

Return to Work Protocol - Updated 07.15.21

In June of 2020 I safely reopened and again began serving the downtown community of Vancouver. The health and safety of my workspace, my health and the health of my patients are all a top priority to me. Listed below are important measures I've put in place to create a safe environment as part of my return to practice as mandated by the College of Massage Therapy of British Columbia.

Patient Screening

- Verbal and digital COVID-19 pre-screening questions and consent required for all patients. All patients will have to confirm the following:
 - They have reviewed their out of province travel with their therapist.
 - They are not currently sick with COVID-19.
 - They have not come into contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - They have washed their hands for at least 20 seconds or used hand sanitizer upon entering the clinic space.
 - They consent to treatment knowing that while I have taken measures to minimise risk of viral transmission, the nature of massage therapy means that physical distancing is not possible in the treatment room.

- In the current environment of COVID-19 risk, informed consent requires that patients are informed that:
 - Any massage therapy treatment involves some risk of COVID-19 transmission;
 - The therapist is following a protocol to reduce or mitigate risk, but that risk cannot be reduced to zero;
 - The patient consents to treatment despite some risk; and
 - The therapist documents the patient's consent.

Required Protocol

- All patients are told when booking their appointments to stay home if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of sense of smell. If patients are experiencing these symptoms and have not been tested for COVID-19, they will be recommended to test and call 8-1-1.

- The therapist will use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool daily, and will stay home/cancel appointments if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. A screenshot of each day's assessment will be saved. Temperature will be recorded each day of treatment.
- A cleaning procedures notice and cleaning chart are in room for patients to see what is being done between treatments to ensure minimized risk of transfer. A binder is kept in the treatment room for each day of treatment that is signed up by the therapist at the end of the day. This include the date, treatment times, cleaning times, daily temperature and what is cleaned through the day and at the end of the day.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be readily available for patients and therapists. Including: eye goggles, single use face masks, and gloves. It is required to respect a patient's individual personal boundaries and support their requests for PPE to be worn by either individual.
- Cleaning time has been increased between patients to 30 minutes to allow for plenty of time for thorough conversation about COVID-19 and consent and communication, as well as enough time to continue our standards of cleaning and sanitizing high touch areas in between each patient.
- The 24 hour cancellation policy will be relaxed to ensure honesty and compliance with those that feel sick on the day of their appointment but hope to avoid a penalty.
- The building management has an understanding of the new operating procedures and will consistently apply procedures to ensure that adequate distancing, face masks and cleaning are done.
- **Donning and doffing mask:** Although masks are recommended now in phase three, the previous rules will apply: wash hands with soap and water prior to putting on a mask, prior to taking off a mask, and after disposing of a mask in the laundry or garbage (cloth or paper/disposable). This will be completed given that it is required for patients to wash their hands before entering the treatment room. RMT's hands should already be washed when putting on a mask as they would have done this after treatment and cleaning the room as per the required protocols set out in this return to practice document for my workplace locations. Patients should throw away the mask properly outside of the treatment room and then immediately wash or sanitize their hands. A new mask will be worn for each treatment.
- Physical distancing will be in place and clearly marked throughout the building. Physical distancing is not possible in the practice space however. Signage has been posted noting that masks are mandatory as social distancing cannot be done.

- Patients will be required to complete proper hand washing and/or sanitize hands before entering the treatment room and before leaving the building. Therapists have always been required to wash their hands properly before and after treatments which will continue to be mandatory. The therapist's hands will be washed outside the treatment room but sanitized upon returning to the room and before touching the client on the table. The therapist will verbally confirm with the patient at time of re-entry that hands will be sanitized.
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available in the practice waiting area. The building management will provide hand sanitizer at the elevators for each floor. Another bottle is available in the treatment room.
- The therapist will include in any communication to the public that coronavirus can be spread by touch if a person has used their hand/s to cover a cough or a sneeze. This information should also be shared by the therapist to the patient when explaining the requirement for no face touching.
- The therapist will suggest to patients to use a tissue if an itch must be addressed. Tissues will be provided to therapists and patients at both my workspaces.
- If the therapist is prone to sweating a head band will be used, or a hand towel will be available to wipe the forehead and face as required to avoid sweat from dripping into eyes necessitating touch.
- Extra throw blankets and water glasses will be removed until further notice as these can not be immediately sanitized after every use. Patients and therapists will be asked to bring their own water. Table covers and heat pads should not touch the patient directly to allow for continued use. Blankets and sheets will be changed between clients and shoulder bolsters and pillows will have vinyl protectors sanitized between patients.
- It is required of RMT's to clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces in between patients, regardless of appearance.
- Linens will continue to be single use only, then laundered externally in hot soapy water. The therapist's hands are required to be sanitized and clean before handling clean sheets.
- It will be required that patients must arrive unaccompanied unless the patient is a minor who requires parent/guardian, or infirm and needs assistance. They should only arrive a few minutes prior to their treatment to limit gatherings. The patient will be met at the entrance by the therapist.

- The therapist will be scheduling 30 minutes between each appointment to thoroughly clean the treatment room. They are required to:
 - Sanitize the treatment table and table adjustment levers after each treatment.
 - Clean equipment and supplies (table levers, lotion bottles, etc.) immediately after each patient.

- The therapist will continue to clean and disinfect all contact areas several times a day. Touch-surfaces.

- The therapist will make sure to stay on top of any new protocols or requirements to continue to remain safely open to the community.

Should you have any queries or further questions you can email hello@evanvrmt.com or call 1-604-725-2222.

Stay safe and stay well,

Evan Vandersluys, RMT