



Saskatchewan College of Psychologists

Practice Considerations In Light of COVID19 - FAQs

- 1) Is there a duty to report to the health authorities a client who has travelled overseas recently and who indicated that they may have been exposed to the virus.**
 - The provincial legislation pertaining to public health (the Public Health Act / Disease Control Regulations) do not appear to have a requirement for this profession to report.* Clients however should be encouraged to self-identify and to seek medical advice as to how to proceed.
 - *Consultation occurred with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Sask. in regard to obligations under the legislation however this is not intended to be a substitute for legal consultation.
 - There are a number of pieces of legislation that pertain to Public Health (e.g. Quarantine Act - federal, the Public Health Act, Disease Control Regulations) that members of the profession should be familiar with. The privacy legislation is also germane to the question.
 - In general the Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) would suggest a duty to maintain client privacy, and the confidentiality of client health information unless required by law to act otherwise. This is congruent with the guidance provided within the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (Code) and the SCP Professional Practice Guidelines (Guidelines).
 - The Code and the Guidelines also direct members to abide by prevailing laws. Should there be a change in legislation requiring mandatory reporting it is advisable to seek legal consultation, and consultation with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Saskatchewan prior to taking action.
- 2) If I get ill with COVID19 or I believe that I have been exposed to it and should self-quarantine, what are my obligations and responsibilities?**
 - The Code and Guidelines would support immediately withdrawing from practice and providing immediate notification to clients that you have had contact with, about their potential exposure, along with encouraging them to consult with their health practitioner.
 - You should also provide clients with information in regard to emergency services and any coverage that will be available to them in your absence.
- 3) Given the direction from government to limit social contact (social distancing), can I cancel appointments or offer services via technology?**
 - As this is a novel situation that we do not yet have a full understanding of, it is reasonable and is being advised by the government to limit contact where possible.

- If you wish to cancel appointments it is important to notify your clients as soon as possible, and to inform them of what is available to them during this time, and especially in the case of an emergency.
- Practice via technology is allowable congruent with the considerations outlined in question #5 below.

4) What if I want to continue seeing clients in person during this public health crisis?

- The College cannot make a decision for you about whether or not you continue to provide in-person services in light of the current public health crisis.
- If you choose to continue seeing clients in person, it is important that they are given the opportunity to refuse this without consequence. Thus if you have a cancellation fee for cancellations without X hours of notice, you may wish to consider waiving the fee for the time being in light of COVID 19 and the panic that is an understandable outcome.

5) Is it reasonable to ask clients before scheduling an appointment about their potential exposure to COVID19?

- Yes this is reasonable.
- If a client has a cough or other symptoms it is reasonable to ask them to reschedule or look for alternate means of delivering a service to them.

6) Can I provide services via technology?

- Provision of services via technology is acceptable if one has competence in providing services via the modality they wish to use, and if that modality of providing services is congruent with the client's needs and capabilities.
- Also key to the provision of services via technology is ensuring that informed consent for services delivered in this manner is obtained, ensuring the security of the modality, ensuring the confidentiality of client information, and having a back-up plan in the event of technology failure.
- If you wish to provide services via technology you are advised to review the advisory on the College website entitled "Model Standards for Telepsychology Service Delivery" (<http://www.skcp.ca/pdf%20files/telehealth-advisory.pdf>).
- The College is unable to recommend a specific conferencing platform to utilize for the provision of services. Members have the responsibility to do due diligence in establishing a secure conferencing platform if this is how they wish to deliver services.
- If clients are uncomfortable with having services delivered via technology, it is important to provide them with alternatives if possible, and if not possible assist them in identifying alternative services and facilitate the transfer of their personal health information to another provider if requested.

7) Are there any general considerations about promoting safe practice that I can implement in my practice?

- You may wish to post signs in your reception area identifying the symptoms of COVID19 and asking clients to self-identify if they are experiencing any of these.
- You may wish to relax any appointment rescheduling and cancellation policies you have in your practice until such time the risk has passed e.g. waive cancellation fees.

- Make tissues, a garbage can, and hand sanitizer (or a handwashing station) available in your setting.
- Ensure that high-touch surfaces (such as doorknobs, light switches, phones and sink faucets) are cleaned with a disinfectant regularly, or even between client appointments.
- Engage in proper the handwashing technique between sessions with clients.
- Seek medical care early if you yourself are experiencing any symptoms of the virus.

8) I am a provisional member and I am required to have a minimum of 6 hours of in-person supervision for every 160 hours or practice. In light of the recommendation from the government to limit in-person contact where possible how should my supervisor and I proceed?

- The Registration Committee of the College will accept supervision hours logged via technology effective immediately and until further notice. The supervision hours should be clearly logged in your practice log.
- Supervision must still occur at the same rate but can occur via telephone or video conferencing. Direct observation of your work with clients must still occur however this can be done through video recording or a secure conferencing platform.

9) The College's continuing education requirement for the 2020 practice year may be difficult to obtain in light of the cancellation of many conferences and meetings. How will this be handled by the College?

- For the 2020 practice year the College will accept that the required minimum number of hours (10) of direct participatory activity will not likely be met in most cases.
- The 2020 requirement will continue to be 20 hours, but the hours can be obtained via self-directed study and online offerings. Members are reminded that it is important to maintain an accurate record of their CE activities as these will be important in the event you are chosen for an audit.

10) Where can I get accurate information in regard to COVID19?

- Current information in regard to COVID19 can be found at www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus