
**INFECTION PREVENTION MANUAL
FOR
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

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INTRODUCTION

Infection prevention in the behavioral health setting is an important safety function. Unfortunately, there is inadequate research related to infection prevention in this setting to provide comprehensive evidence-based guidance for prevention practices. Therefore, we apply general principles of infection prevention and adapt them to this unique environment.

Freestanding acute care hospitals, substance abuse centers, outpatient practices, group homes, and correctional institutions are but a few of the many environments in which an infection preventionist may find a behavioral health-related infection prevention challenge. The infection preventionist is confronted with unique opportunities to identify, prevent, and control infections in a population that is often less compliant than those in acute care. Mental health patients may be at increased risk for infection, which can lead to a heightened risk for transmission to others in the milieu, including healthcare workers. No matter how challenges present themselves, the behavioral health infection preventionist's goal is to develop strategies designed to control them and to provide a climate in which infection is identified, and the transmission of infection is minimized.

The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance in the development, oversight, and continuous evaluation of an infection prevention system for the behavioral health facility, regardless of the specific setting. Customization of the policies in this manual is imperative to addressing the unique characteristics of your patient population.

*APIC Text of Infection Control and Epidemiology. 3rd Edition. Chapter 53: Behavioral Health
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