



## VANCITY MASSAGE THERAPY PRESENTS: **A Restart Plan for Return to Clinical Practice in Respect of COVID-19**

'Thanks! I hate it.'

We know you don't want to read this. To be honest, we didn't want to write it. Unfortunately, we didn't have a choice in this matter and neither do you. Three cheers for government mandates that impact the global economy and mental health! At least we're all in this together – and with that comradery we can support each other to endure and survive this pandemic. Perhaps, in the future, we will look back on this time as the moment human society found out how resilient we can be if we work together. No man gets left behind!

This plan was developed with the goal of reducing the risk of exposure to the virus that causes Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) for both patients and the therapist in our clinical setting. Here, we identify the actions that the therapists at Vancity Massage Therapy (VMT Clinic) commit to, and that all visiting patients must commit to, in order to resume massage therapy treatment in a safe, effective manner.

**BC CDC Release:** "Coronavirus is transmitted via liquid droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The virus can enter through these droplets through the eyes, nose or throat if you are in close contact. The virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin. It can be spread by touch if a person has used their hands to cover their mouth or nose when they cough. That's why we recommend you cough or sneeze into your arm and wash your hands regularly."

Source: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/COVID-19/about-COVID-19/how-it-spreads>

### **The overall aim of these protocols is to reduce potential COVID-19 transmission by:**

- Required ongoing self-assessment for signs of COVID-19 related illness in both the patient and the therapist.
- Reducing all physical, non-treatment related interactions amongst all people within the practice environment.
- Implementation of a standard protocol for hand hygiene applicable to the patient and the therapist.
- Behaviors to modify (avoiding face touching) for the patient and the therapist.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols for the therapist.
- Appropriate use/protocols of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the patient and the therapist.
- Meeting professional obligations, particularly related to both informed consent and liability insurance responsibilities, for the therapist to enable their safe return to practice.
- Create sanitization expectations in the patient through transparency of protocols.

### **What Can I Expect as A Patient?**

At VMT Clinic we've used the truism "we've got your back!" as a slogan that embodies the community of inclusion and creativity that we have prided ourselves on building with our patients in a professional health care environment. We still have your back. We just have to do it with PPE, BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tools, and refusing treatment if we have a patient who classifies as a COVID-19 exposure risk. The following document will outline all expectations the health care clinic, VMT Clinic, has for our registered massage therapists (RMTs) and their patients. Please be aware that this document is prepared with reference to the Massage Therapists Association of British Columbia Recommended Guidelines, the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia's Interim Guidelines, and Worksafe BC's Health

Professionals: Protocol for Returning to Operation. We have analyzed these releases and crafted our Restart Plan to be more than sufficient or bare minimum. It's stringent. You might hate it a little bit, especially because it will be enforced. Your RMT will enact the procedures to the best of their ability, and we request you play along. For example, no one is allowed to show their naked nose and mouth – the horror! Everyone must don an intricately designed disposable mask to keep their germs to themselves and their modesty intact. Besides, masks have silver linings. No more teeth whitening – who sees those now? Today is our moment for glory, we can all drink wine and smoke cigarettes with no judgement about yellowing enamel. What a time to be alive.

DISCLAIMER : Don't start drinking and smoking. Juice cleanses and mountain air for everyone!

## Factor One: Assessment for Symptoms of COVID-19 For Patients & Therapists

All patients will be informed about new protocols at the time of booking or the day before their appointment. Patients booking through online booking will have a window pop up prior to booking that informs the patient of VMT Clinic protocol changes and requests they check their email after booking to find a copy of our VMT Clinic Restart Plan and links to our mandatory COVID-19 intake and consent forms. Our Restart plan will be placed on our website ([www.vancitymassage.com](http://www.vancitymassage.com)) and an encrypted online booking software (Jane) will send new and existing patients a copy of these protocols as part of a COVID-19 specific consent forms and BC Self-Assessment tool protocols. All patients will be required to fill out where applicable and sign the forms electronically through Jane, prior to arriving to VMT Clinic for their appointment.

### Cool, what does that mean though?

#### Pre-Screening / Prior to Arrival

- One day prior to a booked appointment, patients will be required to complete the online BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool and to stay home if they experience any symptoms of COVID-19.
  - The tool can be found here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- The therapist will contact their patients the day before their appointment to discuss using the BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool and verify that each patient is eligible for massage therapy at this time and inform the patient of COVID-19 risks and \$10 Supply Surcharge. This charge may be billed to extended benefits as 'Miscellaneous'.
- The therapist will use the BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool and a forehead thermometer themselves on a daily basis to ensure they are symptom free and commit to canceling all appointments if symptoms appear.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses and seasonal allergies. An appointment must be cancelled immediately if either the patient or the therapist presents with even mild symptoms that may be signs of COVID-19 including:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Chills
  - Shortness of breath
  - Sore throat or pain with swallowing
  - Stuffy or runny nose
  - Loss of sense of smell
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches
  - Fatigue
  - Loss of appetite

On the day of their appointment, patients are required to cancel appointments if they experience what they determine to be:

**Just the sniffles**

**Just seasonal allergies**

**Just feeling under the weather**

\* No fees will be issued for last minute cancellations due to symptomatic presentation or Covid-19 exposure.

- Patients must confirm that they have **not** been in contact with anyone displaying illness, or signs and symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days prior to their treatment and that the patient has not experienced any COVID-19 symptoms within 14 days of the treatment date.
- Patients will be required to sign (electronically through Jane) and fill out a COVID-19 intake form prior to their first treatment during heightened COVID-19 protocols. Patients will be required to perform the BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment prior to every appointment during heightened COVID-19 protocols. A COVID-19 liability / consent form will need to be signed at the VMT Clinic prior to each treatment.
- As a part of the consent form, patients must commit to understanding that while we have taken all possible measures to minimize the risk of viral transmission, the nature of massage therapy means that physical distancing is not possible in the treatment room.
- Patients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and postpone treatment at this time. For pregnancy inquiries: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/Pregnancy-COVID19-Community-Providers.pdf>
- The therapist and patient must agree that the therapeutic benefit of massage therapy outweighs any potential consequence of treatment, including the possibility of viral transmission.
- Patients who develop even mild illness or symptoms must cancel booked appointments.
  - **Patients will not be charged a late cancellation fee if they cancel due to illness.**

**Please Note:**

There will be a **\$10 Supply Surcharge** on all appointments.

This may be billed to extended health plans if your plan has an eligibility for miscellaneous supplies!

## Factor Two: Decontamination

COVID-19 is a droplet spread virus. It lives on hands for a period of ten minutes yet has been theorized to survive days on a hard surface. In order to avoid spreading COVID-19 like a plague, we've got to be ready to annihilate this virus quickly. The way we do this is simple but requires team work – we all need to follow the strictest sanitization guidelines. Let's do what humans do best and create an extinction level massacre, all we need is some hand sanitizer and face masks. Easiest war ever, we've got this guys.

### Okay, how does my clinic experience change when I walk in?

#### Upon Arrival

- No more door code! Touching things is banned and patients are not allowed to open doors. For real. We have two options to enter the VMT Clinic space: a classic option and a very neat nerdy tech option. It's a choose your own destiny, but the riveting front door saga. Either call 778-388-8081 to inform the therapist you have arrived, or open your phone camera and point it at the QR Code sign we have on the entry door. This will prompt you to a web page to enter your email or phone number, click check in a few times, and BAM! We know you're there. Magic.
  - For more information on how easy QR code use can be, visit: <https://jane.app/guide/online-booking/self-check-in-for-patients>
- There will be a sign will be placed on the clinic reception counter stating 'RECEPTION SANITIZED' or "RECEPTION CONTAMINATED." At the moment a patient exits the VMT Clinic reception (either into the treatment room, or to leave after their treatment) the therapist will place the "RECEPTION CONTAMINATED" sign on the counter. While the patient is changing, the therapist will mist all surfaces with a Lysol Spray to sanitize the environment for the next patient. The therapist will then adjust the sign to "RECEPTION SANITIZED."
- Upon entering the VMT clinic space, both the patient and the therapist are confirming they have done the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool pre-screen and have no symptoms.
- The therapist will open the door with hand sanitizer. The patient will immediately use the hand sanitizer (70% alcohol) and apply on all hand surfaces until dry (required). The patient will then apply a mask (required), gloves (optional), and dispose of contaminated PPE into the waste bin at the entrance. There will be posted instructions for Entry Sanitization Protocol for patients.

- We request patients bring their own mask if possible. Masks are to be worn at all times within the VMT Clinic space.
- The Entry Sanitization Protocol instructions for patients is as follows: Discard contaminated gloves from outside the VMT Clinic space, use hand sanitizer, secure a single use mask on the face covering nose and mouth, then use the hand sanitizer once more. If a patient has their own mask, they are requested to wear it on upon arriving at the VMT Clinic space. As per PPE handling protocols, they must utilize the provided VMT Clinic hand sanitizer after face touching. Once appropriately sanitized, the therapist will bring the patient straight into the treatment room.
  - Patients are not required to wear gloves, although they are available
- A sink for handwashing will be made available to patients upon request [follow floor signs].
- Patients will be brought into the treatment room as soon as possible to mitigate COVID-19 exposure risks. There will be two socially distanced chairs for use in the waiting area in case of an unanticipated deviation from our protocols.
- The therapist will advise the patient of their daily results from the online BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool.
- Upon entering the treatment room, patients will be assessed with a forehead thermometer and asked again to confirm their personal results from pre-screening with the BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment tool. Patients must confirm they have no signs of COVID-19 as outlined here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/COVID-19/about-COVID-19/symptoms>
- Patient must confirm that they have not travelled outside British Columbia within 14 days prior to their appointment.
- The treatment will be cancelled immediately if the patient does not meet the COVID-19 pre-screening criteria upon physical presentation at the VMT Clinic or verbally discloses that they are an exposure risk.

**Physical Presentation of COVID-19 includes, but is not limited to:**

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| → Coughing                                    | → Chills                              |
| → Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | → Sore throat or pain with swallowing |
| → Stuffy or runny nose                        | → Fatigue                             |

**Factor Three: Clinic Minimalism and Social Distancing**

With registered massage therapy, there is no social distancing. It's impossible to completely mitigate the COVID-19 risks to patients or therapists. It's the '*sharks with laser beams attached to their head*' of a pandemic - there should be some inventive and diabolically genius way to solve the question of socially distancing during a massage. In theory, we could design AI robots to mirror our therapists as they massage mannequins. If anyone has a spare 5 million dollars to donate (and can get us in contact with our cyborg overlord Elon), we'll get right on designing them. Unfortunately, prior to the manufacturing stage our strict protocols for PPE use and good ol' science is what we can offer to our patients at this time.

**FUN FACT !**

**Do you know what six feet looks like? What can you visualize to between yourself and another human?**

- |                         |                                 |  |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| ▪ The door from Titanic | ▪ A standard white rhino height | ▪ Nine tenths the height of Michael Jordan |
| ▪ One cow (lengthwise)  | ▪ Half of a Volkswagen Beetle   | ▪ One-tenth the height of a Brachiosaurus  |

## How will you ensure my personal space bubble is not breached?

### Use of Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Only one patient/person is permitted to linger in the reception space at any given time. Patients must arrive unaccompanied. Exceptions and consideration will be made for anyone with a disability requiring assistance.
  - Minors will not be treated at this time.
- The therapist and the patient will both maintain a space of 2 meters (6 feet) distance between each other in all clinic areas that are outside the treatment room.
- The fabric couches have been removed from the reception area; there will be 2 hard surface chairs suitable for sanitization between patients that are separated by a minimum of 6 feet. These waiting room chairs should only be utilized in the event of an emergency.
  - Patients are not permitted to lounge in the clinic reception area before or after the treatment
- Coffee, tea, water, and the candy have all been removed from the clinic reception area. A small single use water bottle will be available upon request.
- Nothing remains in the clinic space that cannot be disinfected after each touch.
- Patients will not touch things unnecessarily.
- Appointment times are scheduled with 15 minute staggering to reduce the potential of patients or therapists crossing paths. Time between appointments has been increased (30 minutes) for enhanced cleaning protocols. Therapists are allowed to treat a maximum of 6 patients per day at this time. As Covid-19 restrictions lift, these changes will revert, slowly, back to our normal schedule.
- Patients are asked to arrive on time and not early or late for appointments.
- Patients are required to wait in their vehicles or on the benches outside of the building until 5 minutes before their appointment time.
- With the patient arrives, the VMT clinic door will be opened for the patient by the therapist and will be locked behind them to prevent anyone unscheduled and/or unassessed for COVID-19 exposure from entering the space during the course of their treatment. The clinic door will be re-opened by the therapist at the end of the appointment for the patient to leave without them touching the doorknob to open the door.

### Within the Treatment Room

- It is not possible to maintain physical distancing while in the treatment room.
- Patients will be asked to keep personal belongings inside a plastic container, which can and will be sanitized between patients.
- Patients will be asked to remove everything from the clinic that they brought with them.
- Therapists will again assess for signs and symptoms of COVID 19, obtain consent for the discussed treatment, and the specific risk massage therapy provides for exposure to COVID-19 at the beginning of each treatment.

### Restroom for Patient Use

- The building management has increased restroom cleaning frequency.
- The restroom has been equipped with touchless soap dispenser and paper towels and proper handwashing guidelines.
- Soap and fresh paper towels for drying will be available at all times.
- A waste bin has been placed next to the restroom door so that patients may use a paper towel to open the door, and then discard of it before re-entering the VMT Clinic space.

- There will be a covered plastic container labeled as the men's or woman's restroom keys. If used, please leave the cover off the container. These will be sanitized between use with CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes.

## Factor 4: Hand Hygiene

In order to avoid a potential pandemic driven apocalypse, we have to stop this virus from spreading like a plague. The way to annihilate COVID-19 quickly requires us all to follow the strictest sanitization guidelines. With vigilance, a team effort, hand sanitizer, and masks we can fight this tiny terror. If we all strive to extremely high personal hygiene standards we can do what humans do best and create an extinction level massacre. We just need some hand sanitizer and face masks. Easiest war ever. We've got this guys.

### Really, you're teaching me to wash my hands?

#### Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- Immediately upon entering the clinic space the patient must either:
  - Use hand sanitizer provided directly by the therapist or utilize a touchless hand sanitizer dispenser. After their hands have dried the patient must apply a mask, per PPE protocol, then utilize hand sanitizer once more.
  - OR the patient may go directly to the handwashing sink [follow floor signs] without touching anything inside the clinic and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and then dry thoroughly. After completion the patient must apply a mask, per PPE protocol, then wash hands once more.
- If hands are visibly soiled, the patient MUST opt to wash hands at the handwashing sink [follow floor signs].
- The therapist will wash their hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds between patients, before and after using CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes to disinfect contaminated spaces/objects, before donning gloves and after taking gloves off, and before donning or doffing other PPE like face masks, goggles, scrubs or aprons.
- Hand washing protocols will be posted visibly in the reception area and at sinks.
- Payment occurs in the reception area. Preferred methods of payment are extended insurance direct billing, electronic credit card payment, or e-transfer. Point of Sale system with Tap is available for card use. Electronic payment is enabled through our encrypted and industry standard Jane software system. The POS machine will be sanitized between each patient.
- Cash is accepted, although it is not preferred, and the therapist must follow proper hand washing immediately after accepting payment.
- Receipts will be emailed, not printed.

#### In the Treatment Room

- The therapist will open and close the door before, during and after the treatment as required – reducing the need for the patient to touch the door.
- Patients will be permitted to open the door themselves after the treatment to exit the treatment room.
- Tissues are available inside the treatment room that the patient may use as a barrier when opening the door.
- A touchless hand sanitizer dispenser is available within the treatment room. The patient will be required to sanitize hands after dressing but before leaving the treatment room.
- The door and doorknobs will be disinfected with CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes between each patient.

## Factor Five: Avoid Face Touching

Just don't touch your face. Let's move on.

### Treatment Options:

We will not be offering 30, 75, or 90 minute treatments to enable proper social distancing requirements are met with forced schedule staggering.

### But, what if I want to?

#### Reception Area / Entry into Clinic Space

- The therapist will communicate with the patient that coronavirus can be transmitted by touch if droplets are on the hand when it touches the face, as it can transfer those infected droplets to the mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Tissue will be available throughout the VMT Clinic. These are available for use by the patients or the therapist to address an itch and/or touch the face for any other reason. After touching face, even with the tissue barrier, utilize the provided hand sanitizer or wash hands immediately.
- The therapist will wear a mask at all times. Please note that the therapist may wear either goggles, gloves, or both upon patient request.
- Patients are required to wear face masks that cover both the nose and mouth at all times within the clinic space.
- As intraoral treatments, external TMJ treatments, and palpation of the face musculature requires the patient to remove their mask to perform, these will not be conducted at this time to reduce the risk of transmission from the patient to the therapist.

We will not be offering facial muscle palpation or facial treatments at this time. We are unable to perform:

- Intraoral treatment
- External TMJ treatment

## Factor Six: Enhanced Cleaning

Registered massage therapy has always had extremely high sanitization protocols. Prior to our return to practice, the building management has scheduled a professional sanitization spraying of the lobby entrance, elevators, hallways, restrooms, and VMT Clinic with Clorox 360 disinfectant cleaner. Between our original standards, the heightened COVID-19 protocols, and the building's increase of common area cleaning we are hunting down and killing every germ we can find.

### There's more?!

#### Clinic Sanitization Protocols

- Additional time [30 minutes] has been scheduled between patients to allow the therapist to follow proper cleaning protocols. Number of scheduled treatments per day has been limited to 6 as a precaution to reduce exposure risks.
- All surfaces will be cleaned, followed by disinfection with a Health Canada approved sanitizer for use against COVID-19 disinfectant as listed here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
  - VMT Clinic will be sanitizing with CaviWipes, Lysol Wipes, and Lysol spray. Please note, supply brands may change depending on supplier's stock and current market demand. Any sanitizer mentioned in this document will be considered interchangeable with any product listed on the Health Canada approved disinfectants list.
- Common areas will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day. The building has increased the restroom cleaning schedule.
- All high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected with either CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes between patients, regardless of a 'clean' appearance. High touch surfaces include (but are not limited to):

- Light switches, stool cover, chairs, doorknobs, POS machine, electronic devices, table surfaces, chairs, stools, window coverings, faucets, etc.
- The treatment table, table levers, face cradle, and lotion bottles will be disinfected immediately after each treatment.
- When the patient is in the treatment room changing for their appointment, the therapist will sanitize the VMT Clinic reception by misting all surfaces with Lysol Spray to reduce the transmission risk for the next patient or therapist to enter the reception.
- No hydrotherapy supplies or blankets will be used. Table heaters and thermophores (heating pads) may be utilized by the therapist provided they are covered with a sanitary barrier. Pillowcases will be placed over the sanitary barrier and will be changed between each patient. Sanitary barriers will be sanitized with CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes between patients.
- A Cleaning and Disinfectant for Clinic Setting Poster will be on Display in the reception area.
- All linens, are single use and will be laundered through a third party company using detergent and bleach (or bleach equivalent) between each use.
  - Soiled laundry will be placed in an easily sanitized plastic container with a lid and be transported directly to the laundry room. Here there will be a laundry bin with a lid to prevent exposure to the air.
- HEPA Air Purifier has been placed in the treatment room and will be utilized in between each patient and/or during the treatment.
- A disinfected plastic bin has been placed in the treatment room. The patient will be asked to keep all of their personal belongings in this bin during the treatment. Post treatment, this same bin will be used to carry used linens to the laundry room for washing.
- After treatment, the therapist will apply appropriate PPE for cleaning. The treatment room sanitization protocol requires the therapist to stand in the center of the treatment room and mist the entire room with a Lysol Spray disinfectant. The therapist will then leave the room, remove PPE appropriately, and wait 5-10 minutes until the product has dried. The therapist will then wipe all high touch surfaces utilizing CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes.
- Plastic bins will be disinfected between each patient during the 360 degree Lysol Spray room misting and then wiped with CaviWipes or Lysol Wipes once the Lysol Spray has dried.

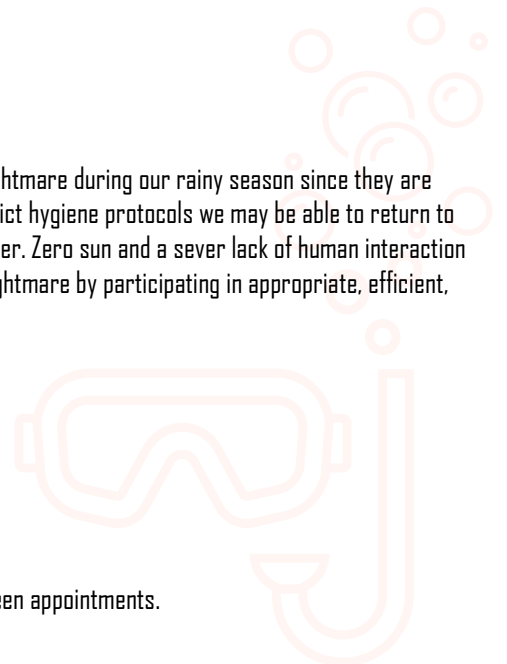
## **Factor Seven: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

I think we can all admit one thing – these mandatory face masks are going to be a nightmare during our rainy season since they are rendered useless once the fabric becomes damp/wet. With consistent social distancing and strict hygiene protocols we may be able to return to normal life and avoid the future where we have to lockdown and social distance during fall/winter. Zero sun and a sever lack of human interaction with grey clouds and chilly temperatures? No thank you. Let's all work together to avoid that nightmare by participating in appropriate, efficient, and effective PPE use today!

### **How does one use PPE in an appropriate, efficient, and effective way?**

#### **Clinic Protocols**

- The therapist will wear a face mask at all times while working with a patient.
- The therapist's face mask will be changed in between appointments.
- If a patient requests that the therapist wears goggles, these will be disinfected between appointments.
- The therapist will wear non-latex gloves if/when appropriate.
  - Gloves may be appropriate when over-use of cleaning and/or chemicals causes skin irritation, or when the therapist's hands or skin of the hands are otherwise injured.





- Hands will be washed prior to putting the gloves on and immediately after removing them.
- Gloves will be worn by the therapist during an appointment at the patient's request.
- Patients are required to wear a clean face mask that does not have an exhalation valve in the clinic at all times.
  - If patients have their own fabric face mask, they are requested clean it prior to use, and to enter the VMT clinic reception wearing it.
  - If patients do not have a fabric face mask, a single-use mask will be provided at the time of their treatment.

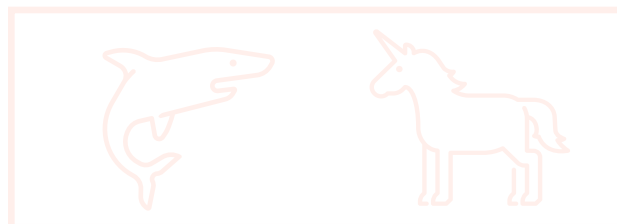
## Factor Eight: Professional Obligations

One of the largest factors is this last one. Liability. It's a scary word, and even scarier in a pandemic. An 'act of God' is an exclusion in most policies and guess what a virus is? Did you guess? Perfect! Your guess is as good as ours. Viruses are not mentioned in most policies. They cover bacteria, fungi (mold), and micro-organisms – none of which define a virus. Our insurance providers are refusing to clarify what COVID-19's impact will have on our liability insurance policies as we return to practice. We have been told there is no confirmation that our liability insurances will cover a claim related to COVID-19. There has been a palpable lack of enthusiasm from insurance agents to discuss any COVID-19 related claim submissions. This has led us to operate cautiously. To protect VMT Clinic and our therapists from this ambiguity, we will be following these guidelines strictly. If the patient or therapist presents with any symptoms or is exposed to a potential COVID-19 case, we will be required to cancel treatment. Below is a list of potential scenarios and the actions to be taken by the therapist and patient.

### So, what do I need to understand about COVID-19 cancellation requirements?

#### Liability Insurance and Cancellations

- The therapist carries professional liability insurance (predominantly Wilson M. Beck and Lackner McLennan). Wilson M. Beck policies specifically are often included in membership with the Massage Therapist's Association of BC.
- If a patient is exposed to COVID-19, their appointment will be cancelled and they will not be eligible for massage therapy for 10 days from exposure. If a patient develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, they will not be eligible for massage therapy for 14 days after symptom presentation.
- Most insurance companies have not released statements about the implications that COVID-19 may have on insurance policies. When this question is asked, the response has been a polite declination to address concerns stating it will be a 'case by case' basis.
- There has been one company who released a statement. This document indicated that a strict adherence to the standards and recommendations by the governing bodies [of massage therapy] for sanitization and social distancing will be beneficial in demonstrating a conscientious action to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by the therapist.
- The therapist must follow all the health and safety guidelines outlined by the Registered Massage Therapists Association of BC, the College of Massage Therapists of British Columbia, the Provincial Health Officer, and WorkSafe BC. The therapist will take all reasonable precautions to clean and disinfect the shared VMT Clinic space and all surfaces within the treatment room.
- No guarantees have been made by the therapist that the patient may not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.



### Mandatory VMT Clinic Isolation Guidelines:

If the therapist is notified of an exposure risk or has any COVID-19 symptoms, the therapist will immediately self isolate and call the Public Health Authority at 8-1-1 to request COVID-19 testing. **The therapist must cancel appointments for 3 days.**

If the therapist receives a COVID-19 test, they must continue to cancel all appointments and **self isolate until negative results are received.** After receiving negative results, the therapist must inform 8-1-1 of their results and obtain approval to return to work.

If the therapist is ineligible for a COVID-19 test and was exposed to a patient who tests positive for COVID-19 or the patient was in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, **the therapist must self isolate and cancel all appointments from the date of exposure for 10 days.** Prior to returning to work, the therapist must either receive approval from 8-1-1 or a Public Health Authority Official.

If the therapist is eligible for a COVID-19 test and tests positive, **the therapist must cancel all appointments and self isolate for 14 days.** Prior to returning to work, the therapist must either receive approval from 8-1-1 or a Public Health Authority Official.

### Mandatory VMT Clinic COVID-19 Protocols:

#### In the Event That a **Patient Tests Positive for COVID-19 Having Been to a Massage Therapy Appointment within the 14-days Prior to Onset of Symptoms**

- The patient will immediately contact the therapist and inform them of positive test results and possible transmission of the virus.
- The therapist will immediately self-isolate and inform VMT Clinic of the exposure risk.
- The therapist will immediately call the Public Health Authority at 8-1-1 to report the possible transmission and act on direction of the Public Health Authority. If approval to return to work is given by a Public Health Authority Officer, the therapist may resume treatments.
- If the therapist requires COVID-19 testing:
  - The therapist will cancel treatments for 3 days, or until test results are returned negative and return to work is approved by a Public Health Authority Officer.
  - If testing proves positive the therapist will follow any Public Health Authority directive and inform all patients treated over the previous 14 days about a potential transmission. The therapist will cancel treatments for 14 days from symptom presentation while self isolating.
- The therapist will be responsible for following any Public Health Authority directives to contact exposure risks.

#### In the Event That a **Patient Alleges they Caught COVID-19 from the Therapist**

- The therapist will immediately self isolate and inform VMT Clinic of the exposure risk.
- The therapist will immediately call the Public Health Authority at 8-1-1 to report the alleged transmission, providing both the name of the therapist and **the name and contact details of the patient.**
- The patient must understand the therapist's obligation to disclose the patient's information to the Public Health Authority in a potential COVID-19 transmission event and will be required to sign a COVID-19 consent, including patient acknowledgment of this disclosure.
- If approval for return to work is given by a Public Health Authority Officer, the therapist may resume treatments.

- If the therapist requires COVID-19 testing:
  - The therapist will cancel treatments for 3 days or until test results are returned negative and return to work is approved by a Public Health Authority Officer.
  - If testing proves positive the therapist will follow any Public Health Authority directive and inform all patients treated over the previous 14 days about a potential transmission. The therapist will cancel treatments for 14 days from symptom presentation while self isolating.
- The therapist will be responsible for following any Public Health Authority directives to contact exposure risks.

#### **In the Event That the Therapist Catches COVID-19 or Displays Symptoms of COVID-19**

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate and inform VMT Clinic of the exposure risk.
- The therapist will call Public Health at 8-1-1 to report the symptoms and request access to COVID-19 testing:
  - If testing is granted:
    - The therapist will cancel treatments for 3 days or until test results are returned negative and return to work is approved by a Public Health Authority Officer.
    - If testing proves positive the therapist will follow any Public Health Authority directive and inform all patients treated over the previous 14 days about a potential transmission. The therapist will cancel treatments for 14 days from symptom presentation while self isolating.
  - If testing is not granted:
    - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled for 10 days from symptom presentation and the therapist will self isolate for 10 days or until approval for to return to work is given from a Public Health Authority Officer.
- The therapist will be responsible for following any Public Health Authority directives to contact exposure risks.

#### **In the Event That the Therapist Comes into Close Contact with Someone Showing Signs of Illness or Tests Positive for COVID-19**

- The therapist will immediately self-isolate and inform VMT Clinic of the exposure risk.
- The therapist will call Public Health at 8-1-1 to report the symptoms and request access to COVID-19 testing:
  - If testing is granted:
    - The therapist will cease to provide treatment for 3 days or until test results are returned negative and return to work is approved by a Public Health Authority Officer.
    - If testing proves positive the therapist will follow Public Health Authority directive and inform all patients treated since exposure of potential transmission. The therapist will cancel treatments for 14 days from symptom presentation while self isolating.
  - If testing is not granted:
    - All massage therapy appointments will be cancelled for 10 days from symptom presentation and the therapist will self isolate for 10 days or until approval for to return to work is given from a Public Health Authority Officer.
- The therapist will be responsible for following any Public Health Authority directives to contact exposure risks.

#### **Asymptomatic Spreaders**

- Asymptomatic transmission of the coronavirus is an unavoidable risk of practice until acquired herd immunity is announced by the Public Health Authority and/or there is an effective treatment or vaccine against COVID-19.
- VMT Clinic has put protocols into place to help mitigate associated risks of asymptomatic presentation of COVID-19, as outlined in the preceding documentation.

- No guarantees have been made by the therapist that the patient will not come in contact with COVID-19 at or during an appointment.

## Factor Nine: Informed Consent

And here we are: the most important issue surrounding starting to practice again. Patient consent! Again, registered massage therapy has extremely high standards for patient consent. At this time we will be heightening this – patients will need to perform the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool pre-screen prior to each appointment, confirm results with their therapist, and sign a COVID-19 consent form prior to each treatment. **VMT Clinic cannot guarantee a COVID-19 exposure free environment.** This is a very important fact that all patients must understand. There is a risk of transmission with all registered massage therapy treatments. With the risk of COVID-19, an updated informed consent is mandatory for the patient to be informed, empowered, and able to understand the exposure potential of receiving treatment.

### So, what do I need to understand about COVID-19 exposure risks?

#### Informed Consent of COVID-19 Transmission Risks

- Any massage therapy treatment involves 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 patient consents to the treatment despite some risk.
- The therapist will document the patient's informed consent in advance and at every treatment.

**The risk of COVID-19 transmission is possible during each registered massage therapy treatment and informed consent will be renewed at the beginning of each appointment.**

- Enhanced sanitization, social distancing, PPE, the BC Self Assessment tool, and new guidelines enable a reduction of COVID-19 exposure risks
- The associated transmission risk is not to be diminished by the therapist in discussion with the patient

**MISSION COMPLETED.**

**800 Points to Slytherin**

\* Created May 2020. Information contained is subject to change dependant on evolving COVID-19 research findings.