



Guidance on Reopening In-Person Behavioral Health Services

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Ohio's Behavioral Health system has continued to provide services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic although many programs have restricted in-person sessions. In many communities accessing mental health and addiction services has looked different over the past several weeks. As Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Health Director, Amy Acton, M.D., begin lifting Stay at Home related orders, many businesses will be able to return to offering clinically appropriate services in a face to face setting. The following is a guide to assist in reopening services at your facilities during the COVID pandemic. For more information about staying safe as you restart face to face services please visit [RestartOhio.gov](https://www.restartohio.gov).

Steps to Consider for Reopening

1. Develop appropriate educational materials and a plan for dissemination.

- What educational materials are available to staff and clients regarding COVID-19?
- What educational materials regarding COVID-19 are visible within your organization?
- What is available information to distribute for clients/residents regarding safety and COVID-19?
- How are materials made available, e.g., organization's website, mailings, on-site – posted or hard copy?

2. Develop an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan.

- What measurements will you monitor regarding successful implementation of an Infectious Disease Plan?
- What is your procedure for heightened cleaning/sanitizing all areas of your facilities?
- What are procedures for identifying level of risk of exposure among employees, visitors, vendors, and clients?
- Actively encourage all sick employees and clients to stay home.
- Sick employees and clients should follow CDC-recommended steps and should not return to the facility until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers.
- Those who are well but who live with a person with COVID-19 should notify their counselor/case manager/supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.
- All staff/clients should be encouraged to monitor symptoms and take their temperature before leaving home.
- Implement screening for all staff, visitors, vendors, and clients entering the premises. Each week, ensure that your organization's plan aligns with updated state and federal guidance.
- Identify an area that offers social distancing and privacy for the screening, perhaps outdoors. Screen everyone; do not be selective.
- These are 3 standard COVID-19 screening questions.
 1. Does the client have symptoms of respiratory infection (new cough, trouble breathing, shortness of breath or wheezing) or any of the following: chills, new muscle aches, sore throat, diarrhea, new loss of sense of smell or taste?
 2. Has the person traveled outside of the United States within the past 14 days, or been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19?
 3. Take each person's temperature to see if it is at or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Any positive response should lead to seeing a primary care provider for further assessment. If a person screens as potentially exposed to or symptomatic of COVID-19, they should not be allowed to enter the facility. All behavioral health services should be provided by telehealth services until this person is cleared by a qualified healthcare provider to return.

3. Develop a policy on Workplace Flexibilities and Protections.

- What are procedures for working from home?
- What are the procedures for PPE for employees?
 - Applying and removing sterile gloves (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIrqilC3YmY>)
 - Mask Wearing 101: How to Properly Use & Re-use a Mask (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwPWdkbyizw>)
 - PPE Donning and Doffing: CDC Sequence for COVID-19 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1lxq2OUy-U>)
- What are the procedures for PPE for clients/residents?
- What are workplace policies and procedures when employees may be displaying symptoms during work?

4. Develop a policy on Workplace Controls and Safe Work Practices.

- What are procedures for social distancing?
 - Advise clients and transport persons to wear cloth masks during transport (and when in public). Try to not have clients sit in the front seat with the transport person. If in a van, have one client per row of seating, if possible.
- What are procedures for maintaining social distancing in programming?
- What are procedures for maintaining social distancing in social areas?
- What are procedures for safe work practices?
- How/do your organization's policies align with federal and state guidance?

5. Develop a policy on Programming Implementation.

- Develop criteria for telehealth vs. in-person programming.
- Include considerations for preventing community spread.
- Establish guidelines for individual and group programming.

6. Develop a policy on effective use of funding and resources.

- How can funding and current resources be utilized differently to address technological/infrastructure needs?
- How can you effectively use telehealth resources and bill for those services? What policies and procedures need to be updated to apply to telehealth? What staff training needs to take place?
- What potential funding opportunities are available to assist with various phases of the crisis (including long-term recovery)? How can funding be sequenced to meet the need of the organization?

7. Update policies for inpatient, residential, and housing programs.

- Make ongoing plans for isolation needs, e.g., considerations for individuals at high risk.
- How can you support education for residents and staff re: cleaning and hygiene standards.
- Use federal and state guidance to develop protocol on PPE for residents and staff, including changing needs as residents phase into integrated community activities.
- Develop protocols and policies for visitors.
- Specify cleaning and sanitizing protocols.
- Consider reducing capacity within congregate living environments to continue to adhere to CDC guidance on spacing.

8. Develop a plan for employee support.

- Ensure ongoing support of staff who are continuing to work in facilities and returning to the workplace after working remotely.
- Develop guidance for travel and staff that use either their own vehicles or agency vehicles for transporting.

Additional Resources

- <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- Training and Technical Assistance Related to COVID-19 (PDF)
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/training-and-technical-assistance-covid19.pdf>
- Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, And Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak (PDF)
 - <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>
- [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov)
- Great Lakes Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
 - <https://attcnetwork.org/centers/great-lakes-attc/home>
- Guidance on PPE recommended to minimize chances of exposure
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>
- Instructions for the proper use of PPE
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
- National Council for Behavioral Health COVID-19 Guidance
 - <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid-19-guidance-for-behavioral-health-residential-facilities/>
- Responsible RestartOhio
 - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/>
- Re-opening Facilities to Provide Non-emergent Non-COVID-19 Health care: Phase I :
 - <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid-flexibility-reopen-essential-non-covid-services.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Labor Coronavirus Resources:
 - <https://www.dol.gov/coronavirus>
- University Hospitals Healthy Restart Playbook
 - <https://www.uhhospitals.org/university-hospitals-healthy-restart>