

COVID-19 – Intervening in a Violent Situation

In the current pandemic, healthcare workers are encountering situations where a user’s violent or threatening behaviour poses a risk to the user’s safety or the safety of others. Such circumstances often require a team intervention or a Code White. Any physical intervention requires more organization than usual, because personal protective equipment must be available, and there must be sufficient time to put it on. Here’s a checklist to help you with this new procedure.

	Team Intervention or Code White
In normal circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put the emphasis on a verbal intervention ● Apply the advice in the Code White Fact Sheet ● Conduct the intervention in an organized, structured and safe manner ● Remember that the safety of individuals comes first ● Get organized (prepare an action plan, assign roles, coordinate the intervention) ● Consider safety issues and wear the recommended PPE for the work situation (e.g., head gear, cut-resistant sleeve, gloves to protect against bites or punctures) ● Be careful you don’t provoke a more aggressive response from the client (i.e., by getting too close to the client, surrounding the client, etc.)
Suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More than ever, try to resolve the situation through a verbal intervention ● Apply the principles of team intervention or Code White used in normal circumstances And ● Wash your hands ● Wear a long-sleeved gown ● Wear a procedure mask (1) ● Wear eye protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When choosing eye protection (2), assess the risk that a violent patient will tear off the caregiver’s visor ○ Consider using safety glasses or safety goggles ○ Use a safe means of attachment, to prevent strangulation ● Put on non-sterile gloves ● Don’t touch your face

References

1. N-95 mask if aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMP) or if presenting with severity criteria. See INSPQ. (20 mars 2020). COVID-19 : Mesures de prévention et contrôle des infections pour les milieux de soins aigus : recommandations intérimaires. <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/covid/mesures-prevention-milieux-soins-aigus-covid19.pdf>
2. INSPQ. (2018). Notions de base en prévention et contrôle des infections : équipements de protection individuelle. https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/2442_prevention_controle_infection_equipement_protection_in_dividuel.pdf

Excerpt from INSPQ recommendations for eye protection:

Safety Glasses

- For exposure to infectious droplets, blood, or other bodily fluids.
- Can be cleaned and reused until visibility is compromised.
- Can be worn over prescription eyeglasses.

Visor or Face Shield

- For exposure to infectious droplets, blood, or other bodily fluids.
- Can be worn over prescription eyeglasses.

Visor Attached to Mask

- Minimal exposure to infectious droplets, blood, or other bodily fluids.
- Can be worn over prescription eyeglasses.
- Easy to put on.

EYE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are not considered eye protection devices.
- Choose safety glasses or face shields that ensure visual acuity.
- Make sure that the eye protection selected forms a barrier against lateral splashes as well as direct projection.
- Do not reuse single-use eye protection.
- Clean and disinfect reusable eye protection after each use.