

Coronavirus (Covid – 19) Guidelines 18th March

At COSRT we are closely monitoring the situation with the Coronavirus, Covid-19, and these Guidelines are in line with government guidance. The current guidance recommends social distancing and wherever possible working remotely. As such because of either your age, being in isolation, an underlying condition or other personal factors, you may now switch to working online for the delivery of therapy and supervision. This includes students in training.

General advice for Client /Supervisions Sessions

COSRT Members work in many environments and some will be subject to the advice and terms and conditions of the organisation they work within. These guidelines are not meant to be supersede these or be prescriptive, but to offer a sound common sense framework at this time of disruption.

Contingency Plans the switch to online therapy

Where possible we need to limit any disruption to the service users' therapy and the therapists supervision. This is a frightening and uncertain time for us all and we can expect that anxiety will be exacerbated both within therapy and supervision sessions. To ensure that we are still able to offer service users sex and relationship therapy and/or supervision you can offer remote sessions via electronic means e.g. Zoom, VSee, Facetime, Cisco Webex, Microsoft Team etc, or the phone.

Simple tutorials on how to use any of these can be found on "you tube"

<https://www.youtube.com/>

Or if in any doubt, or you need more help please contact :

Jo Coker jo.coker@cosrt.org.uk

Please ensure that:

1. You read the attached practice guideline for working online.
2. You prepare your service user ideally in advance of the change.
3. That your service user/ supervisor/supervisee has access to and knows how to use the platform you use.
4. You have a lockable storage area in which you can keep client notes, to which no-one else has access
5. You have an appropriate, confidential space in which to offer the remote sessions.
6. Your Supervisor is aware you are offering on-line session from home.
7. You inform your insurer and heed any advice they offer.
8. You make any required changes to you service user agreement.

Students on COSRT Accredited Courses

COSRT have confirmed that in these unusual circumstances, working remotely with service users with these stipulations is allowable for students on placement, with the permission and guidance of course directors, supervisors and appropriate insurance in place . They also may receive supervision remotely.

Vulnerable service users

For service users who are in a distressed and vulnerable state and in your opinion require imminent and ongoing face-to-face therapy sessions, you may need to consider referring them to another psychotherapist, psychotherapeutic counsellor or professional who is able to offer this support at this time if you cannot. Consider providing details of emergency support and help for the service user in your absence.

At this stage the advice is to continue with the therapy and supervision our service users need remotely, heeding government advice on a day by day basis. We will do our best to communicate to this as appropriate.

For those still seeing clients face to face please observe these guidelines

The term service user is used which may apply to a client sessions or supervision sessions

- Please make available hand sanitiser and use before each session and ask your service user to do the same.
- You may wish to invite potential service users to check their temperature before entry.
- Please wash your hand between sessions.
- Please have a tissue with you at all times and offer a tissue to your service user as they enter the session. If you need to use the tissue to sneeze or to blow your nose, place it directly in the bin, and sanitise your hands. Advise your service user to do the same.
- If you unexpectedly sneeze, use the crook of your elbow and not your hand.
- Please do not make direct physical contact with service user and observe sensible social distancing. No handshakes.
- Where appropriate and possible, please empty your bin at the end of your clinic.
- Wash any drink glasses used thoroughly with hot water and washing up liquid.
- Where possible please spray your door handle and desk with the antibacterial cleaner at the end of every session.
- Please wash your hands for 20 seconds at every break.
- If you have recently travelled from affected regions, please do not conduct sessions. Please advise your service user not to attend sessions.
- If you have travelled and have been isolated for 14 days since returning, with no symptoms of the virus, you may attend in person. Please advise your service user to do the same.
- If you have symptoms – temperature, cough, difficulty breathing – do not attend sessions. Please advise your service user to do the same.
- If you or your service user think you have been exposed to the virus, DO NOT go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Call NHS 111 or use their [online coronavirus service](#) which will advise you what to do.
- For more detailed guidance on how to prevent the transmission of this virus please look [here](#).
- Re-schedule sessions for when you or your service user are better and symptom free or if possible move to online sessions.
- Explore the possibility of on-line sessions with your service user as a contingency so this is a planned for event rather than crisis management. Discuss what arrangements you are likely to put in place if therapy is disrupted due to events

beyond yours and your service users' control. This is especially important in vulnerable service user groups.

- Be aware that vulnerable groups are not just the elderly but those who because of underlying disease may be immune compromised. This information may not be held by you so be sensitive to how a service user identifies themselves.
- Ensure you provide a full explanation of how on-line therapy/ supervision / phone sessions will work.
- You may need to consider your cancellation policy and amend in these unique circumstances.
- We suggest that a brief action plan sheet outlining these facts is given to your service users for clarity and reference and available on your website.
- If you become ill at work ensure you inform the building manager so that any deep cleaning and health precautions can be taken.
- Ensure you have any contact detail you need on you at all times in case of sudden closure of a building or clinic. Discuss with your manager protocols around GDPR for this eventuality.

If you have any queries or are unsure how to use electronic platforms please contact Jo Coker <mailto:jo.coker@cosrt.org.uk>

We will be updating our approach daily so watch out for emails entitled **Coronavirus Update.**:

