



Behavioral Health Guidelines for Medical Isolation

The following are some of the behavioral health considerations to take into account when a person is in medical isolation.

	Inform	Support	Triage	Treat
Patients	<p>Provide information, in native languages, about common responses to isolation.</p> <p>Use professional interpreters if needed.</p> <p>Use multiple modes to communicate information about stress and isolation.</p>	<p>Provide a supportive environment and relationships with patients - encourage exercise, visits, favorite foods, and home reminders as appropriate.</p> <p>Provide basic supportive counseling and respond promptly to call lights.</p> <p>Provide access to communication means.</p>	<p>Assess for mental status upon initiation and periodically throughout isolation.</p>	<p>Refer to psychiatrist or licensed mental health practitioner for further assessment or treatment.</p> <p>Employ suicide precautions as applicable.</p> <p>Know common reactions to isolation and potential for depression and anxiety symptoms.</p>
Staff	<p>Provide information and frequent updates about risks of working with patients.</p> <p>Praise and thank workers.</p> <p>Control rumors by dispensing regular, accurate information to all staff.</p>	<p>Provide break area away from isolation unit.</p> <p>Consider mandatory breaks.</p> <p>Hold regular staff meetings that include mental health support.</p>	<p>Supervisors regularly assess stress level, coping, and fitness for duty of workers.</p>	<p>Provide referral information for in-house or community resources (e.g. Employee Assistance Program).</p>
Patient Families	<p>Obtain release of information from patient so family can be informed of patient progress.</p> <p>Provide accurate information about isolation precautions, common responses, illness, and risks to patient and others.</p> <p>Consider informing family prior to releasing information to media.</p> <p>Keep family informed while at or away from your facility.</p>	<p>Inquire about spiritual needs.</p> <p>Encourage family members to take frequent breaks from hospital setting, get adequate sleep and nutrition.</p> <p>Encourage family members to accept help from others.</p> <p>Create space for family members to gather away from media.</p>	<p>Monitor stress and expressions of distress of family.</p>	<p>Provide referral information (for community or hospital resources that the family may access as needed).</p>
Community	<p>Provide frequent updates to the media and your community in multiple languages.</p> <p>Release information about how people can be most helpful to those affected by isolation precautions.</p> <p>Release technical information to community health professionals and hotlines.</p>	<p>Consider arranging for a location outside of hospital (or your facility) for community members to gather if needed or desired.</p>	<p>Consider providing interventions or referral training to community members in a position to detect stress or distress in others (e.g. teachers, clinic nurses, faith leaders).</p>	<p>Provide a listing of potential referral sources to media for dissemination to the public along with information about when to seek help.</p>