



## **2020 Topic sheet # 5 - May**

*(SARS-CoV-2 is the virus and COVID-19 is the disease)*

### **NEXT PHASE COVID-19 – EFFORTS TO REDUCE TRANSMISSION IN THE PRACTICE / WORKPLACE**

*Throughout Australia these will need to be kept up for a year unless effective treatment and/or a vaccine is developed*

**HERE IS A BUNDLE OF PREVENTATIVE MEASURES/IDEAS FOR YOUR HEALTHCARE / WORKPLACE – use all as much as possible to reduce the risk of transmission regardless of your perception of transmission in your community.**

- a. Symptom checking yourself every day when you get up - any symptoms no matter how mild. A scratchy throat, shortness of breath, a dry cough, runny nose, weakness/fatigue, temperature, diarrhoea. Do not go to work but get a swab done. Do not put colleagues at risk plus your work may not be great quality!
- b. Have a buddy system to check each other for symptoms and temp (if you have one) before you start work. Don't just ask each other if you are well – list the symptoms and no matter how mild, if any are present please have a swab done before you go home.
- c. Check your clients /patients before you meet with them - same questions. Not all are forthcoming.
- d. Hand hygiene regularly during the day as well as part of the 5 moments of hand hygiene.
- e. Cleaning / disinfection of high touch surfaces middle of day by staff and by cleaner after work.

#### **Things I would strongly discourage among staff in healthcare and other workplaces because they can drive up risk**

1. Do not place drink bottles on benches to sip on during the day because you are not likely to remember to perform hand hygiene before and after. Keep water in your car or bag.
2. Using others' pens
3. Sharing food
4. Using the staff room unless you can keep up distancing
5. Meetings in person unless outside – it's amazing how many less meetings we've had (the clinic didn't fall apart)
6. Being inside all day – take breaks in your car or outside to minimise transmission as much as possible
7. Working too long without a break. This situation is stressful enough with PPE and continual thinking ahead etc.

#### **Things I would strongly encourage**

1. Go out for a coffee /lunch or keep a thermos and cold pack in your car. Use your car as your escape bubble or find the nearest park to eat/drink as part of a mental health break. Chat to friends, turn the music up.
2. Contactless entrance to the workplace or leave door open if possible
3. Outdoor sheltered sitting area for staff with distance of course (think of an outdoor heater if necessary).
4. Keeping the door/windows open as much as is comfortable on that day wherever you are
5. Mix consultations if possible so patient can have part review by telehealth or equivalent then come in for a short 10 minutes consultation – under 15 minutes is not considered close contact and reduces the risk.
6. Contactless payments – for obvious reasons
7. Ask every patient/client to use the sanitiser and take two tissues in case of cough etc – this also saves on masks
8. Contactless taps - this should have happened years back so consider installing them

**These principles will sustain us even as restrictions are gradually loosened. The suggestions provided are to keep you safe but make life a bit more bearable. Your colleagues and vulnerable community members rely on you!**