

## Shift Note Guidelines

*Documentation is important for record keeping, support, and discipline when necessary. Please take a moment to read these guidelines for writing shift notes.*

**If it isn't documented properly it didn't happen. Please document what happened before talking to other staff about situation to keep it as clear as possible.**

Fundamentals of Shift Notes:

1. *Objective*: write only facts, do not write assumptions or guesses.
2. *Concise*: use as few words as possible to convey the message.
3. *Relevant*: get to the point quickly and with focus.
4. *Well written*: write in legibly, use proper sentence structure, use person's names (or room #) instead of "he/she/they" when possible. Make sure the action being noted is attributed to the correct person/subject.

Components of Shift Notes:

Think before you write, analyze, assess, and structure the situation. Consider that everyone sees the situation from their own point of view. Ask these questions when decided what to write:

- What happened?
- Who was involved?
- What was the cause? (don't project or guess if you don't know)
- Was the situation witnessed, if yes by whom?
- What was the order of events?
- When did this happen?
- How long did it go on?
- (If you can assess without assuming) How did this happen?
- Okay to document something that just didn't feel right to you, but clearly state that you felt this was suspicious or odd, etc.

Use active voice when describing a situation: *I observed, this action happened, they stated, I said, I did this, etc.*

When describing a person's emotional state, write the behavior (what they said or did), do not project the emotions: *they were crying, they were yelling, they were shaking their fist, they said they were sad, mad, etc.*

If a person is being rude or disrespectful describe the behavior or tone subjectively: *they had an irritable tone, they were raising their voice, they were interrupting when someone else was speaking, they were defending breaking the rules by saying "...", etc.*

Please make a note of any Code of Conduct Violation and note which section the activity violated.

If follow-up is needed, please note that in the far right column, and by whom it should be followed up.