

COVID-19 Practice Guidelines for Psychologists and Psychological Associates

The Board of Psychologists and Psychological Associate Examiners offers the following suggestions to its licensees, per the State of Alaska Health [Mandate 15](#), to assist them in deciding how and when to transition from providing remote telehealth services to direct in-person services. It is not an exhaustive list and is intended as guidance; good judgment should be exercised.

1. We are still learning about COVID-19. Licensees need to base their decision making on scientific rather than political sources of information. Licensees need to rely on reputable sources such as the state's Unified Command Task Force, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO).
2. Licensees are encouraged to maintain social distancing and continue providing remote telehealth services for the time being during the declared State of Emergency by the Governor.
3. Licensees may exercise discretion in seeing clients face to face whose needs cannot be met through remote telehealth services.
4. Decision making needs to balance the needs of the client with the risks of exposure and transmission.
5. Sanitize all surfaces (e.g., chairs, couches, door handles, table and counter tops) per [CDC](#) recommendations prior to each in-person appointment. Do not schedule face-to-face sessions with clients who are reporting symptoms of fever, respiratory problems (coughing, sneezing, runny nose, etc.) or are just not feeling well. Prior to face-to-face client services, clients should be verbally screened for such symptoms. Do not schedule clients who have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 2 weeks.

Standard questions include:

- 1. Have you been confirmed positive for COVID-19?*
 - 2. Are you currently experiencing or recently experienced any acute respiratory illness symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath?*
 - 3. Have you knowingly been in close contact with any persons who have been confirmed positive for COVID-19?*
 - 4. Have you knowingly been in close contact with any persons who have traveled and are also exhibiting acute respiratory illness symptoms?*
6. Do not use a waiting room or other public gathering areas. Have clients wait in their vehicles outside and call them in when it is time for their appointments
 7. If distance of 6 feet between therapist and client can be maintained and all other precautions are being observed use of masks can be a matter of choice for the client and clinician.
 8. No physical contact — no handshakes, hugs, etc.
 9. Allow enough time between sessions to sanitize all surfaces before starting the next session.