

Dear Member

COVID-19 - DECIDING TO RETURN TO FACE-TO-FACE WORK

Many Counsellors and Psychotherapists are now considering how and when they can safely return to face-to-face work.

Whilst it is always essential to observe Government guidelines, members for the most part are faced with making individual, ethically founded decisions on this important issue.

As the risk of virus transmission cannot be completely eradicated, the decision to re-commence face to face work should be based on balancing of the risk of transmission for both client, therapist and possible third-party contacts against the risk to the client of not having a face -to -face service (see previous guidance). In short, is the client's well -being so compromised by having to work remotely that re-commencing face-to face sessions is a reasonable and justified course of action?

Any return to face-to face work must prioritise safety and take every reasonable precaution to contain the risk of transmission of Covid-19.

A helpful way of approaching this would be to develop an individual **risk protocol for your own practice setting.**

This could include:-

- the mode of entering and leaving the premises
- a checklist of areas/items to be sanitised/protected/removed.
- safe access to toilets
- safe provision of drinking water and tissues
- protection of chairs/furniture,
- use (if any) of PPE
- avoidance of physical contact
- procedure should either therapist or client develop symptoms, test positive for Covid-19 or have contact with someone COVID 19 positive.
- Clients should be aware of the precautions you are taking.

Remember to confirm that your insurance will not be invalidated and that your therapeutic executor arrangements are ready and available.

The above is not an exhaustive list of items to consider and members should develop protocols for their own particular setting and, where necessary, with each client.

The BACP website <http://bacp.co.uk> and UKCP website <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk> Are both useful further sources of information

With best wishes in these difficult times

John Fletcher

Chair UKAHPP