

COVID-19 Safety Plan

At Speech Meta, our guidelines follow those that the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals recommends. The guidelines that they have recommended to practitioners are developed collaboratively by BC Health Regulators, with expertise and direction provided by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), and WorkSafeBC. According to CSHBC, the guidance, which is applicable for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects the best evidence available at this time and will change as required to reflect updates in our understanding of the virus and its transmission. Resources that are linked to in their guidance are also subject to change and therefore CSHBC will monitor changes and update the guidance. For the most up to date information about COVID-19, please visit the HealthLink BC www.healthlinkbc.ca and The BC Centre for Disease Control www.covid-19.bccdc.ca.

With restrictions begin to ease, following announcements from Premier John Horgan and PHO Dr. Bonnie Henry about BC's Restart Plan, we will begin re-opening our doors for in-person sessions on June 1, 2020. This does not mean that we will resume all in clinic sessions immediately for all clients, all SLPs at Speech Meta will carefully adjust on how we deliver care to our clients and attend to physical environments to ensure best infection prevention and control practices. Speech Meta, at this current stage, continues to recommend virtual care for all of our clients as it is still considered the safest option during the pandemic and in-person services will proceed only when the anticipated benefits of such services outweigh the risks to the client and the Speech Pathologist. Speech Meta will prioritize clients based on, including but not limited to: 1) acuity and severity of the client's functioning level and condition, 2) functional impairment or impact of the condition on the client's quality of life, 3) the impact of not receiving services, 4) inability to communicate via virtual platforms, 5) necessity of services that can be provided in-person.

Section A:

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A-1: Pre-Screening & Self-assessment for symptoms of COVID-19

All clients must follow the guidelines as listed below prior to their in-person visit:

- Clients will receive a COVID-19 self assessment survey prior to their first in-person appointment
- Clients will need to sign a form indicating that they are committed to using the COVID-19 self-assessment tool prior to attending all of their in-person sessions, confirming the following:
 - No symptoms or signs (even if they are mild) of COVID-19, including fever, cough, chills, shortness of breath, sore throat, pain with swallowing, stuffy or runny nose, loss of sense of smell, headache, muscle aches, fatigue and loss of appetite.
 - They have not been in contact with anyone displaying illnesses, signs or symptoms of COVID-19 with 14 days prior to their treatment.
 - All family members of the client in the household have not travelled outside British Columbia within 14 days prior to the appointment
 - They understand that client with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and treatment options.
- A temperature reading will be taken at the door prior entry

All staff, therapist, and workers at Speech Meta:

- must conduct a COVID-19 self-assessment of themselves daily and cancel, reschedule, or provide tele-therapy sessions if any symptoms appear. They also need to agree that they have not been in contact with anyone displaying illnesses, signs or symptoms of COVID-19 with 14 days prior to their treatment. All family members of the therapist in the household have not travelled outside British Columbia within 14 days prior to their appointment with the client. They understand that workers with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider providing care to clients via virtual options or can refer clients to another clinician to receive care.

A-2: Arrival & Departure

- Clients are asked to arrive on time for appointments.
- Clients are not permitted to sit in the clinic reception area or the waiting area before or after the appointment, and all toys and books are removed from the waiting area.
- Clients are asked not to bring any unnecessary belongings to the clinic. For important personal belongings, we will provide a bin for you at the corner of each room so the bin can be disinfected easily after you leave.
- Clients are asked not to be accompanied by more than 1 adult/caregiver. Siblings are not allowed to wait in the waiting area.
- Upon arrival, you will need to provide verbal consent that you have completed the COVID-19 self survey and there are no concerns of COVID-19 based on the assessment results.



- The session will be cancelled immediately if you do not meet the pre-screening criteria upon physical presentation at the clinic and cancellation fees are still in effect.
- Clients or family members with seasonal allergies cannot be easily differentiated from COVID-19 symptoms and therefore the session cannot be conducted in person at this time.
- Upon your arrival, you will be walked to the bathroom or pantry area where you can wash your hands with soap and water before entering the therapy room.
- Masks are mandatory in the office for family members. If you have a mask, please bring it with you. If you do not have a mask, you can purchase a mask from us for \$1.00. Your mask must be worn when entering the clinic and during your child's therapy session.
- For your safety, our therapists will all wear a face shield. This will allow your child to see your therapist's mouth for therapy purposes. In some circumstances, your therapist may choose to wear additional PPE (mask) in addition to a face shield. If you would like your therapist to wear a mask in addition to a face shield, please feel free to communicate this to your therapist prior to your session.
- Appointment times are staggered to reduce the potential of clients and therapists crossing paths, and to allow for time in between appointments for enhanced cleaning.
- After the session, your therapist will escort you to the pantry or the bathroom where you can wash your hands prior to leaving

A-3 Treatment Room & Materials

- Surfaces and therapy materials will be thoroughly disinfected before each therapy session including tables, chairs, door handles, light switches will be sprayed with a government approved COVID-19 disinfectant
- All of your personal belongings including purses and bags, will be placed in a bin inside the therapy room when you attend a session with your child
- Therapy rooms are emptied and only furnished with bare minimum of equipment (e.g., table and chair)
- Clinic materials and resources are only selected to be used in sessions only if they can be thoroughly disinfected. Guidelines can be requested by emailing us at info@speechmeta.com.

A-4 Informed Consent

Due to the risks involved with COVID-19, an informed consent is required for clients to be informed that they understand that:

- Any speech and language therapy services involve some risk of COVID-19 transmission
- The therapist is following protocol to help reduce or mitigate risk where possible, but that risk cannot be reduced to zero.
- The client consent to having in-person services despite understanding the risks involved
- The therapist will document the patient's consent in advance at every treatment



- Clients are aware and understand that in-person treatment can be changed back to teletherapy in the event that the pandemic worsens.
- Clients are aware that the therapist reserves the right to change the appointments back to teletherapy sessions at any point during the course of treatment for the safety of the client, the therapist and the clinic

A-5 Occupancy & Physical Distancing

We have established and posted the following occupancy limits:

Office - max 3 therapists

Therapy Room - max 3 people

Pantry - max 2 people

In order to reduce the number of people at the clinic, we have implemented the following:

- recommend virtual care for all of our clients as it is still considered the safest option during the pandemic and in-person services will proceed only when the anticipated benefits of such services outweigh the risks to the client and the Speech Pathologist.
- admins will work on administrative tasks remotely
- stagger appointments to minimize the number of clients in the open area
- conduct meetings virtually
- Implement measures to keep workers and others at least 2 metres apart, wherever possible

A-6 Cleaning, Hygiene and Sanitation (Hand washing, surface cleaning, toy cleaning)

Speech Meta has reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. A cleaning/sanitizing document outlining the details of our cleaning and sanitization procedures is available upon request.

All sessions will be conducted on the first floor of the office, which has 4 hand washing facilities on site for all of our clinicians and clients. Hand washing locations are visible and easily accessible.

We have policies that specify when workers must wash their hands and we have communicated good hygiene practices to workers. Frequent hand washing and good hygiene practices are essential to reduce the spread of the virus.

We have implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces, including but not limited to washrooms, tools, equipment, shared tables, desks, light switches, and door handles. This includes frequency that these items must be cleaned (number of times per day) as well as the timing and the person in charge.



All workers and clinicians who cleaning will have adequate training and materials on site.

We have eliminated all unnecessary equipment and tools to simply the cleaning process (e.g., shared utensils, plate and toys that cannot be easily sanitized).

We will maintain a minimum 2-week supply of plain soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, if possible.

Hand Washing

Rigorous hand hygiene with plain soap and water or alcohol based-hand rub (RBHR) is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both workers and clients can pick up and spread germs easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Every should practice diligent hand hygiene.

How to practice diligent hand hygiene (signage will also be posted):

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID19.
- In addition to hand washing, clients and workers can use alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 7-% alcohol
- To learn more about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the BCCDC's hand hygiene poster
- All workers must wash their hands upon arriving for work, prior to each client sessions, after each client session, before and after breaks, before and after handling common tools and equipment.
- Clients and family members must each their hands before and after each session and immediately after if they get their hands dirty in the session (e.g., putting hand in the mouth).

Speech Meta will ensure alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 70% alcohol) is available at multiple locations, including office entrance, pantry, and every treatment room.

Surface Cleaning

All frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between clients. High touch surfaces include, but not limited to light switches, door handles, table surfaces, chairs and electronic devices.

Toy cleaning

All toys and therapy materials will be cleaned and disinfected between clients, please refer to the detailed document on cleaning and sanitization.



A-7 Rules & Guidelines

We have identified rules and guidelines for how workers should conduct themselves working at the clinic. We have clearly communicated these rules and guidelines through meetings and signage.

1. Workers must follow the guidelines for cleaning and hygiene as outlined above and in the cleaning and sanitation document
2. Workers shall wear face shields at all times while working with a client, clinicians may choose to wear a mask in addition to face shield
3. Workers should cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue
4. Workers should throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene
5. Workers should refrain from sharing things such as food, drinks, utensils, etc.

PPEs (Using Masks / Face Shields)

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment>

We have reviewed the information on selecting and using masks and face shields and instructions on how to use them. We understand the limitations of using PPE to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets. We understand that masks should only be considered when other control measures cannot be implemented.

We have trained workers in the proper use of masks and face shields. Face Shield will be worn any time a clinician is in contact with a client or other people in the clinic.

We have displayed PPE donning and doffing instructions for all workers at the clinic.

A-10 Resources for Working from Home

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/April/new-resources-support-health-safety-while-working-from-home>

A-11 Illnesses

All workers who have symptoms of COVID-19 or travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case must stay home and self-isolate.



All workers must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the clinic.

Those who are unsure should-isolate and be directed to use the BC COVID-19 self assessment tool at <http://bc.thrive.health>

If concerned, they are advised to contact 811, the local public health unit, or a doctor to seek further input.

When clients and workers are ill and need to cancel a therapy session, the client will be offered a tele-therapy session in lieu of an in-clinic visit. This is only if the client or clinician are health enough to do so.

If you have any questions about this document, please contact us at info@speechmeta.com.