

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/in-person-psychotherapy>

Selection of protocols

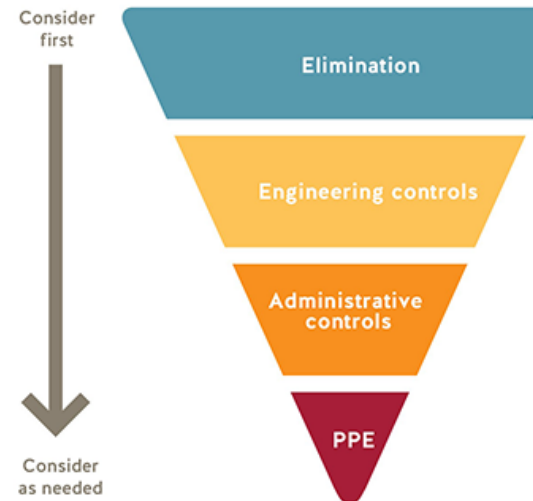
Different protocols offer different protection. We will use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and adding additional protocols as required.

First level protection (elimination): A safe physical distance from one another. The number of people in the office is limited keeping at least 2 meters from others.

Second level protection (engineering controls): If physical distancing cannot be maintained, barriers will separate people.

Third level protection (administrative controls): Using cleaning protocols, devices will not be shared, doors opened for clients, and staggered sessions.

Fourth level protection (PPE): If the first three levels of protection aren't enough to control the risk, non-medical masks will be provided. Ensuring appropriate use of masks. Non-medical masks offer limited protection from respiratory droplets.



Protocols for in-person Psychotherapy

Virtual services

We will:

- Where possible, provide virtual services for clients and offer in-person services only if necessary.
- Use alternate work practices to reduce the number of clients.
- Discuss the plan or policy that speaks to COVID-19 related issues; this will be communicated to clients and help to standardize practices among practitioners.
- Communicate illness policy and safety protocols with clients through email and website before entry into the workplace.
- Adjust cancellation policy to allow for clients to cancel or reschedule in-person appointments without penalty if they develop symptoms.
- Consider whether an informed consent for in-person services during COVID-19 is appropriate; this should be communicated to clients prior to in-person services.
- Consider maintaining virtual services, if in-person informed consent is not agreed upon by client.

Before the appointment

We will:

- Ask clients whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. Ask them to cancel or reschedule their appointment if they develop symptoms or have a family member who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Remind clients of this policy when they arrive for their appointment.
- Ensure that all in-person appointments are scheduled and staggered to allow time to sanitize surfaces between appointments (e.g., schedule a break or virtual session following an in-person appointment) and to minimize contact with others.
- COVID-19 protocols are posted. This may be posted at entrance and/or exit locations, if practicable.
- Clients may consider waiting in their vehicles, or outside the office if possible, until just before their appointment or when they are called or texted to come in.
- Where physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., corridors, small offices, etc.) single-person access into constricted area is required.
- The number of clients in the waiting area is limited to maintain the physical distancing requirement and ensure total number of people do not exceed this limit.
- Waiting area is arranged to maintain the physical distancing requirement.
- There is a direct and accessible route to sit in the waiting area and during the therapy session to ensure physical contact is not required to access the seating area(s).
- Non-essential items from the reception area and treatment areas, such as magazines, booklets, pamphlets, and complimentary phone chargers are removed.
- Where elevator use is required to access the office, ensure clients maintain physical distancing and use of the elevator is staggered.

During the appointment

- Restricting access to clients only where possible (i.e., no children, friends, or family accompaniment allowed). Includes consideration for disabled individuals and those who require accompaniment (e.g., a parent or guardian).
- Providing hand-washing facilities or hand sanitizer for clients to use upon entry to the workplace.
- Using alternative forms of greetings and avoid hand shaking or close contact.
- Implementing alternative forms of treatment that do not require physical contact.
- For couples or family psychotherapy, ensuring that clients who attend are from the same household or "social pod." Where appropriate, video sessions for couples or family psychotherapy to ensure the physical distancing requirement.
- Limiting the use of cash and limiting the handling of credit cards whenever possible, by allowing clients to scan or tap their cards. Encouraging tap payment over pin pad use.
- Limiting the use of communal pens and refraining from exchanging items before and after the appointment (e.g., sending receipts, documents, and reports electronically).

- If it is not possible to maintain physical distancing with clients, offering the use of masks. Masks can reduce the spread of droplets from the wearer, but may not prevent the wearer from inhaling the droplets of others. If a mask is worn it is important to ensure that clients as well as the Psychologist are wearing masks to ensure protection for both parties.

Office Safety Precautions in Effect During the Pandemic

My office is taking the following precautions to protect our patients and help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

- Office seating in the waiting room and in therapy/testing rooms has been arranged for appropriate physical distancing.
- My staff and I wear masks.
- My staff maintains safe distancing.
- Restroom soap dispensers are maintained and everyone is encouraged to wash their hands.
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is available in the therapy/testing rooms, the waiting room and at the reception counter.
- We schedule appointments at specific intervals to minimize the number of people in the waiting room.
- We ask all patients to wait in their cars or outside until no earlier than 5 minutes before their appointment times.
- Credit card pads, pens and other areas that are commonly touched are thoroughly sanitized after each use.
- Physical contact is not permitted.
- Tissues and trash bins are easily accessed. Trash is disposed of on a frequent basis.
- Common areas are thoroughly disinfected at the end of each day.