**TRAINING STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Guidance for Online Practice**

1. **PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT**

This document sets out guidance for remote practice in the context of the COVID-19 crisis by HIPC for all its members, both organisational and individual. The intention is protection of the public through maintenance of professional standards and at the same time to ensure that we are able to continue supporting all practitioners to serve the needs of the public during the current crisis. This guidance has been agreed by the Training Standards Committee of the HIP College, UKCP. It will be reviewed and updated as we progress through the crisis period.

Whilst we believe that it is most important for all practitioners to continue to serve their existing clients and support them during this time through remote working, we recognise that for all therapists seeing a new client for the first time remotely, without having had a face to face meeting in person presents further challenges and additional layers of competence will be required.

1. **UKCP REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOTE PRACTICE (all practitioners)**

UKCP ask all practitioners to ‘*consider if you and the client have the means, competence and facilities to conduct online therapy safely and securely, and whether this is appropriate for the client and you*’

UKCP have asked all practitioners to review the [guidance in relation to remote working](about:blank) and have under present conditions encouraged remote working where it can be delivered safely and ethically. The UKCP Code of Ethics and Professional practice must be adhered to irrespective of whether clients are seen in person or remotely. Particular consideration should be made with respect to new clients who have not previously had a face to face meeting in person. The parts of the Code that are relevant here are those which relate to changes in the contract and the competence of practitioners:

* Confirm each client’s consent to the specifics of the service you will offer, through a clear contract at the outset of therapy (and at this change)
* Ensure that your professional work is adequately covered by appropriate indemnity insurance or by your employer’s indemnity arrangements.
* Respect, protect and preserve clients’ confidentiality.
* Understand the limits of competence and to stay within them in all professional activity.

1. **GUIDANCE FOR TRAINEES WORKING WITH EXISTING CLIENTS**

**C.1** OMs should have in place policies which outline additional minimum training requirements for safe and ethical remote working and online practice.

**C.2** Students and trainees should be provided with in-house training covering telephone and on-line protocols.

**C.3** Where relevant, agencies/placements will provide similar training which relates to the specific client group they are working with.

**C.4** OMs are responsible for ensuring that trainees have been assessed for competence for remote working. This may be undertaken by the OM directly, or in liaison with supervisors.

**C.5** Where possible supervision will take place within the same medium as the student/trainee’s client work that is being supervised so that the experience is parallel and reinforced.

**C.6** It is recognised that not all supervisors will have experience of working online and this means that their technical and professional competence may also need to be supported by specific CPD to address online practice.

**D. GUIDANCE FOR TRAINEES WORKING WITH NEW CLIENTS**

**D.1** OMs will need to create policies that set out the additional support and training provided to trainees covering the impact of online working on assessment and risk management of new clients.

Key factors to be covered should normally include:

* Initial risk assessment of client’s suitability for remote work
* Remote contracting
* The importance of confirming the client's identity by some reliable means -e.g. driver’s licence, passport
* Management of risks – e.g. awareness of a client’s location, agreement on what will happen if there is loss of internet connection during a session.
* Management of confidentiality, security and data management

**D.2** Ideally practitioners will have gained some expertise and experience in online work with existing clients before working online with new clients. Supervisors will confirm when a trainee has developed the competence to work with new clients.

**D.3** Practice is normally with UK clients and where practice is international the OM must ensure that legal and jurisdiction aspects have been addressed.

1. **TRAINING DELIVERY AND CURRICULUM**

UKCP considers the outbreak of Covid-19 as a safe and clear justification for increased or exclusive use of technology to support training programmes where appropriate.

**E.1** Trainings should otherwise follow UKCP Guidelines for Use of online training [https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Online-Training-Guidelines.pdf](about:blank)

**E.2** Trainings will need to demonstrate how they have considered any impact upon diversity, equality and social inclusion, including arrangements to ensure that, wherever possible, trainees can continue to access the curriculum. This may entail, where necessary,consideration of reasonable adjustments to the delivery of the curriculum or to meeting the curriculum requirements. Trainings should have a mechanism in place to support students who may be struggling to engage with a more remote learning experience e.g. a nominated individual with whom students can liaise.

**E.3** Trainings should be open to and aware of issues that can arise during remote teaching and offer support and training to prepare tutors for working flexibly in the complex situations that can arise.

**E.4** Guidelines for personal psychotherapy in training should be adhered to wherever possible through remote therapy.

**HIPC Training Standards Committee**

Final draft as of March 2020.

*We recognise that in the current situation there will be ongoing updates****.***