Keeping safe in the workplace
Mental Health Units

Acute respiratory infection (ARI) such as COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus transmission can occur between health workers (HW) and from patients to HWs or vice versa. This includes both community settings and inpatient mental health units. Being diligent and following appropriate infection prevention and control (IPAC) strategies will reduce the risk of cross transmission. At minimum:

- Access to hand hygiene, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces, are essential to keep you and others safe

- Ensure to take regular breaks, stay hydrated and change PPE as required

- Keep up to date with your vaccinations

- Ensure you do not to come to work if you have any ARI symptoms - stay home and get tested

- Be aware of the transmission risk level and respond appropriately

Do you have a plan for an ARI outbreak management?

- Do you have a documented plan to manage a suspected or confirmed ARI outbreak?

- How will your unit minimise consumers therapeutically socialising with one another to mitigate potential transmission risks

- Have you referred to the NSW IPAC response and escalation framework ([section 3.4 risk matrix summary table- IPAC and COVID Safe Healthcare](#))?

- Have you considered creating 'social bubbles' of smaller numbers of staff for breaks as part of your infection prevention and control strategy

- Do staff have access to and are they using appropriate PPE, and cleaning/disinfection products for high touch point cleaning?

- Have your staff completed mandatory PPE training, fit checking, and fit testing of P2/N95 respirator?

- Do you have a protected space for you and your staff to don and doff your PPE?

- Have you ensured easy and ready access to adequate hand hygiene products?

Please contact your local infection prevention and control professional for further advice.