

BAMT Guidance for Music Therapists during the COVID-19 outbreak

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Introduction

This set of guidelines aims to support music therapists working as freelancers or private practitioners, and employed music therapists who may appreciate additional help alongside their employer guidelines. This is a live document which will be updated regularly until further notice, as public advice changes.

This is not an exhaustive set of guidelines, neither does BAMT oblige music therapists to work exactly in the methods outlined; rather, this document may provide you with useful information about some questions you may have about your work during this time of uncertainty.

BAMT is not a regulating body. Any guidance from the [HCPC](#) takes precedence over guidance from BAMT, and this guidance would be amended to become in line with HCPC guidance should there be any differences.

Clinical Sessions

Depending on where you work and the type of client groups you work with, it may be possible to continue sessions in person or remotely. Therapy is allowed to continue face-to-face under current guidelines (January 2021) - see the end of the section “Where and when you can meet in larger groups” [here](#).

Remote sessions

It should be possible to run a remote session similarly to an in-person session. If your client does not have instruments available to them, they may wish to consider singing or talking as part of their work, if they can.

The following should be considered to ensure client safety (with particular thanks to Chiltern Music Therapy for these points):

- All clients should have access to the agreed software, a secure internet connection, and a private room to ensure confidentiality.
- For clients aged under 18 who can access remote sessions independently, a support staff or family member should be available for a check-in at the start and end of the session and contactable by phone should there be any issues during a session.
- For clients of any age who are not able to access remote sessions independently, a support staff or family member must be able to facilitate the session as guided by the therapist.

If this differs from your employer or contractor’s advice, please refer to their guidance first.

Types of music therapy to offer

In some cases, it may not be possible or desirable to offer music therapy exactly as usual. You may wish to consider other musical resources in your toolkit that may feel appropriate or useful to offer as part of a remote session. Some examples include:

- Songwriting
- Adding lyrics over instrumentals or loops (pre-composed or devised in-session)
- Receptive music therapy, including sharing playlists
- Guided Imagery in Music techniques (if you are a qualified GIM practitioner)

Phone and Online session guidance (with particular thanks to North London Music Therapy and Chiltern Music Therapy)

It may be possible to run online or phone music therapy sessions using one of the following software programs:

ENCRYPTED: Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Signal, Microsoft Teams

UNENCRYPTED but still suitable if consent is given and understood: Google Hangout, Microsoft Classroom

You must continue to be mindful of GDPR compliance, and it may be worth checking if your software company has a statement on GDPR. For further information, please refer to the [ICO](#) and [NCSC](#) guidance.

Client safety must be maintained as part of online and phone sessions. Therapists running online or phone sessions must take steps to ensure a professional background is presented: a quiet, neutral space with no disturbances while sessions are taking place. No people or pets should be in the background. In addition, for online sessions, there should be no personal pictures or other objects in the background that would give a “home-like” feel.

BAMT would recommend that remote sessions take place at the same time in-person music therapy would usually take place. Your client should also be somewhere quiet, where they are unlikely to be disturbed.

If your client has instruments they may wish to bring them to where they are, and they may wish to consider singing. It may be helpful to pre-warn your client that music making online and over the phone can feel more difficult than music making in person, so they may feel they would prefer to talk for the whole session - if so, that is ok.

1. Your client (or their carer) should be responsible for contacting their therapist at the time their session is due to start. It is this way round so the client has the option of “making the journey” to their therapy as they usually would.

2. The session will continue as usually as possible.
3. You as therapist should let your client know when it is time to finish your session. It is then your client's (or carer's) responsibility to hang up or leave the virtual session and to finish the session, again to allow them to "leave" therapy as they usually would.

Further advice on using Zoom

As a significant number of remote music therapy is taking place over Zoom, BAMT recommends the following additional considerations. We would recommend ensuring the Advanced Settings are set to the following options for all remote sessions:

1. Make sure your meeting is password protected.
2. Avoid sharing the meeting ID where possible.
3. Set the screen sharing option to "host only" before the meeting begins.
4. Always enable a waiting room in case your client arrives early for their session.

Using the paid version of Zoom has increased options for sharing and advance security.

Precautionary advice

BAMT would not recommend using YouTube or any open access streaming service for music therapy sessions. While it may be desirable to livestream music as part of an open access service, BAMT would not recommend advertising this as music therapy, as this may give a false impression to some online users. For further guidance, please refer to the HCPC's Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, which can be found [here](#).

Remote Group Sessions, with particular thanks to North London Music Therapy

BAMT would recommend holding group sessions using Zoom as it has the greatest capability within the software. We would recommend using the same Zoom setup as described above and that the group lasts for as long as it would do if it were being held face to face.

As music therapy groups usually involve active participation it may be beneficial to prepare all participants beforehand that it will be most helpful to them to keep their camera on for the entirety of the group, while remaining mindful that this may not be possible for every group member throughout an entire session.

If your service users require carers to be present in order to facilitate their attendance, this should be accommodated. You may find it helpful to reiterate that each person on the Zoom call should be an active participant as part of each session, regardless of whether they are a service user or a carer.

Postponing Sessions

If you find you are unable to continue sessions in any form, you will be facing many conversations with clients, families and carers during this anxiety-provoking time. Scheduling diarised time to talk with families will ensure you have enough time to think through with everyone affected what the recent changes mean for them, and to identify and signpost towards any immediate support needed.

Support for families and carers outside of sessions

BAMT has an [open-access page](#) with a list of guidelines and resources for use during COVID19 and beyond, providing information, leaflets, websites and other resources for additional support. For SEND clients, your council's Local Offer (available on council websites) will have information on local support for SEND.

Apps and other online resources (with particular thanks to Irene LoCoco and Liz Coombes)

KORG has made the iKaossilator free for a limited time: [Website](#) | [App Store](#) | [Google Play](#)

Moog has made the Minimoog Model D Synthesiser free for a limited time: [App Store](#) | currently not available on Android

BandLab: [Website](#) | [App Store](#) | [Google Play](#)

Fingertip Maestro: [App Store](#) | currently not available on Android

NodeBeat: [Website](#) | [App Store](#) | [Google Play](#)

SoundForest: [App Store](#) | currently not available on Android

Blocs Wave: [Website](#) | [App Store](#) | [Android](#)

Bloom (paid): [App Store](#) | [Google Play](#)

In-person sessions

For the most up to date guidance regarding in-person sessions please refer to BAMT's sister document, "BAMT Guidance for Music Therapists working alongside COVID-19".

Key Workers

BAMT has heard reports of some music therapists continuing work on the grounds of being classed as a key worker. If you are unsure whether this applies to you, check with your employer or contractor first. You may wish to refer to [this government guidance](#) for further support.

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision should be able to take place remotely and in a similar way to in-person supervision. Please refer to BAMT's supervision guidelines in the first instance for recommended supervision practice and technique.

Remote supervision guidance

BAMT recommends Zoom as the preferred software for use during online clinical supervision. Zoom is encrypted, and is free to access for all. It is possible to share screens in order to play session recordings. It is also possible to record supervision - please refer to GDPR guidelines for more information regarding this.

Zoom have provided a series of training videos [here](#).

Should you prefer to improvise as part of your supervision, it should be possible to do this over Zoom if you and your supervisor have instruments at home. It is likely that your internet connection will need to be extremely reliable and fast to minimise latency as part of supervision.

Music Therapy Training

Please keep up to date with information from your training provider as to specific arrangements for attending seminars and workshops. Please also refer to your training provider as to specific arrangements regarding assignments and viva voces. BAMT's Training and Education Committee and our CEO, Andrew Langford, continue to work with all training providers.

With thanks to

Adrienne Freeman, Anglia Ruskin University, Andrew Langford, BAMT Board of Trustees, British Association of Art Therapists, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Chiltern Music Therapy, Chroma, Derby University, East London NHS Foundation Trust, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Jonathan Cousins-Booth, Martin Lawes, Music Therapy Lambeth, Nordoff Robbins, North London Music Therapy, Roehampton University, Steve Cobbett, Suffolk Music Therapy, University of Limerick, University of South Wales, University of the West of England, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh