

PROMOTING POSITIVE PATIENT EXPERIENCES WHILE WEARING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

A GUIDE FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

With the increased utilization of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), we have heard from our patients, families, and community providers that it can be confusing, or even scary to have someone walk in to a room in full PPE. The Mary Bridge Child Life Team in conjunction with Kids Mental Health Pierce County (KMHPC) has put together a list of suggestions for providers and staff when wearing PPE around pediatric patients or patients with special needs. Health care staff are used to PPE, but for patients and families it can be unfamiliar and intimidating.

AIDET is a composite of five behaviors to use in every patient/staff interaction to anticipate, meet, and exceed expectations of patients, coworkers, and visitors. AIDET is a helpful guide and can be used to explain PPE

ACKNOWLEDGE:

- Smile when you walk into a room and as you introduce yourself. While the patient may not be able to see your mouth, the rest of your face will still portray that you are smiling.
- Make your PPE relatable. Ask the patient if they know of anyone else who wears a mask? You can say "Some kids tell me the face shield looks like a Storm trooper or astronaut mask! What do you think it looks like?"

INTRODUCE:

- Take a minute to explain the PPE you are wearing. You can say, "Me and everyone I work with are wearing masks, gowns, and face shields so that we don't spread any germs. We wear this protective gear to keep everyone safe and to protect others"
- Sit down if possible, this can help make you appear more relatable and less threatening. Positive body language is important.

DURATION:

- Wearing PPE can increase your body temperature and can be uncomfortable. For assessments and procedures that are longer in duration, set times for breaks for both you and patient. For young children, relate the duration to developmentally appropriate tasks such as watching a video, playing a game or singing a song.

EXPLANATION:

- For patients who seem hesitant, engage patient and family in conversation before starting exams or procedures. Giving kids time to "warm up" is especially important right now.
- Always announce what you are doing before you are doing it. "I am going to take your temperature now by using this thermometer on your forehead."

THANK YOU:

- Provide opportunities for patients and families to ask questions.
- Praise patients for accomplishments. (Big and small)
- Thank them for allowing you to interact with them while wearing PPE

Practical tips to making PPE more approachable, approved by Mary Bridge Infection Prevention:

- Use a dry erase marker or other washable marker to decorate your face shield – wipes off easily when disinfecting between patients- give yourself cat whiskers or big eye lashes!
- Wear a picture of yourself smiling on the outside of your gown so that they can see what you look like. Pictures must be laminated and cleaned in between patients.
- Contact Mary Bridge Child Life (253-403-5315) or KMHPC (<http://kidsmentalhealthpiercecounty.org/>) for additional support.