

## **TCS Practice and the Coronavirus**

### **Protocols for online and telephone counselling**

- Where possible we will provide virtual services for clients and offer in-person services when the situation allows face to face contact.
- Communicate illness policy and safety protocols with clients through email or website
- Ensure that the cancellation policy is clear for clients to cancel or reschedule in-person appointments without penalty if they develop symptoms or transfer to online or telephone

### **Before the face to face appointment**

- Ask clients when booking whether they have symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. Ask them to cancel or reschedule their appointment if they develop symptoms or have a family member who has confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Remind clients of this policy when they arrive for their appointment.
- Risk assess counsellors and clients for age, ethnicity, pre-existing health conditions
- Ensure that all in-person appointments are scheduled and staggered to allow time to sanitize surfaces between appointments (e.g., schedule a break or virtual session following an in-person appointment) and to minimize contact with others.
- Consider asking clients to wait in their vehicles, or outside the office if possible, until just before their appointment or when they are called or texted to come in.
- Ask clients to wear masks in communal areas. Consider single-person access if entry into constricted area is required.
- If we are able to public waiting areas should be arranged to maintain the physical distancing requirement. (not under our control in either Westview or Milroy House)
- Provide clients with a direct and accessible route to sit in the waiting area and during the therapy session to ensure physical contact is not required to access the seating area(s).
- Remove non-essential items from the room, such as sweets, magazines, booklets, pamphlets, and complimentary phone chargers.
- Address confidentiality issues if track and trace contact tracing is necessary
- Encourage clients not to bring non-essential items to the session i.e. bags, sunglasses, pens, paper etc.

### **During the face to face appointment**

- Restrict access to clients only where possible (i.e. no children, friends, or family accompaniment allowed). Include consideration for disabled individuals and those who require accompaniment (e.g., a parent or guardian).
- Provide handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer for clients to use upon entry to the workplace.
- Use alternative forms of greetings and avoid hand shaking or close contact.
- For couples or family counselling, ensure that clients who attend are from the same household or "social pod." Where appropriate, consider outdoor sessions for couples or family counselling to ensure the physical distancing requirement.

# TCS

## Tenterden Counselling Service.

- Explain the use of Use Pay Pal on the web site and the drop off envelope service via the Town Hall for payments, as far as possible.
- Limit the use of communal writing pens and refrain from exchanging items before and after the appointment (e.g., send receipts, documents, and reports electronically).

Where it is not possible to maintain physical distancing with clients, ask counsellors and clients to use masks. Masks can reduce the spread of droplets from the wearer but may not prevent the wearer from inhaling the droplets of others. It is therefore important to consider seriously whether clients as well as the counsellor are wearing masks to ensure protection for both parties.

Practise social distancing. Keep at least one metre + away from clients (ideally two metres for extended periods, i.e. over 10 minutes). Avoid hand-shaking or other physical contact.

- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after each client.
- Regularly disinfect door handles, hand-rests of chairs, computers, laptops, phones, writing implements etc. between clients.
- Make sure tissues are available to clients (if they weren't already) so they can practice the mantra "catch it, bin it, kill it". Pre-divide tissues into batches so that you can provide clients with their own portion – don't have one central box of tissues that could become contaminated.
- If you provide a bin for tissues, make sure it is emptied between clients and use appropriate measures to prevent yourself from coming in contact with the contents – or ask clients to take their tissues home and dispose of them themselves.
- Air out the consulting room where possible by opening windows etc.
- Use your judgement: if you have any doubts about your own health or that of your client, take the appropriate steps. This may include self-isolation, sign-posting clients to resources such as NHS111 or PHE and notifying other individuals who you may have been in contact with (or who may be affected).
- TCS should provide tissues, hand sanitiser, bin with lid. Ask the client to bring mask (needs it for entrance anyway), water, tissues (preferably), own hand gel (preferably)
- Counsellor to sanitise the room before the next client. To do this each session needs to have at least a gap of 30 mins between clients.