

## COVID-19

### Guidelines for Return to In-person Services

As various provinces and territories across Canada, and various states across the United States of America, begin to ease business restrictions related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the College recognizes many vocational rehabilitation and evaluation professionals may be concerned about how to ensure their personal safety, the safety of their clients, and the safety of others with whom they have contact. To assist Registrants with providing the safest and best possible services to members of the public, the College has prepared the following guidelines, however, it is incumbent on all Registrants to ensure they are informed of regulations relevant to their geographic area of practice and follow those directives accordingly.

**The following guidelines are not to replace or overtake any local legislation/law. If your government requires further actions and/or precautions, then you must adhere and follow them.**

Once in-person services with clients resume, Registrants must prioritize the safety of their clients, coworkers, and staff, as well as other members of the public potentially accessing their practice location. This may include (but is not limited to):

1. Until a Registrant's local authorities permit a return to full, non-urgent provider services, Registrants will provide services virtually to clients, such as through telephone or video conferencing, to ensure public safety. Even in the event that public safety measures permit in-person service interactions, if a client has any conditions which impose the need for additional safeguards, and such safeguards cannot be met, then the Registrant must use their professional judgement to reassign services to virtual methods such as telephone or videoconferencing methods.
2. Registrants are to refrain from providing any personal opinions or advice to clients about the COVID-19 pandemic, which has the potential to influence clients to take measures that are contrary to their local government regulations, the advice of their local public health office and/or other authoritative bodies. Any such advice may be considered a boundary violation and/or practicing outside of one's scope of practice.

3. Registrants will make reasonable efforts to follow social distancing practices such as:
  - a. Limiting the number of people accessing the Registrant's office space according to the relative space available and the need to adhere to appropriate social distancing guidelines. If the necessary social distancing guidelines cannot be met, then in-person interactions would be considered prohibited.
  - b. Rearranging furniture such as chairs in a waiting room to promote social distancing as needed.
  - c. Instructing clients and other persons accessing the practice location to wait in their vehicles, if possible, until it is safe to enter the practice area.
4. Prior to any in-person interactions, Registrants, their colleagues, staff, and any other persons accessing the Registrant's service area must ensure that they pass screening criteria in their local jurisdiction. For illustrative purposes, the Ministry of Health Screening Guidelines for Ontario can be located [here](#). Clients must be pre-screened, such as through phone or videoconferencing prior to accessing the practice site. Registrants must document all information gathered pertaining to the screening process.
5. Clients must be screened again when they access the practice site prior to the commencement of any vocation/rehabilitation services.
6. If any person in the practice site presents with signs and/or symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or any risk factors, the Registrant must immediately:
  - a. Establish and maintain a distance of two metres between the individual of concern and any other persons.
  - b. Have the individual complete hand hygiene and cover their nose/mouth.
  - c. Have the individual contact their local medical officer of health or public health office for further direction.
  - d. Clean and disinfect all affected areas immediately.
  - e. Maintain thorough documents on any potentially exposed persons so as to enable contact tracing.
  - f. Follow up with the affected person(s) virtually as needed and maintain a record of such follow-ups.

7. Registrants will take the necessary precautions to ensure their practice areas are safe and sanitary, such as:
  - a. Sanitizing frequently touched surfaces in the Registrant's private workspace prior to interacting with each client.
  - b. Having hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations available and requiring clients and any person accompanying them to perform hand hygiene when they first access the Registrant's private workspace.
  - c. Repeating hand hygiene procedures as often as necessary (i.e. if a client leaves the practice area to take a break and then returns).
  - d. Wear a facemask and ask that clients and any person accompanying them wear a mask properly covering the nose and mouth, and that they do not remove their mask for the entire duration of their appointments.
  - e. Instruct clients to refrain from bringing family members or any other person to the practice location unless absolutely necessary and germane to the client's appointment, such as a personal attendant, interpreter or a guardian in the case of a minor.
  
8. Registrants will notify clients of any areas which clients (or persons accompanying them) will be exposed to in the process of accessing the Registrant's private workspace, if the above-noted sanitation measures in those areas are outside of the Registrant's control. This includes, but is not limited to, shared entranceways in buildings, elevators, stairwells, hallways, cafeterias and restrooms.

BOD Approved Virtual Vote May 21, 2020