



**Singapore
Association for
Counselling**

FOR COUNSELLING
AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

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OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS – COVID-19 NEW STAY HOME MEASURES

Dear SAC Members,

In view of PM Lee's Speech this afternoon regarding the new and stricter measures, the following are the recommendations from the SAC Executive Committee:

1. As counsellors and psychotherapists, our services to our clients are considered as mental health services and thus falls along the spectrum of psychological services and social services. Thus, it is important that each professional member ascertains the needs of the clients who need attending and the impact of the restrictions to "stay home" on the clients.
2. These current restrictions will impact our counselling engagement with our clients for **ONE (1)** month only. Therefore it is advised that a proper assessment be made for the more vulnerable clients who may be at a "higher risk" for example: clinically depressed, actively suicidal, phobic, OCD, active self-harming, acute interpersonal or psychological issues like family violence and child abuse, etc.
3. Appointments for non-acute and/or stable chronic cases that could be rescheduled after the **ONE (1)** month period, are strongly recommended.
4. Since the Government recommends that citizens use masks whenever they step out of the house, it is recommended that masks be made available for clients to use when they come for sessions and counsellors will also be recommended to use masks. Process the use of masks with the client as necessary.
5. For the need of immediacy, members may consider the use of *technology, via various web conferencing software and platforms and to ensure competency with the use of such platforms. Proper client informed consent is to be documented as necessary. ***IMPORTANT** – Members are to ensure professional ethics and boundary management when online.
6. Over the next weeks, in the event of a surge of enquiries and increase in intake, members are encouraged to refer such enquiries to various National Hotlines like SOS, NAMS, Care Corner, and others as recommended. A new National Hotline will be announced soon.
7. While the context of these measures is for **ONE (1)** month only, Members are reminded to also practice self-care and take appropriate measures to attend to their own needs, family and children; exercise, eat and rest well; seek clinical supervision for any new therapeutic situations that may be faced during the period from 7 April to 4 May 2020. ***Please be alert to further official Government updates of possible extensions of these measures.***

Thank you, everyone for coping and adjusting through the various measures that were introduced over the past months to manage the COVID-19. Now that these new measures have intensified, may each one of you find new courage and strength for the work that we do with our clients.

I also wish all of you and your family members to stay well and stay safe.

Warm regards,

Sam Kuna

President (Singapore Association for Counselling)