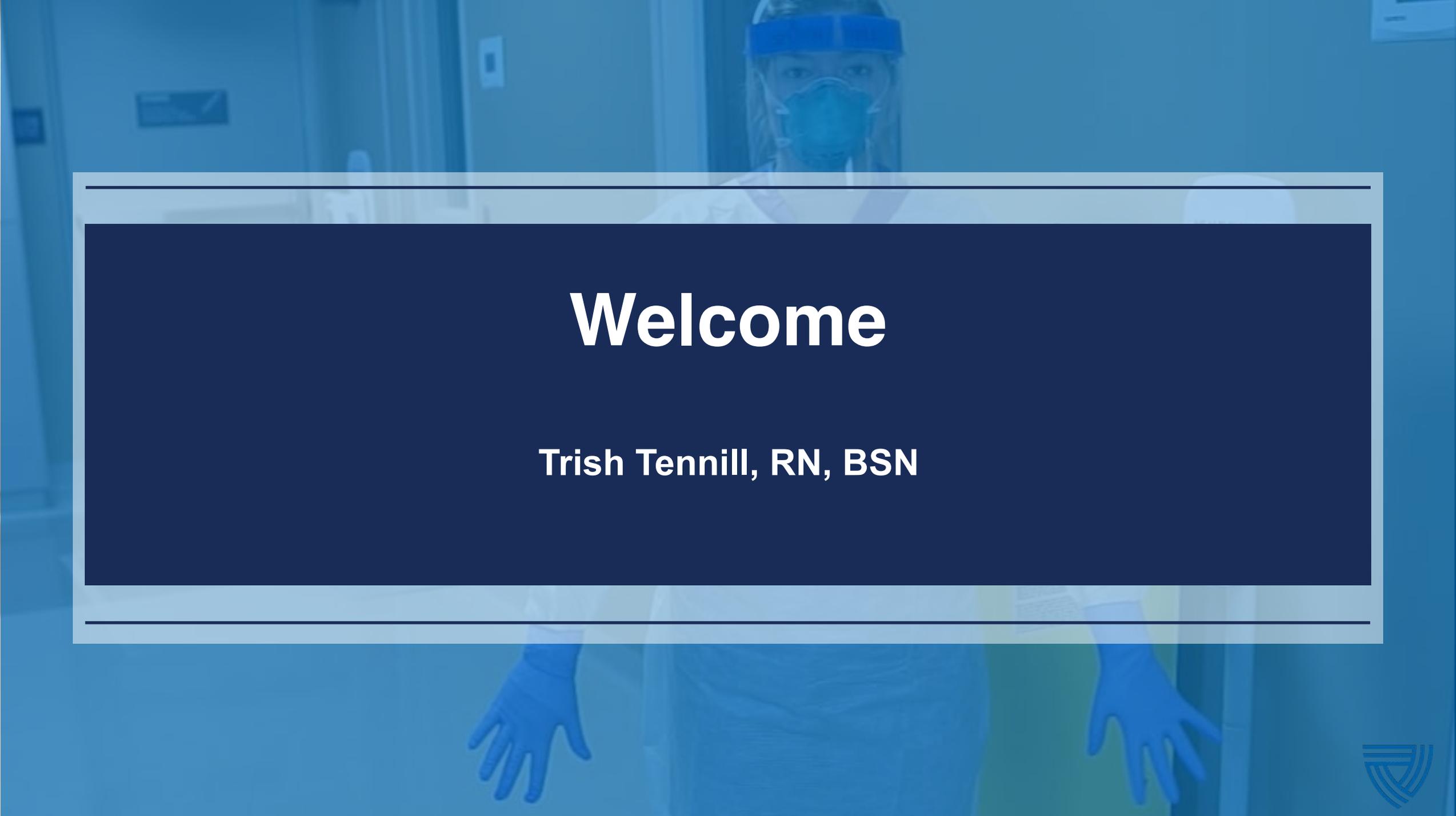


NETEC COVID-19 Webinar Series:

Containing the Spread of COVID-19 on Inpatient Psychiatric Units



Welcome

Trish Tennill, RN, BSN



➤ **Welcome:** Trish Tennill, RN, BSN

➤ **Containing the Spread of COVID-19 on Inpatient Psychiatric Units:** Leonardo V. Lopez, MD

➤ **NETEC Resources:** Trish Tennill, RN, BSN

➤ **Questions and Answers with NETEC:**

National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center

Mission Statement

To increase the capability of the United States public health and health care systems to safely and effectively manage individuals with suspected and confirmed special pathogens

For more information

Please visit us at www.netec.org
or email us at info@netec.org



Assessment

Empower hospitals to gauge their readiness using
Self-Assessment

Measure facility and healthcare worker readiness using
Metrics

Provide direct feedback to hospitals via
On-Site Assessment

Education

Provide self-paced education through
Online Trainings

Deliver didactic and hands-on simulation training via
In-Person Courses

COVID-19 focused
Webinars

Technical Assistance

Onsite & Remote Guidance

Compile
Online Repository of tools and resources

Develop customizable
Exercise Templates based on the HSEEP model

Provide
Emergency On-Call Mobilization

Research Network

Online Repository
Built for rapid implementation of clinical research protocols

Develop Policies, Procedures and Data Capture Tools to facilitate research

Create infrastructure for a
Specimen Biorepository

Cross-Cutting, Supportive Activities

Containing the Spread of COVID-19 on Inpatient Psychiatric Units

Leonardo V. Lopez, MD



Background on Bellevue

- **7-unit, 178-bed service, serving approximately 3000 patients per year**
- **Largely involuntarily hospitalized patients with psychotic disorders**
- **Majority of patients undomiciled**
- **Median length-of-stay 13 days**



COVID Experience

Since March 2020

- ✓ Treated over 50 patients identified as COVID-19 positive
- ✓ Treated over 125 patients with suspected cases of COVID-19

➤ No more than two cases of patient-to-patient transmission

➤ No clear cases of patient-to-staff transmission

➤ No transfers to medical service as a result of COVID-19

BELLEVUE HOSPITAL

Early Phase of Pandemic

- Hospital began to develop policies and procedures for identifying and triaging potential cases of COVID-19
- Limited knowledge, limited testing environment
- Daily hospital briefing included psychiatry, allowing department to share up-to-date knowledge with department staff
- Intradepartmental meetings focused on reinforcement of mission: treating patients with incidental (asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic) COVID-19 was an element of, not extension of, mission

Leadership Approach

Reinforce role of hospital

➔ Many severely ill patients would be treated on medicine service; psychiatry would need to assist medicine in appropriately utilizing resources

Reinforce role of department

➔ Medicine service does not have degree of expertise in managing patients with mental illness; sub-optimal management could exacerbate spread



Leadership Approach Continued...

Acknowledge fear

Solicit volunteers (confidentially)

Interdisciplinary approach

Find optimal spaces

- Staffing/nursing
- Space/infection control



Patient Care Approach

1

Management of patients with possible COVID-19

2

Management of COVID-positive patients

3

Unique psychiatric considerations

1 Management of Patients with Possible COVID-19

- **Any suggestive symptoms should lead to immediate contact & droplet isolation**
- **Medicine team should be consulted immediately. Ideally medical team integrated into psychiatry service**
- **Testing strategy will depend on local conditions**
 - **If readily available, rapid test should be performed, along with tests for alternative causes of illness**
 - **If not, patients should be isolated for at least 72 hours until either clinical resolution or discovery of alternate cause**
 - **If neither criteria is met, decision to continue isolation should be determined on case-by-case basis**

2 Management of COVID-Positive Patients

**COVID-positive patients with mild symptoms
can be managed on psychiatric units!**

➤ **Rooms should be designated in advance**

- **Ideally, single rooms and large rooms in which multiple confirmed positive patients can be cohorted**

➤ **Patients should remain on contact/droplet isolation for 14 days**

➤ **Patients should have vital signs, most importantly SpO₂, checked regularly and should be seen by an internist at least daily**

2

Management of COVID-Positive Patients Continued...

- ▶ **Patients need to be encouraged to stay in room, requires frequent staff engagement**
- ▶ **Indications for transfer to medicine include hypoxia, hypotension, altered mental status, other signs of sepsis**
- ▶ **Should avoid sending patients to medical service if not necessary for medical purposes**
 - **Medical staffs are less likely than psychiatric staffs to be able to engage patients to maintain isolation, increasing risk of spread**
 - **Other risks (e.g. elopement) are also more difficult to mitigate in medical settings**

3

Unique Psychiatric Considerations

Restraint/Seclusion

- ➔ Restrictive interventions cannot be utilized solely because patients refuse to respect isolation precautions (laws will vary by state)
- ➔ Exceptions include situations in which refusal is clearly psychotically motivated
 - In our experience, need for such interventions was rare

3 Unique Psychiatric Considerations Continued...

Personal Protective Equipment

- Many essential items cannot be kept in open areas due to ligature risks or other hazards (e.g., consumption of hand sanitizer)
- PPE is best kept in portable carts (e.g. crash carts) that can be wheeled from room to room

3 Unique Psychiatric Considerations Continued...

Personal Protective Equipment: Masks

- **Standard surgical masks pose minimal ligature or self injury risk**
 - **Benefits of mask wearing outweigh this risk**
- **All patients should be offered masks on arrival and daily thereafter**
- **Much like citizens in the community, patients cannot be forced to wear masks, and uptake will likely vary by region**

3 Unique Psychiatric Considerations Continued...

Court Proceedings

- ▶ **Patients on isolation will not be able to attend in-person court hearings**
- ▶ **It is necessary to have a portable device that can support a teleconferencing app so that hearings can be held from patient rooms when necessary**

Social Distancing: Patients

Meals

➔ All meals should be served in patient rooms

- Could also hold multiple iterations of each meal, but we felt this was too difficult to control
- Our Press-Ganey scores for meals rose substantially during this period

Groups

➔ Groups can continue to be held

- Markings should be placed to ensure seats are 6 feet apart
- Surgical masks should be required
- Staff must keep track of which patients attend groups in order to ensure equity

Social Distancing: Visitors

- **Visitors, including non-hospital clinical staff, should be banned if community transmission is high**
 - **Community members are just as likely (if not more likely) to unknowingly bring the virus onto a unit as are new patients**
 - **Tablets or similar devices should be available on the units so that patients can communicate with loved ones and outside providers**

Social Distancing: Staff

- ➔ **Staff members need to minimize risk of transmission from themselves**
 - **Multi-person events should be held remotely**
 - **All staff must wear masks**
 - **Unlike patients, staff circulate in both the community and the hospital, and if community transmission is high, they pose a greater risk to patients than patients do to staff**

Questions and Answers





NETEC Resources

Amanda Grindle, MSN, RN



NETEC is Here to Help

NETEC will continue to build resources, develop online education, and deliver technical training to meet the needs of our partners

Ask for help!

- ➔ Send questions to info@netec.org - they will be answered by NETEC SMEs
- ➔ Submit a Technical Assistance request at [NETEC.org](https://www.netec.org)

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