultive behavior when it occurs at any DBH location.

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**Purpose** To ensure staff and other persons in DBH facilities are protected from harm due to assaultive behavior incidents and to train staff accordingly.

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**Definition** **Assaultive Behavior** is defined in County policy as violent behavior and/or circumstance; direct, indirect, implied, potential or actual, from any person and directed toward any person, occurring at any County facility or in connection with the conduct of County business without regard to location. It requires a response to warn, defend and protect staff, clients and the general public who are present when assaultive behavior occurs.

**Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP)** is a protocol triggered by assaultive behavior in any DBH facility. The protocol is the appropriate response required to warn and protect staff, clients and other members of the public, up to and including employing the Emergency Action Plan (EAP), as defined below, to evacuate the facility or to reach a safe haven room. Details of the protocol are described in the DBH [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#).

**Color Code Alert** is a verbal emergency alert using a color designator and is referenced as a color code. Color codes are used to communicate an incident has developed. Staff will be issued card-badges with the color codes and brief explanations on them to wear on the same lanyards as Access Cards and Identification Badges. Additional definitions follow for the color codes to be used by DBH staff in all facilities. The DBH color codes are listed here and descriptions follow:

- Code Blue = Medical Emergency
- Code Grey = Combative Person
- Code Red = Fire
- Code Yellow = Bomb Threat
- Code Silver = Crisis

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# County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health

## Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP) Policy, Continued

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**Definition**  
(continued)

**Note:** No other alerts or code phrases are to be used in DBH facilities for the above listed conditions/incidents, with the exception of DBH staff assigned to another department or agency location, such as DBH staff located at ARMC.

**Code Blue**, when announced, indicates an appropriate response is needed to a suspected or imminent medical emergency. DBH Psychiatrists should respond to this alert whenever possible.

**Code Grey**, when announced, indicates a combative person has been encountered or an act of violence is taking place. This is illegal, assaultive behavior as defined above, requires action as described in the [Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Procedure](#) and, when appropriate, in the [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#). It requires immediate response from clinical staff trained in Non-Violent and Acute Intervention procedures and techniques to avoid escalation. Clinical staff with clients should stay with their clients. The highest ranking staff responding will:

- Determine if the first responding clinic staff member is successfully de-escalating the client and is capable of completing the de-escalation
- Decide to replace or support the first responding clinic staff member with another staff member if the first responder is not successfully de-escalating the client
- Indicate which other staff should be calling local law enforcement, among other actions, in accordance with the above referenced procedures
- Advise other responding staff not able to directly participate in resolving the incident to return to their respective duties

**Note:** Facilities with more than one clinic, program, or co-located department may modify the Code Grey alert response by following the color code with the term “all” or the name of the clinic or program, as fully described in the [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#).

**Code Red**, when announced, indicates a fire emergency, actual or suspected, and will often be accompanied by an audible fire alert. Appropriate EAP fire responses should be made by assigned staff, including building evacuation as appropriate.

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# County of San Bernardino

## Department of Behavioral Health

### Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP) Policy, Continued

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**Definition**  
(continued)

**Code Silver**, when announced, indicates a crisis is occurring, which may include someone brandishing a weapon, or a hostage being taken, multiple batteries being committed by a group or similar crisis incident. This is the most likely incident requiring the use of a Safe Haven Room as defined below, particularly if shots have been fired or the brandishing or hostage assault is taking place in a lobby point of egress or blocking other facility means of ingress or egress. Procedures should be employed as indicated in the [Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Procedure](#) and in the [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#). Staff unable to safely reach a safe haven room will lock themselves and their clients in therapy rooms as needed, and stay out of sight of any windows in the room.

**Code Yellow**, when announced, indicates a bomb threat. Staff should respond as directed in the [Bomb Threat Procedure](#), particularly those who may receive notice of the threat.

**Emergency Action Plan (EAP)** is the written plan developed as part of the Disaster and Safety program to react and respond to emergencies DBH expects may reasonably occur at any DBH location. It communicates policies and procedures for staff to follow in emergencies and information for regular and after hours work conditions staff is trained to use, as indicated in the [Emergency Action Plan \(EAP\) Policy](#). The basic information included is:

- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments
- Procedures to follow by employees who remain to control critical facility operations before they evacuate
- Procedures to account for all employees after emergency evacuation has been completed
- Procedures for evacuating clients and members of the general public
- Rescue and medical duties for those employees assigned to perform them
- Preferred means of reporting fires and other emergencies
- Types of evacuations to be used in various emergency situations

**Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training** is presented to DBH staff. Enrollment may be completed through Learning Essentials. The training is intended to ensure staff are able to:

- Respond effectively to warning signs that someone is beginning to lose control or escalate
- Avoid and take control of an out-of-control situation
- Feel calm and confident, instead of fearful and confused
- Promote everyone's safety, welfare, care and security at all times

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# County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health

## Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP) Policy, Continued

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### Definition (continued)

**Safe Haven Room** is a room with no windows and locks on all doors. It is used when evacuation cannot occur and staff, clients and the general public must be protected, such as when an entrance to the building usually used in an evacuation is blocked by the incident. Occupants remain inside the room and silent until cleared to leave by the Clinic Supervisor (CS), Location Safety Coordinator (LSC), Program Manager (PM) or designee. Clinicians' therapy rooms may be used for safe haven if the main Safe Haven Room cannot be safely reached. Please see [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#) **ABP Readiness** section for Safe Haven Room staff training and preparation.

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### Assaultive Behavior Response Guidelines

Responses to assaultive behavior, as defined, and threats directed toward individual DBH staff are described in the [Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Policy](#) and [Procedure](#). The ABP in this document describes appropriate responses to other types of threats and assault, such as bomb threats, weapon or hostage situations and instances when actual battery cannot be immediately and effectively controlled and individuals witnessing the assault are in peril.

Each DBH facility LSC, CS and PM or designee is responsible for coordinating and training employees on the ABP protocol. These members of management have the responsibility to ensure the following ABP guidelines are maintained:

- Staff is trained to appropriately respond to an assault and to color code alerts
  - Staff, clients and the general public witnessing an assault are protected
  - Appropriate first responders are notified
  - Staff practice training in:
    - Correct use of Color Code alerts
    - Activating EAP
    - Safe Haven Room response
  - Appropriate assistance is provided to affected bystanders
  - Appropriate post-incident investigation and reporting are completed
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### Co-Located Clinics

DBH staff assigned to DBH clinics in facilities co-located with clinics from other County departments will become familiar with the additional codes for those departments, links to which are listed below.

- [ARMC Alerts](#)
  - [Public Health Alerts](#) (Link to be established in the future.)
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# County of San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health

## Assaultive Behavior Plan (ABP) Policy, Continued

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**Staff Assigned to Other Departments** DBH staff assigned to other department or agency locations will follow the alert system for their respective locations.

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**Reference** Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 77117(b)

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**Related Policy and Procedure** County of San Bernardino Policy 09-08: [Violence and Threats in the Workplace – Zero Tolerance](#)

DBH Standard Procedure Manual

- SFT7005: [Bomb Threat Procedure](#)
  - SFT7006: [Earthquake Procedure](#)
  - SFT7007: [Disaster and Mass Casualty](#)
  - SFT7009-1: [Assaultive Behavior Plan Procedure](#)
  - SFT7010: [Possession of a Weapon Policy](#)
  - SFT7010-1: [Possession of a Weapon Procedure](#)
  - SFT7015: [Threats and Assault on DBH Staff Policy](#)
  - SFT7016: [Special Incident Reporting Procedure – Client Related](#)
  - SFT7022: [Emergency Action Plan Policy](#)
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