

**REGION I EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
STANDING MEDICAL ORDERS  
EMT – Basic**

**SMO: Behavioral Emergencies**

**Overview:** “Normal” behavior is generally considered to be adaptive behavior that is accepted by society. This idea is also defined by society when the behavior:

- Deviates from society’s norms and expectations
- Interferes with well being and ability to function
- Is harmful to the individual or group

A behavior emergency can be defined as a change in mood or behavior that cannot be tolerated by the involved person or others and requires intervention.

**INFORMATION NEEDED**

- \_\_\_ Significant stressors identified by the patient and/or family
- \_\_\_ Any alcohol or other drugs involved
- \_\_\_ Medical history: trauma, tranquilizers, anticonvulsants, diabetes, other medical problems
- \_\_\_ Any injuries noted to patient
- \_\_\_ Does patient have plans to hurt self or others?

**OBJECTIVE FINDINGS**

- \_\_\_ Altered mental status
- \_\_\_ Behavioral ranges from hostility and anxiety to withdrawn
- \_\_\_ Search for medical alert bracelet or card
- \_\_\_ Injuries to patient if has self-destructive behavior

**TREATMENT**

- \_\_\_ Scene safety—STAY ALERT.
- \_\_\_ Contact Resource Hospital, police, and/or Fire Department back-up as appropriate.
- \_\_\_ Identify yourself clearly.
- \_\_\_ Approach patient in a calm and professional manner. Talk to patient alone—request bystanders to wait in another area. Show concern for family members as well. Allow patient to verbalize his problem in his own words. Reassure patient that help is available.
- \_\_\_ Get patient’s permission to do your assessment before touching patient.
- \_\_\_ Vital signs.
- \_\_\_ NEVER leave patient alone.
- \_\_\_ Transport female with another non-threatening female bystander or relative if possible.
- \_\_\_ In the case of suicide attempts, be prepared to:
  - Treat any injuries
  - If drug or poison was ingested, find agent and transport with patient to hospital
  - Be ready to assist ventilations if needed. If patient goes into respiratory arrest, follow proper protocol.
- \_\_\_ Transport quickly and quietly.

**Documentation of adherence to protocol:**

- \_\_\_ Patient's presenting demeanor
- \_\_\_ Reinforcements called and on scene
- \_\_\_ Verbalizations in patient's words using quotations when possible
- \_\_\_ Any more advanced medical interventions that were necessary

**PRECAUTIONS AND COMMENTS**

- Remember that abnormal emotional behavior could be the result of injuries or disease. Initiate treatment as required. Consider and attempt to evaluate for possible causes of behavioral problems:
  - Hypoxia
  - Hypotension
  - Hypoglycemia
  - Trauma (head injury)
  - Alcohol/ Drug Intoxication or Reaction
  - Stroke/ CVA
  - Post-ictal states/ seizures
  - Electrolyte Imbalances
  - Infections/ fever
  - Dementia (i.e. acute or chronic organic brain syndrome, Alzheimer's disease)
- At all times, EMT's should avoid placing themselves in danger; at times this may mean a delay in the initiation of treatment until the personal safety of the EMT is assured
- If the patient is judged to be either suicidal or incompetent and dangerous to self and others, the treatment and transport should be carried out in the interest of the patient's welfare. If the patient resists, police involvement is necessary and the use of reasonable force may be used to restrain the patient from doing further harm to self or others.

**REGION I EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES  
STANDING MEDICAL ORDERS  
EMT – Paramedic**

**SMO: Behavioral Emergencies**

**Overview:** “Normal” behavior is generally considered to be adaptive behavior that is accepted by society. This idea is also defined by society when the behavior:

- Deviates from society’s norms and expectations
- Interferes with well being and ability to function
- Is harmful to the individual or group

A behavior emergency can be defined as a change in mood or behavior that cannot be tolerated by the involved person or others and requires intervention.

**INFORMATION NEEDED**

- \_\_\_ Significant stressors identified by the patient and/or family
- \_\_\_ Any alcohol or other drugs involved
- \_\_\_ Medical history: trauma, tranquilizers, anticonvulsants, diabetes, other medical problems
- \_\_\_ Any injuries noted to patient
- \_\_\_ Does patient have plans to hurt self or others?

**OBJECTIVE FINDINGS**

- \_\_\_ Altered mental status
- \_\_\_ Behavioral ranges from hostility and anxiety to withdrawn
- \_\_\_ Search for medical alert bracelet or card
- \_\_\_ Injuries to patient if has self-destructive behavior

**TREATMENT**

- \_\_\_ Scene safety—STAY ALERT.
- \_\_\_ Contact Resource Hospital, police, and/or Fire Department back-up as appropriate.
- \_\_\_ Identify yourself clearly.
- \_\_\_ Approach patient in a calm and professional manner. Talk to patient alone—request bystanders to wait in another area. Show concern for family members as well. Allow patient to verbalize his problem in his own words. Reassure patient that help is available.
- \_\_\_ Get patient’s permission to do your assessment before touching patient.
- \_\_\_ Vital signs.
- \_\_\_ NEVER leave patient alone.
- \_\_\_ Transport female with another non-threatening female bystander or relative if possible.

## **TREATMENT (cont)**

\_\_\_ In the case of suicide attempts, be prepared to:

- Treat any injuries
- If drug or poison was ingested, find agent and transport with patient to hospital
- Place on cardiac monitor.
- Be ready to assist ventilations if needed. If patient goes into respiratory arrest, follow proper protocol.
- Consider the use of **Narcan 2mg bolus IV or ETT** if narcotic overdose suspected. Use of Narcan may unmask other illicit drugs such as PCP which could cause the patient to become violent. Use Narcan with caution if suspected polysubstance abuse. Priority is to protect self and other Providers.

\_\_\_ Transport quickly and quietly.

### **Documentation of adherence to protocol:**

\_\_\_ Patient's presenting demeanor

\_\_\_ Reinforcements called and on scene

\_\_\_ Verbalizations in patient's words using quotations when possible

\_\_\_ Any more advanced medical interventions that were necessary (O2, intubation, medications)

### **PRECAUTIONS AND COMMENTS**

- Remember that abnormal emotional behavior could be the result of injuries or disease. Initiate treatment as required. Consider and attempt to evaluate for possible causes of behavioral problems:
  - Hypoxia
  - Hypotension
  - Hypoglycemia
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7/04

Reviewed:

Revised:

EMS/ Region1 SMOs