

Remembering COVID-19

I have recently started working as an Occupational Therapist for Wellpath Recovery Solutions at Bridgewater State Hospital, a maximum security, forensics hospital that was originally run by the Department of Corrections. The Persons Served (PS) here all have been court ordered to have an evaluation to determine if they are competent to stand trial.

I have had the opportunity to work on multiple units in the hospital, including one which is the COVID unit. Currently everyone is required to wear an N95 mask at all times in the hospital and full PPE must be worn when on the COVID unit.

When I first started working here, each PS was allowed one 30 minute period to come out of their room for the day to ensure proper precautions and social distancing were followed. Since then we have opened up a bit more and each PS has the opportunity to come out of their room for a total of four hours as well as a designated time to go for a walk.

A typical day consists of 1:1 engagement with each PS, provision of worksheets such as word searches, brain teasers, and poems, group activities run in the hallways while the PS stay in their rooms such as Bingo, Music, and Current Events, and card games when the PS are out of their rooms. It is definitely tough having the PS in their rooms for so long and there is a continued effort to dig deep to provide activities to keep everyone engaged while still maintaining our social distancing.

Since I started working amid this epidemic, I have not seen the hospital operating “normally.” However, once we go back to normal I will be facilitating CBT groups as well as many other groups that will cover areas that will be beneficial for each PS health and well-being. There are multiple assessments that can be completed in order to ensure that each PS is receiving the best care possible.

I can't wait for COVID to be over but we are currently making the best of the situation and ensuring that each PS is engaged, cared for, and most importantly, safe.