

## **INFORMATION SHEET FOR BTFA MEMBERS REGARDING COVID-19 (coronavirus)**

Updated 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

This is an information resource sheet for BTFA members to provide an understanding of practitioner rights and requirements with regards to the coronavirus (COVID-19) when working directly with your clients.

### **COVID-19 facts**

- The virus can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity
- Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19
- People who live in, or have recently been, in an area with ongoing spread are at increased risk of exposure
- People who have been in close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 have been advised to self-isolate for 14 days (seek leave, hiatus and avoid places of business until the full period is completed without symptoms)

Understand the symptoms of COVID-19 (any of the below):

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you:

- Develop symptoms; AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or live in or have recently travelled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19

**NOTE:** Call ahead before going to any doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is a very serious public health issue both in Australia and around the world. As of March 16 2020, almost 169,516 cases and almost 6,516 deaths had been reported worldwide; 300 cases and 7 deaths had been reported in Australia so far, with this information changing daily.

A coronavirus is transmitted from animal to human and can cause a cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome or other illnesses. The term novel coronavirus refers to *a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans* according to the World Health Organisation.

According to experts, strict cleaning procedures, including frequent, thorough hand-washing and sanitising surfaces are necessary to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. Many people are choosing to limit face-to-face communication, with meetings, conferences and school classes cancelled across the globe. Health-care workers are at risk of contracting the virus.

## **Coronavirus safety precautions, client communication & best practices**

What best practices can Bowen practitioners implement during this age of coronavirus to stay healthy, serve clients and keep their clinic doors open?

We wish to strongly reiterate that it is every person's responsibility to act in accordance with the directions of healthcare officials and government health bodies.

### **Hygiene**

Hygiene standards should be adhered to regardless of the existence of COVID-19. This includes:

- Maintaining a high level of personal hygiene for all clinical staff (including correct washing of hands before and after each patient contact)
- Maintaining a high level of cleanliness within the clinic
- Regular cleaning of all clinic surfaces (especially clinic equipment, devices, dispensing area and containers)
- Regular removal of all waste
- Appropriate cleaning of reusable clinic equipment, instruments and devices
- Clinic and environmental controls including spills management
- Use of protective clothing where appropriate

Communicating with clients and rescheduling those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms is essential.

Washing hands with warm water (not cold) and soap remains the gold standard for hand hygiene and preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Washing with soap removes oils from our hands that can harbour microbes. In addition to thorough hand washing between clients, it is a great idea to ask clients to 'gel-in' upon entering your treatment room and prior to placing your hands on the client. Clients will appreciate this extra step and will be encouraged to 'gel-out' before leaving.

### **Actions to keep yourself and others healthy**

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds (sing 'Happy Birthday' twice over), especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay at home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin

### **Safety in clinic**

If you have concerns about COVID-19 and the risks clients may pose to your health, you can:

- Ask them if they are currently unwell and, if so, to postpone their appointment for 2 weeks
- Ask if they have done any travelling in the past month. If so, you may enquire where and determine when you book that client in.

Healthcare officials are advising persons who are unwell to wear masks, rather than the healthy, with the exception of medical staff working directly with infected persons. This is at the discretion of individuals, but it is advised if you feel unwell and need to go out in public, to wear a protective mask.

### **Communicating with your clients**

Communicate directly and frequently with clients. Determine if they or their acquaintances have symptoms. When you are transparent and proactive with your communications, your clients will

feel more at ease with continuing their regular schedules. Also, remind them that stress affects health, so getting a Bowen treatment is actually a proactive step to take right now.

You may wish to write an email, post a social media update, and start talking to your clients today. You can also hang a poster on your office wall to inform clients the steps you are taking to ensure their safety while in your treatment space. With professional, frequent communication, coronavirus doesn't have to create a hardship on your business. We suggest that you focus on how the virus is transmitted; symptoms the client should monitor for and when those symptoms create a contraindication; and the steps you are actively taking inside your clinic to keep your clients safe and healthy.

Include links directly to the Australian Government Department of Health website <https://www.health.gov.au/> and the Coronavirus Health Information hotline **1800 020 080** will give your clients peace of mind that you are following legitimate and factual protocols.

Ask clients to reschedule if they or anyone in their circle of acquaintance are sick.

Take excellent care of your own health. Invest in your own wellbeing so you can be the resource your clients need. Avoid panicking, and get your information from credible sources. A list of useful resources is posted at the end of this information sheet.

### **What not to do**

- Don't panic. It doesn't help anyone, least of all your clients.
- Don't use face masks, they don't help unless you're sick already. And if you are, stay home and away from others.
- Don't neglect your own health and self-care. COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath, and may appear two to 14 days after exposure.

### **Important resources – web links and hotline**

*Please also keep up to date with local, state and federal changes through the Australian Government and news articles.*

Australian Government Department of Health  
<https://www.health.gov.au/>

COVID-19 General information (updated daily)  
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

COVID-19 More specific information (including hygiene) - key information for practitioners  
<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-national-health-plan-resources>

COVID-19 Health Information hotline - 1800 020 080

Australian Medical Association <https://ama.com.au/>

World Health Organisation  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

### **News sites**

<https://www.theguardian.com/au>  
<https://www.abc.net.au/>