Working with COVID-19 Policy

**Last Reviewed: 28th September 2020**

This policy includes the measures we are actively taking to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. You must follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe environment. If you do not agree to abide by the terms set out in this policy, we have the right to delay your return to face-to-face services. This policy will be reviewed regularly in line with scientific and government guidance.

This COVID-19 policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people, and anyone involved in You and Me Counselling’s services physically in our office. We strongly recommend to all working from home to read through this policy as well, to ensure we collectively and uniformly understand the measures put in place.

**Counselling Sessions Procedure**

**Therapists**

* Therapists should ensure they arrive five minutes before the start of their first client, and will have to go straight to the counselling room. They will not be permitted to enter the office. Client files will be given via the sliding glass window, or be handed to them in their room. Therapists may keep their possessions with them, or place them in lockers – keys for this should be collected and left each day, and will be cleaned before the next use.
* Therapists are to complete their notes in the counselling room, and return them afterward to the receptionist via the sliding glass window.
* Therapists are to answer the door for their own clients.
* Only two staff will be permitted to work in the office at any given time.

**Clients**

* Clients should ensure they arrive at the start time of their appointment, and wait outside. They will not be able to wait in the waiting room.
* Parents are not permitted to wait in the waiting room during their child’s session, and will have to drop them off and collect them from the front door.
* Children should be encouraged to bring their own pencil cases
* Clients should follow a one-way system, entering through the main door, and exiting through the hall door.
* Clients over 11 years old must wear a face covering, unless they are exempt. In these cases, this exemption should be discussed with the therapist to ensure that both parties are happy with this arrangement.

**General Hygiene Rules**

* Wash your hands after using the toilet, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the 20-second hand-washing rule). You are also encouraged to use the sanitisers you’ll find around the office.
* Toilet and sink area should be wiped down with the disinfectant wipes provided after use. This is down to the individual user to clean up after themselves.
* Therapists must wipe down surfaces used in the play room paying particular attention to any play equipment used after each session that takes place in there. A packet of disinfectant wipes will be kept on the top shelf.
* Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.
* Keep windows open where possible to ensure open ventilation.
* Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.
* Sanitiser, and antibacterial wipes will be available around the office. Face masks are not compulsory for clients, but they are welcome to wear one if it makes them feel more comfortable. Therapists must wear the provided face shields.

**Developing Symptoms**

* If you develop symptoms as set out on the NHS website (high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss of/change to your sense of smell or taste), you must remain at home, and contact the office immediately, and follow all isolation guidelines set out by the government.
* If you have symptoms but feel you would be able to continue counselling from home, inform the office, who will make the necessary arrangements.
* If you receive a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you must inform the office immediately. You understand that we will need to contact any individuals you have come into contact with (ie, clients and counsellors). You will only be allowed to return to the office after you’ve fully recovered.
* If you’ve been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected yourself, or have been advised to self-isolate by a contact tracer, you must alert us immediately and follow all guidance given at that time. You will only be able to return to the office once any period of self-isolation is completed.
* If we are contacted by a contact tracer regarding an individual, either client or counsellor, in the interest of public health we will have to disclose the dates and times you were present at the office. No other information regarding sessions will be shared, and all information discussed during counselling sessions remains confidential.