

# COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY



## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

**For the health and safety of all who visit Kindred Art Space the following Policy has been established with systems implemented to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spreading within our Centre and Community.**

**Due to the nature of the pandemic, this policy is dynamic and may change periodically as further information becomes available from Worksafe Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services, Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission which we regularly monitor for updates.**

In planning our response to a potential outbreak of COVID-19, and taking reasonable precautions to minimise infection risks, Kindred Art Space and our independent practitioners, assess the way we work to identify, understand and quantify risks and to implement and review control measures to address those risks.

We work together to adapt and promote safe work practices, consistent with advice from health authorities, to ensure our workplace supports social distancing and exemplary hygiene measures. We actively control against the transmission of COVID-19, consistent with the latest advice from the [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee \(AHPPC\)](#), including considering the application of a hierarchy of appropriate controls where relevant.

**Kindred Art Space implements Good OHS practice in responding to a pandemic which requires to:**

1. keep informed and up-to-date on pandemic information
2. undertake OHS risk management by managing the direct and indirect risks
3. incorporate OHS preparations and risk control measures into a business continuity plan
4. review and evaluate risk control measures.

The OHS risks during a pandemic can be loosely categorised as the direct risks of infection and the indirect risks arising from changes to usual work arrangements. Good consultation and communication with independent representatives support our effective development and implementation of risk control measures.

**Manage the direct risks of infection.**

Workplace measures to minimise disease transmission and prevent infection are based on an understanding of how the disease is transmitted from person to person. We refer to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website for up to date information.

**COVID-19**

The COVID-19 virus is transmitted between people through close contact and droplets, not by airborne transmission. The people most at risk of infection are those who are in close contact with a person who has COVID-19.

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact (see Definitions) with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appear;

- close contact with a person with COVID-19 who coughs or sneezes; and
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with COVID-19, then touching your mouth or face.

**Preventing Infection**

The most effective preventive measures in the community include:

- performing hand hygiene frequently with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth;
- practicing respiratory hygiene by coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue and then immediately disposing of the tissue;
- wearing a medical mask if you have respiratory symptoms and performing hand hygiene after disposing of the mask; and
- maintaining social distance (a minimum of 1.5 metres) from individuals with respiratory symptoms.

**Social distancing**

A primary transmission control measure is social distancing, that is reducing and restricting physical contact and proximity. Kindred Art Space encourage social distancing through measures such as:

- allowing only identified, essential independent representatives and clients to attend the Centre. We stipulate that only one person accompany a client to an individual therapeutic session and remain in the waiting area.

- utilising alternative therapeutic session options, such as telehealth sessions by phone or video.
- Anyone from a confirmed COVID 19 'hotspot' who wishes to seek services, can not visit Kindred Art Space. Alternatively, Telehealth sessions will be available.
- discouraging physical contact in the Centre
- maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5 metres between people in the Centre (person-to-person droplet transmission is very unlikely beyond this distance)

### **Hygiene and use of personal protective equipment**

Transmission can be reduced by undertaking additional cleaning at the workplace and supporting good personal hygiene.

Kindred Art Space provides information resource posters around the Centre to reinforce and support good personal hygiene.

Training for Kindred Art Space independent practitioners is undertaken as it becomes available through government channels.

Kindred Art Space Toilets are cleaned at regular intervals during each day. All high-touch areas in each consultation room are cleaned in between each session. All independent practitioners maintain a 15 minute gap between each client session to clean all high-touch surface areas.

### **Unwell practitioners with pandemic-like symptoms do not attend the Centre.**

If a practitioner develops symptoms while at the Centre, they are advised to go home.

Kindred Art Space has appointed a Pandemic Disease Manager (PDM). As part of planning for pandemic diseases, the PDM directs the preparation activities and manages the implementation of risk control systems. This includes ensuring supply of recommended personal protective equipment, tissues and cleaning products.

### **Ventilation and air conditioning**

Kindred Art Space has confirmation from their building owner that the air conditioning system is properly designed and maintained. All internal spaces are ventilated where possible and dependant on security risk management, fresh air can flow through the Centre.

Doors to consultation rooms are open in-between consultations.

The rear Garden and open-air space at Kindred Art Space is temporarily available as a consulting area and is reserved for individual sessions where available.

### **Review and evaluate control measures OHS risk control measures are regularly reviewed and updated as required.**

All independent practitioners take reasonable precautions to continue to provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill and to keep themselves and others safe and must not go to work if they have:

- returned from overseas or interstate in the last 14 days, consistent with their state or territory's public health directions, or

- been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or
- a fever, or any symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or nasal congestion).

### **Update May 2020**

If an independent practitioner experiences fever or acute symptoms of respiratory illness (such as those outlined above), they must report those symptoms to Kindred Art Space management.

Should a practitioner experience any of these symptoms whilst at Kindred Art Space, they should leave work immediately, report their symptoms as identified above, and seek medical advice from their doctor or call the National Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 020 080. If COVID-19 is excluded, the practitioner may return to Kindred Art Space once well and as guided by medical advice regarding the infectious period for their condition.

If a diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed, the practitioner must be isolated at home, or hospital depending on the severity of illness until they have been cleared to return to work by a medical practitioner. Public health officials in each state and territory will undertake an investigation to locate any close contacts with the confirmed case to provide advice on self-quarantine and testing. This will include locating any close contacts during the 24 hours before the onset of symptoms of the case.

### **‘Close Contact’ – defined as:**

- More than 15 minutes face-to-face contact in any setting with a confirmed (or probable) case in the period from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed (or probable) case, or
- Sharing a closed space with a confirmed (or probable) case for a prolonged period (e.g. more than 2 hours) in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed (or probable) case.

### **Preparing for an outbreak of COVID-19. Kindred Art Space plan and prepare for possible cases involving clients and practitioners.**

As part of business continuity planning for COVID-19, our outbreak management plan is proportionate to the risk of supports we deliver, and the size of our organisation. This plan includes the following components:

- Identify which supports are critical for the health, wellbeing and safety of each client. Decisions on which services are continued, altered, or suspended are based on the assessed risk to the client and in conjunction with relevant state public health orders. This may include the change to processes availability. Dependent on client needs, processes are assessed on a case by case basis by independent practitioners.
- Identify and assess risks to clients and to the organisation (such as financial, operational, workplace health and safety obligations), and implement controls to mitigate these where possible so we can continue to provide

services to support the community. This may include:

- encouraging independent practitioners and people we support to have flu vaccinations, and maintain up to-date records of vaccination status
- Outline independent practitioner contingency plans in the event of an outbreak, or that independent practitioners are unwell and need to self-isolate, or are not able to work because of caring responsibilities or their own health vulnerabilities. This includes:
  - maintaining an up-to-date contact list of all independent practitioners.
  - streamlining the on boarding of new independent practitioners to maintain health, wellbeing and safety, and avoid risk of harm and having new practitioners undertake the training for workers modules.
- Establish a COVID-19 incident reporting process as part of our organisation's incident management system, and understand our reporting obligations to the NDIS Commission
- Assign an outbreak manager. This manager is responsible for planning, coordinating, and managing logistics if an outbreak occurs, and communicating with state health departments, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) and the NDIA (if required).
- Update independent practitioners on training in infection control procedures, including standard precautions (hand hygiene, correct use of appropriate PPE where needed (and disposal procedures), and cough and sneeze

etiquette) and transmission-based precautions (contact and droplet precautions) as they become available.

- Implement standard infection control precautions throughout Kindred Art Space.
- Establish communication channels to keep practitioners informed of any updates or changes to our business processes as a result of the outbreak.
- Our strategy for communicating with the people we support, their families or guardians/advocates. This includes different communication formats depending on communication preferences, such as e-newsletter, social media posts and text messages.

### **Visitor management**

Our Visitor management policy is consistent with the current public health orders in our state, and reflect whether there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the Centre.

This includes:

- All visitors, clients and staff to sign in/out of the book at the entrance to the Centre.
- To support Kindred Art Space's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all clients who become unwell are required to inform Kindred Art Space as soon as possible. We will undertake an initial risk assessment via telephone to help determine how we can best support you while you are unwell.
- All clients are required to have a medical clearance (document from your GP) when well again so regular services can recommence.
- Maintaining our policy to be open by appointment only to ensure a minimum

number of persons within the Centre at any given time

- Only one visitor attending with a client can remain in the Centre waiting area.
- Non-essential visitors who are not necessary to provide support to people from attending the Centre are not permitted.
- We communicate often with the people we support, their families and guardians/advocates about the steps we are taking to prevent infection, including any changes to the visitor management policies.
- Workshop services – number of persons in Centre are dependent on government rulings.
- Once client services, either individual sessions or workshop services are completed, all clients and visitors must leave the Centre promptly.
- All visitors and clients are informed about social distancing and hand hygiene.

### **Managing an outbreak of COVID-19**

Our outbreak management plan will help our independent practitioners identify, respond to and manage a potential COVID-19 outbreak; protect the health of all practitioners and clients, and reduce the severity and duration of outbreaks if they occur.

An outbreak is considered by the Australian Government Department of Health to have started when two people in three days become sick with the symptoms AND at least one of these has a positive test for COVID-19.

If an outbreak is suspected or confirmed, we will:

- confirm standard infection control precautions are in place and implement transmission-based precautions (contact and droplet precautions)
- bring our outbreak manager and independent practitioners together to implement our plan.

**Please contact Kerry Knight – Founder and Practice Manager on 0450 253 990 or [info@kindredartspace.com.au](mailto:info@kindredartspace.com.au) for further information**