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**Occupational therapy**

**Psychology**

**Speech therapy**

***COVID-19 Workplace Plan***

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## **COVID-19 WORKPLACE PLAN**

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# COVID-19 WORKPLACE PLAN

## Definitions:

**Therapist:** A therapist is a self-employed sole practitioner who is registered with the HPCSA or other body and provides therapeutic services, within a collegial relationship, at the Strubens Valley Therapy Centre or one of its recognised satellite schools.

**Staff:** Individuals who are employed by SVTC to perform essential cleaning or maintenance services both inside and on the property.

**Workforce:** is used as a collective noun to refer to both therapists and staff who conduct their work or are employed at SVTC.

**Clients:** are children, parents or independent adults who make use of the professional services provided by the therapists at SVTC.

**Strubens Valley Therapy Centre (SVTC)** is at 3 Zuka Avenue, Strubens Valley Roodepoort, GAUTENG or at any of the schools where the therapists perform their professional skills.

## 1) Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a plan for implementing the COVID-19 safety program during general work at Strubens Valley Therapy Centre (SVTC).

The plan is intended to flatten the COVID-19 infection curve; to keep therapists and staff healthy; to reduce the risk to clients and to meet regulatory compliance requirements. It refers to and includes the following:

- Risk Assessment
- Prevention
- Mitigation
- Monitoring
- Training
- Action

## 2) Health and Safety File & Risk Assessments

### Health & Safety File

Each discipline (i.e. speech therapy; occupational therapy and psychology) shall maintain a file on site at SVTC. Each discipline will elect a COVID officer who will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the work plan as well as keeping the file up to date with the latest COVID-19 requirements

### Risk Assessment

A COVID-19 risk assessment has been compiled, which will indicate the possible risk in the workplace and the control measures that have been put in place as well as additional control measures.

### **3) Date of Business opening and Working Hours**

The SVTC will open for permitted services as of Monday, 11 May 2020.

Trading/Working Hours will be: 7h30-17h00 Monday to Friday and 7h30 - 15h00 on Saturday. Therapists will rotate and only render limited therapy services to clients that are not able to participate in tele-health.

### **4) Health and Safety Policy**

SVTC is committed to providing a healthy environment for their workforce, clients and visitors to the site. We will strive to continually improve the effectiveness of the health system through the setting and measurement of health and safety objectives and by conforming to current, applicable COVID-19 legislation.

### **5) Mission Statement**

- All therapists and staff working at SVTC are important.
- Every individual has the right to a healthy working place and the right to return from work healthy every day.
- This is the common goal in which we are committed and believe that it can only be achieved by dedication and joint efforts of all involved.
- As the COVID officers, we undertake to provide, within reason, a healthy working environment.
- All therapists and staff undertake to act and work in a healthy manner at all times.
- As an individual, everyone has the right and obligation to stop and correct an unsafe act or situation.

### **6) Chemicals**

- There are many factors to take into account when deciding how to safely work with a hazardous chemical.

### **7) Objective**

Protect the health and wellbeing of therapists and staff during worksite activities and ensure that the health of staff is the prime consideration during the work.

### **8) Targets & Restrictions**

- Reduce risk of possible fatalities, lost time injuries, restricted work and medical treatment, injury cases, and total reportable injury frequency.
- Sick employees will be encouraged to work from home.

### **9) Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each discipline's Covid Officer to ensure that therapists and staff are educated and trained in the risks and hazards pertaining to COVID-19 in the workplace.

### **10) Communication**

The entire workforce will be encouraged to communicate directly to the COVID officers regarding any hazard they have seen, or to make suggestions that will enhance safety. Any such contribution will be raised during the safety co-ordination meetings or earlier if appropriate. The result of these meetings will be communicated back to the workforce through their COVID officer.

## **11) Progress meetings**

Progress meetings will be held as required. During these meetings health issues relating to the COVID-19 on site will be discussed and when required, suitable actions will be identified and taken.

We will determine the required steps to be taken to safeguard our workforce against the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **12) Publicity**

Posters and /or notices will be posted at key locations around the SVTC practice to maintain COVID-19 awareness.

## **13) Workplace Readiness**

### **Preparation of workplace:**

The following steps will be taken to prepare the SVTC premise for therapists and employees to be able to return to a clean and disinfected workplace.

1. Hand sanitizers will be made available at each entrance and exit to the building.
2. Therapists will provide their own hand sanitizer in their own work space.
  - a. Wherever hand washing facilities are not available, there will be hand sanitizers containing a minimum of 70% alcohol.
3. All hand washing facilities will be disinfected, antibacterial soap and disposable hand towels will be made available.
4. Equipment, hand tools, kitchen appliances, office furniture, printers, keyboards, etc. will be disinfected and covered.
5. Common areas such as eating areas and bathrooms will be disinfected.
6. Floors will be disinfected.
7. All areas where high traffic flows, such as doorknobs, light switches, doorbells, etc. will be disinfected
8. Waste bins will be lined with plastic bags, where hand towels, tissues, used PPE, etc. will be discarded, to prevent anyone from coming into contact with it when emptying the waste bins.
9. Waste will be disposed of in the appropriate manner.

### **Prevention measures for all therapists and others that enter the premises**

The following preventative measures will be followed at our workplace:

- Frequent hand washing and use of alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizers.
- Correct cough etiquette and respiratory hygiene.
- Social distancing. Keep a distance of 1.5 meters when in contact with other people.
- Do not touch your face unless your hands are clean.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be procedure based (risk based).

### **Basic Infection Measures taken**

10. Frequent handwashing will be promoted at the SVTC premises.
  - a. Wherever hand washing facilities are not available, hand sanitizers containing a minimum of 70% alcohol will be available.
11. As far as possible, the use of communal equipment, crockery, cutlery etc will be limited.
12. Equipment, hand tools, kitchen appliances, office furniture, printers, keyboards, etc. will be disinfected on a regular basis.
13. Common areas such as eating areas and bathrooms will be disinfected on a regular basis.
14. Floors will be disinfected at least on a daily basis.

15. Workers will be provided with tissues.
16. Waste bins will be lined with plastic bags, where hand towels, tissues, used PPE, etc. will be discarded, to prevent anyone from coming into contact with it when emptying the waste bins.
17. Workers will be encouraged to stay home if they are sick.
18. Ensure social distance at the workplace and remain out of "congregate settings" as much as possible (Places where people meet and gather, like cafeterias).
19. We will encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.

### **Prevention of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace:**

We will as far as reasonably practicable prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus by doing the following:

#### **Screening**

Screening is a way for therapists and clients to find out if they may have COVID-19 or not. The therapist of the specific client will ask detailed questions and take the temperature of the client and the accompanying adult.

#### **What questions will normally be asked?**

The therapist will normally ask:

- If the person has had contact with anyone with confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- If the person has symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty in breathing.

#### **Screening which will be implemented on site:**

1. Therapist or employee screening assessment will be carried out at least once a day.
2. Use of a thermometer to determine temperatures of therapists and clients.
3. General observation of clients.

#### **Environmental Cleaning**

##### **Routine cleaning (decontamination)**

1. Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and door handles. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
2. No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
3. Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down.

##### **Cleaning offices and public spaces where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19**

Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include dry cough, sore throat, fever, tiredness or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that any person has come into contact with will be cleaned including:

- all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles, telephones

If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these will be cleaned using disposable cloths and the usual detergents, according to current recommended workplace legislation and practice. Precautionary measures will be taken to protect cleaners.

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, will be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag will then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It will be put in a safe place and marked for storage until the result is available.

If the individual tests negative, this will be put in the normal waste bins. Should the individual test positive, we will be instructed what to do with the waste by public health authorities.

### **Ventilation**

The SVTC will, as far as possible, be kept well ventilated by natural or mechanical means to reduce the COVID-19 viral load.

### **14) Monitoring Safety**

Therapists will monitor safety in the workplace throughout the course of the day, and should any area be identified as needing attention, ensure that the necessary actions are taken.

Any Therapist/Client/Employee that shows any symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent home and will not be allowed to enter the workplace, so as to safeguard all other therapists/clients.

### **15) Training**

- COVID-19 requirements will be communicated regularly.
- As soon as new requirements are presented, it will be communicated.

### **16) Personal Protective Equipment**

Each therapist is responsible for assessing this risk.

#### **Cloth Face Masks**

According to the new guidelines, therapists will wear a minimum of 2 layer cloth face masks at the workplace.

#### **Wearing of Face Masks**

Face masks should only be considered as a complementary measure and not a replacement for established preventive practices, such as physical distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene and avoiding face touching.

- It is essential that the workforce use face masks properly so that they are effective and safe.
- It should fit properly, completely covering the face from bridge of nose to chin.
- Clean hands properly before putting the face mask on or taking it off.
- Only touch the cord or elastic at the back of the face mask when removing it, not the front.
- If the face mask is disposable, make sure to do so safely in a proper container.

## **Reuse of PPE**

### **PPE's which use can be extended:**

- Face masks: Use until damp or torn, or until end of shift. Change if and when contaminated.
- Cloth Masks: Can be washed
- Face Shields: Can be used for extended periods, but the chances of contaminating hands is good when removing it.

## **17) Hand Tools & Equipment**

### **The following must be kept in mind with regards to tools and equipment:**

- Don't share any hand tools and equipment while working in the workplace / Work area
- Keep tools and equipment safe and in your sight when not working
- Clean all tools and equipment after use and at the end of the day
- Disinfect the work surface as often as possible

## **18) Social Distancing**

All employees and therapists should maintain a 1.5-meter distance from all others and should practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace

## **20) Hand Washing**

Ensure hand washing facilities with soap and running water are in place. Therapists should wash their hands as often as possible for 20 seconds or more. Paper towels should be used for drying of hands. Hand sanitizers must be available in any area where washing facilities are readily available.

## **Customer queuing and screening system**

1. Upon entry to reception, clients must disinfect their hands
2. Clients will be made aware of the social distance requirement.
3. Therapists to wash hands or use sanitizer on a regular basis to disinfect
4. Reception counters, door handles, card payment equipment and any other high traffic areas must be sanitized on a regular basis.

## **22) Employee/therapists showing symptoms of COVID-19**

If and when an employee shows COVID-19 symptoms at work (find below a breakdown of symptoms) he/she will be asked to go home and seek medical advice. Some of the COVID-19

Symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- redness of eyes
- difficulty breathing

We will then assess the risk of transmission, disinfect the area and the therapist's workstation, refer those therapists who may be at risk for screening and take any other appropriate measure to prevent possible transmission.

## **23) Investigation of Cases**

In the event of a therapist being diagnosed with COVID-19, it will be reported to the department of health and the department of employment and labour immediately.

The cause of the infection will be investigated as will the possible failure of control measures. A report will be compiled and kept for viewing as well as record keeping purposes.

## **24) Testing Facilities**

This is only applicable to establishments with more than 500 employees.

## **25) Reporting authorities and emergency contact details**

If and when any staff members are found to test positive for COVID-19, the contacts listed below will be called immediately to alert the relevant authorities.

### **a) The National Institute for Communicable Diseases**

#### **COVID-19 PUBLIC TOLL-FREE NUMBER**

0800 029 999

### **b) The Department of Health**

If you have flu-like symptoms, and have come into contact with someone who has the coronavirus, please contact the national hotline on 0800 029 999

WhatsApp Support Line: 0600-123456

### **c) Department of Employment and Labour**

#### **Provincial Offices**

<http://www.labour.gov.za/Contacts/Provincial-offices>

#### **Labour Centres**

<http://www.labour.gov.za/Contacts/Labour-centres/Pages/default.aspx>

## **26) References and Guidelines**

- The Occupational Health & Safety Act.
- General Safety Regulations.
- Hazardous Biological Agent Regulations
- Hazardous Chemical Substances Regulations
- Facilities Regulations
- Risk Adjusted Strategy Regulations 29 April 2020

## **27) Designated COVID-19 Compliance Officer**

We have designated COVID-19 compliance Officers at SVTC who will oversee the:

1. Implementation of this COVID-19 Workplace Plan
2. And adherence to the standards of hygiene and health protocols relating to COVID-19 at the workplace.

### **Details of the designated COVID-19 Compliance Officer:**

Name & Surname: Ronlynn Lotriet – Psychology 082 851 2102 [ronlynnlotriet@gmail.com](mailto:ronlynnlotriet@gmail.com)  
Ninette Visser - Occupational therapy 082 574 3055 [ninette4ot@gmail.com](mailto:ninette4ot@gmail.com)  
Rachel Singleton - Speech therapy 082 577 6204 [rachelamy.s@gmail.com](mailto:rachelamy.s@gmail.com).