

# COVID-19 BABCP Statement

In light of the COVID-19 situation BABCP is issuing the following information:

Please note: For information on how to protect yourself from the Coronavirus you should always follow the latest [Government advice](#).

## Members in employment (with a service provider, agency etc)

You should be guided by your employer.

## Members in private practice

We recognise that members in private practice may potentially feel conflicted in terms of providing a continuity of service whilst ensuring the safety of yourself and others.

The BABCP Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics guides all our members. The first principle is 'You must act in the best interest of service users'. Considering current and developing health risks, this principle also states:

*1.3 You must not do anything or fail to do anything, or allow someone else to do anything that you have good reason to believe will put the health or safety of a service user or others in danger.*

*1.5 You must protect service users or others if you believe that any situation puts them in danger. This includes the conduct, performance or health of a colleague. The safety of service users and others must come before other loyalties at all times.*

If you follow Government advice and suspend face-to-face therapy (for whatever reason), please consider whether you are able to provide services by another means. This may be by telephone or online sessions.

If telephone or online sessions are to be conducted, please consider whether your service user would benefit from these or not.

If online sessions are carried out, please consider the security of any systems you may have in place. You will also need to have the agreement of the service user.

## If you become unwell

If you become unwell, you must follow Government advice. If you are unsure of your symptoms you are advised to call 111 to seek further guidance.

If, after testing, it is confirmed that you have Coronavirus, the NHS will guide you further.

If you are unwell in normal circumstances, consider how your clients would ordinarily be seen. Do you have associates or other therapists in place who can see them, for instance?

## BABCP CPD Events

At the time of writing, workshops which are listed on our website are going ahead as planned, although this may change at very short notice. If any event is to be cancelled as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak, we will be in touch with all affected delegates.

Note that as per the cancellation policy BABCP will not be liable for the costs incurred from booking of any travel, accommodation or associated costs.

### Psychotherapeutic practice and working in isolation

This guidance is for UKCP members who may not be able to see clients face-to-face or have clients who may not be able to attend sessions for health reasons.

Please note that the UKCP Code of Ethics and Professional Practice must be adhered to irrespective of whether clients are seen in person, online or otherwise.

If you are unable to provide therapy in person to a client because you are in isolation and/or unwell consider the following:

- Explore this situation with your clients before it happens and discuss what arrangements you are likely to put in place if therapy is disrupted due to events beyond yours and your client's control.
- Consider as part of this arrangement what information you will provide to your clients and how that information is to be conveyed. For example, a simple text message from you to the client about your unavailability may be enough for them. Others may require more information/reassurance so that they are aware that this is a temporary departure from usual therapy arrangements. Ask yourself: 'How will my client react if I am unable to give face-to-face therapy and what do I feel is the best way to tell them this information?'
- Consider sharing with them the likely duration until 'normal' therapeutic arrangements will resume or when you will be able to give them an update so that they are not left feeling in the dark and anxious about your wellbeing. Even if the update is to notify your clients that you don't know when normal therapy will resume, this is better than not providing any updates.
- If you are able to provide psychotherapeutic support to clients but are unable to see them physically face-to-face, consider if you and the client have the means, competence and facilities to conduct online therapy safely and securely and whether this is appropriate for the client and you.
- For clients who are in a distressed and vulnerable state and in your opinion require imminent and ongoing face-to-face therapy sessions, consider referring them to another psychotherapist, psychotherapeutic counsellor or professional who is able to offer this support. Consider providing details of emergency support and help for the client in your absence.
- Keep your supervisor informed of the situation.
- Do not charge your clients if you are unable to provide your usual psychotherapeutic support and they do not accept other arrangements you offer.

If your client is unable to attend their psychotherapy sessions in person because they are in isolation and/or unwell consider the following:

- What psychotherapeutic support are they likely to need and how can it be delivered safely without your physical health being impacted?
- Consider if you and the client have the means, competence and facilities to conduct online therapy safely and securely and whether this is appropriate and suitable for you and the client.
- Consider the fee arrangements you have in place with your clients and explore whether these still apply in your client's absence and if so, how it may affect your psychotherapeutic relationship with your client.