

## **BACP Accredited Courses: Placement Hours during lockdown/ social distancing**

### **Update 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

The BACP have recently changed their stance during this rapidly developing situation, and below is the most recent advice issued as of 9<sup>th</sup> April. *Please note, the term 'online counselling' used below refers equally to video-call and phone call counselling sessions (it does not refer to email or other text-based sessions, which are not included in placement hours).*

#### **1. Continuing with Current Clients online**

If you were working with clients face-to-face prior to the lockdown, and want to continue to work with those clients during the lockdown, you can do so using phone counselling/ video-call counselling providing you can demonstrate competence to do so and providing the placement provider and supervisor are also fully in agreement. This requires that you first inform the Placement Coordinator and Programmes Lead, who will check that you have (a) undertaken the necessary training, (b) have the full support of your supervisor and placement, and (c) have self-assessed against the BACP competencies. To ensure that any work undertaken is as safe as possible your supervisor will engage in regularly monitoring and assessing your competences in this area.

#### **2. Starting with New Clients on Phone/ Video counselling**

The BACP are now allowing students to start with *new* clients via phone/video counselling during the lockdown (until last week, this was not permitted). To do this, you must:

- Be appropriately trained in the assessment process for counselling (this is already covered on all accredited courses at the start – make sure your knowledge is up to date)
- Have engaged in training specifically addressing *the initial stages* of online therapy (see online learning resources below) and have discussed your competency with your supervisor
- Have the full approval of your supervisor and placement
- Ensure all new clients will be assessed (by phone) by a suitably qualified practitioner from your placement as usual, and according to the terms of the existing placement contracts, prior to the client being allocated to you.
- *Contact the Placement Coordinator and Programmes Lead to confirm the above and for approval to start.*

#### **3. How many phone/video call hours will 'count' for Placement Hours?**

The BACP have in the last 2 days published new information suggesting they will not be setting a limit at this point. They do stress however that face to face counselling

hours are preferable. *IMC will therefore be fully supportive of students working up to 50% of their required placement hours via video/ phone counselling during the lockdown period.* We are at this time willing to consider requests for more than 50% of required placement hours, but such requests will need approval from the Placement Coordinator and Course Lead/ Programmes Lead in advance and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**4. What if I feel under pressure from my placement to start working online, but I don't want to?**

You should not be asked to work in any way which makes you feel uncomfortable, or in any way which you feel is outside of your competency. IMC will support you fully – please contact the Placement Coordinator if you find yourself in this situation.

**5. Can I pass my course without having all my placement hours in place?**

No. The BACP say we can offer a 'provisional pass', meaning that you can carry on accruing placement hours once the taught part of the course is finished, having passed all of your other course requirements. This is nothing new for IMC students, as all of our BACP accredited courses already offer this facility. The BACP are clear that a 'provisional pass' will **not** allow you to consider yourself qualified, or upgrade your membership to MBACP, or join the Register. To be qualified, you still need a full pass including all placement hours (some of which may be online hours gained during the lockdown/ social distancing period).

**Possible online courses/ learning resources for Online Counselling:**

<https://www.kateanthony.net/shortcoursementalhealth/>

<https://www.onlineevents.co.uk/events/>

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/memberarticles/keep-calm-online-counselling-is-at-your-hand>

<https://www.clivigercounselling.co.uk/covid-19-a-guide-to-providing-online-therapy-in-private-practice/>

<https://www.pesi.co.uk/Blog/2020/March/How-to-Go-Online-Counselling-During-the-Coronoviru>

<https://acto-org.uk/online-training-providers/>

**Need some help or advice on the above information?**

Please contact Jan Cavill, Programmes Lead – [jan.cavill@ironmill.co.uk](mailto:jan.cavill@ironmill.co.uk)  
Or Jana Collins, Placement Coordinator, [placements@ironmill.co.uk](mailto:placements@ironmill.co.uk)

***We're here to help you!***