

Current Best Practices During COVID  
Updated 7-8-21

On June 30, 2021 Washington State eased the mask requirements for fully vaccinated individuals. This does not apply to all settings. According to the Department of Health, Labor and Industries, and the Washington Secretary of Health, masks are still required in health care settings. This means as mental health providers we and our clients are still required to wear masks when we meet face to face.

Below is some additional guidance regarding returning to in - person sessions with our clients.

- Consider ethical, professional, and personal needs on a case by case basis.
  - Document your decision-making process in the clinical note (this does not need to be done every time, just initially and renewed periodically)
- Familiarize yourself with local governments, CDC guidelines, [Labor & Industries](#), and the [Department of Health](#)
- Minimize Risk
  - Clients should not be in the building at the same time.
  - Schedule sufficient time to clean and disinfect as appropriate between each client.
  - Screen un-vaccinated and vaccinated clients over the phone before they come into the office.
  - You and your clients must continue to wear masks. If you or your client can not safely wear a mask document why that its not safe or clinically feasible.
  - Encourage frequent hand washing and have alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Do not use a waiver of liability – instead, ensure clients understand the risks and benefits of in-person services and understand the procedures to minimize the risk of exposure.
- Vaccinations
  - We can not condition our healthcare services on a client's vaccination status..
  - Do not ask for proof of vaccination, rather, ask the client just to confirm that they are fully vaccinated.
  - On a case-by-case basis, you can decide it is not sufficiently safe to see an un-vaccinated individual in person.
  - If you are seeing un-vaccinated people continue to follow all pre-vaccination protocols.
- If clients don't want to comply with your policies and safety procedures it's okay to refer them elsewhere and let them know you can't provide treatment.

Check insurance websites often regarding billing procedure changes. Some companies are allowing for audio only and the instructions are on their website regarding billing. WMHCA has direct link to many insurance companies on our website [www.wmhca.org](http://www.wmhca.org).

These recommendations are based information the Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control, Labor and Industries, Department of Behavioral Health and Recovery, the Health Care Authority, and a workshop from Eric Strom.