

OUR 2022 COVID 19 POLICIES AND PRACTICES

New and updated policies in preparation for 'living with COVID'.

From the 15th December Tasmania will be entering a new and unfamiliar stage of the COVID 19 pandemic, one in which we will be 'living with COVID' in our local community.

Due to the demand on our mental health services, it is essential that we can continue to provide uninterrupted mental health support to as many people in our community as possible while we navigate this challenging time together.

To ensure that we can do this, we have developed, implemented, or will be implementing new policies and practices in our effort to manage and minimise the risks of COVID 19 transmission at our psychology practice.

Our new policies are underpinned by local and national directives and guidelines, as well as Safe Work Australia guidelines. They also incorporate industry-specific recommendations from the Australian Psychological Society (APS).

However, these directives, guidelines and recommendations are likely to change and we will update you if and when our policies change as a result.

We appreciate your understanding and support as we implement these new policies and practices in our efforts to keep you, our team and our community as safe as we possibly can.

We look forward to providing you with our continued support.

Sincerely

Lynne Daniels

OUR 2022 COVID 19 POLICY AND PRACTICES

A Summary

The following is a summary of our new policies. It is important that you read the detailed descriptions of each policy to understand any changes that may affect you.

- Everyone working on our premises (***in our practice***) has been fully vaccinated and will not attend the clinic if unwell for any reason.
- Face-to-face counselling support will be available for unvaccinated children, people aged 12+ who are fully vaccinated, and able to provide a copy of their vaccination certificate.
- Telehealth counselling support will continue to be available for everyone regardless of vaccination status.
- If a COVID directive prevents you or your therapist from attending the practice, your face-to-face appointment will not be cancelled but may automatically be converted to a Telehealth appointment (phone or video appointment).
- If a COVID directive prevents you or your therapist from attending the practice outside of 48 hours of your appointment time, you will not be charged if you decline our offer for your appointment to be converted to Telehealth. However, you may experience delays rebooking an appointment.
- If a COVID directive prevents you or your therapist from attending the practice within 48 hours of your appointment time, our cancellation policy will apply if you decline an offer for your appointment to be converted to Telehealth.
- Wherever possible secure online client forms will replace pen and paper data collection.
- When the border opens, we will implement individual therapy sets for face-to-face appointments.
- Additional control measures will be implemented at our practice to improve ventilation and ensure the building is clean and sanitised, and as safe as possible for everyone at all times. These include air purifiers, temperature checking and hand sanitiser.
- In the event of a possible or confirmed case attending our practice we will support public health officials with contact tracing and follow their advice.

VACCINATION STATUS & COUNSELLING SUPPORT

We will continue to support everyone in our community

We are committed to providing counselling support to every member of our community during this challenging time.

Face-to-face Counselling Support

- Face-to-face counselling support will be available for unvaccinated children and people aged 12+ who are fully vaccinated, and able to provide a copy of their vaccination certificate prior to booking face-to-face appointments in 2022.
- Vaccination certificates must be emailed, SMSed (***sent via text***), posted or delivered to us prior to attending your appointment, and will be stored securely in your client file.
- Please see the additional policies we will be implementing at our practice to minimise the risk of contracting Covid 19 when you attend our clinic for face-to-face counselling support.

Telehealth Counselling Support

- Telehealth counselling support will continue to be available for children and people aged 12+ regardless of vaccination status.
- Telehealth may not be suitable for everyone, and Lynne is happy to have this discussion with you.

COVID 19 Vaccine Exemptions

- If you have a COVID 19 vaccine exemption please contact us as soon as possible to discuss how we can continue to support you.

COVID 19 DIRECTIVES AND YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your face-to-face appointment will automatically be converted to Telehealth

To ensure the continuity of your own care, and to ensure that we can continue to support as many people in our community as possible the following policies and practices will be implemented.

As we begin to live with Covid in our community it is likely that from time to time you or your therapist may be physically well but unable to attend a face-to-face appointment. Such as when:

- You or your therapist have mild cough or cold symptoms.
- You or your therapist have been identified as a close contact.
- You or your therapist are awaiting a COVID test result.
- You or your therapist have been directed to isolate or enter lockdown.

Your appointment will automatically be converted to Telehealth

- If you are physically well but cannot attend a face-to-face appointment your appointment will not be cancelled but will be automatically converted to a Telehealth appointment (phone or video appointment).
 - We will convert your appointment to a Telehealth appointment as soon as you let us know.
- If your therapist is physically well but cannot attend a face-to-face appointment your appointment will not be cancelled but will be automatically converted to a Telehealth appointment (phone or video appointment).
 - If your therapist converts your appointment to a Telehealth appointment, we will contact you prior to let you know.

As we have an ever-increasing waitlist for our services it is essential that every available appointment can be used to support a member of our community.

COVID 19 DIRECTIVES AND OUR CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancelling an appointment or declining Telehealth WITH 48+ HOURS notice

Our priority in 2022 will be to minimise the disruption to the support we provide to you and other members of our local community. As we begin to live with Covid, it is essential that we can continue to use every appointment we have available to support as many people as possible.

Therefore, the following policies and practices will apply when face-to-face appointments are not possible because you or your therapist cannot attend due to COVID directives.

Cancelling or declining Telehealth with MORE than 48 hours notice

If you are physically well but due to COVID directives:

- You need to cancel a face-to-face appointment and decline the offer of Telehealth at least 48 hours prior to the appointment time, you will not be charged for the appointment.

If your therapist is physically well but due to COVID directives:

- Your therapist needs to convert your face-to-face appointment to Telehealth at least 48 hours prior, and you decline the offer of Telehealth, you will not be charged for cancelling the appointment.

Please be aware that if you decline the offer of a Telehealth appointment you may experience significant delays in rebooking future appointments because your appointment time/s will need to be offered to a new client from our waitlist.

COVID 19 DIRECTIVES AND OUR CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancelling an appointment or declining Telehealth WITHOUT 48+ HOURS notice

The following policies and practices will apply when face-to-face appointments are not possible because you or your therapist cannot attend due to COVID directives,

Cancelling or declining Telehealth with LESS than 48 hours notice

If you are physically well but due to COVID directives:

- You need to cancel a face-to-face appointment at short notice, a late cancellation fee will apply (100% of the session fee).
- You decline an offer for your appointment to be converted to Telehealth, a late cancellation fee will apply (100% of the session fee).

If your therapist is physically well but due to COVID directives:

- Your therapist needs to convert your face-to-face appointment to Telehealth at short notice and you decline the offer of Telehealth, the late cancellation fee will apply (100% of the session fee).

Please note: If your therapist has told you that Telehealth will not be suitable for your treatment, you will not be charged for declining the offer of a Telehealth appointment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your therapist or our admin team to discuss our cancellation policy further.

ATTENDING OUR PRACTICE AFTER THE BORDER OPENS

How you can help us keep our community safe

When the **Tasmanian border** opens, we will implement changes to the way you attend our clinic for appointments as part of our efforts to further reduce the risk of Covid transmission at our practice.

The following policies will come into effect on the same date that the **Tasmanian border** opens:

Before your appointment

- Please contact us to change your appointment to Telehealth if:
 - You are experiencing even mild cough or cold symptoms
 - You or someone close to you has been identified as a close contact
 - You or someone close to you is awaiting a COVID test result
 - You have been directed to isolate or you are in lockdown.
- Please ensure we have received a digital copy of your vaccination certificate, which can be emailed or SMSed (**sent via text**) to your therapist or to our reception team (**to our office**).
- Please complete any online forms that we have emailed to you and send digital copies of any GP referrals or other paperwork we may need (photos are fine!).

And please don't worry - if you need help with any of the above prior to your appointment, please call us and we will work it out together.

Attending our practice for your appointment

- When you arrive for your appointment you are welcome to wait in your car and request an SMS from your therapist to let you know that they are ready for your session. (**Please ensure you are using the waiting room for a minimal time prior to and after your appointment**)

- Please check-in upon arrival using our **Check In TAS** QR code or the physical contact register located at the front door of our practice.
- Please use sanitiser. Sanitiser will be provided for your convenience outside of the room and inside the room.
- When mandated face masks must be worn at all times (age 12+). Please let us know prior if you have an exemption.
- Please follow physical distancing guidelines (1.5 metres).

After your appointment

- Where possible please take used tissues with you.
- Please use sanitiser prior to using the door handle to leave the practice. Sanitiser will be provided for your convenience.

Attending our practice with a family member or support person

- Whenever possible, only clients attending an appointment are to enter our building. We ask that where possible, family members or support persons bringing clients to our practice wait in their car.
- When this is not possible we ask that only one family member or support person enter the building. We understand that sometimes siblings may also be attending the practice and they are most welcome when this is necessary.
- Family members (age 12+) or other support persons entering the building must be vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination prior to entering the practice.
- Family members must also check-in upon arrival using our **Check In TAS** QR code or the physical contact register located outside the front door of our practice and use sanitiser. When mandated family members or other support persons must also wear a face mask at all times inside the building. Please let us know prior if they have an exemption.

OUR ADDITIONAL COVID 19 CONTROL MEASURES

What we're doing to minimise and manage risk

We are committed to doing everything we can to keep our team and our community as safe as possible as we all begin to live with COVID in our community.

Please find following the additional measures that have or will be implemented to help minimise and manage the risk of COVID transmission at our practice when the Tasmanian border opens.

Our people

- In line with national directives, every member of our clinical team and our administrative team, have been fully vaccinated and have provided a digital copy of their vaccination certificate.
- Everyone on our team has committed to work from home if they experience any cough or cold symptoms, however mild.
- Lynne will wear a face mask at all times during sessions.

Our premises

- Access to the building will be for those who have a purpose in being in the building.
- Access to the bathrooms will be limited to staff only, however if a child requires the bathroom, please let Lynne know to allow for cleaning afterwards.
- As much as possible all windows in the building will be left open to improve ventilation.
- An Air purifier has been installed to improve air quality in the therapy room.

Our cleaning practices

- Our COVID cleaning routine has been developed based on the current Safe Work Australia guidelines: <https://covid19.swa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/cleaning-table-covid19-12-April-2021.pdf>
- The premises will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily emphasising heavy-use surfaces such as the front door, waiting room chairs, (**reception desk**), stair-rail, kitchen and bathroom.

- Sufficient breaks will be scheduled between every therapy session to allow for the room to be cleaned and disinfected between every client.

RESPONDING TO A POSSIBLE OR CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID 19

What we'll do

Public health officials are responsible for responding in the event that a person with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection enters a premise.

In line with the current [Tasmanian government guidelines](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/#) <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/#> for responding to a possible or confirmed case of COVID 19, we will implement the following measures to assist public health officials to respond and minimise further risk to our community:

- If we become aware that a person attends, or has attended, our practice and displays COVID-like symptoms or shares information that causes us to have reasonable concerns about their health and the health of others who have attended our practice we will call the public health line and follow their advice.
- If we become aware that a confirmed case of COVID 19 attends, or has attended our practice, we will call the public health line and follow their advice.
- We will follow all public health advice about closing off affected areas and we will prevent access until our premises have been cleaned and disinfected.
- We will assist public health to identify close contacts by providing them with our contact register. Only essential personal contact details will be disclosed.
- We will complete a risk assessment with reference to the latest information available, review our COVID-19 risk management controls, and determine whether any changes or additional control measures are required.
- We will notify you as soon as possible if such an event affects you, or our ability to provide face-to-faces services to you.

We Value Your Feedback

These are unprecedented times, and the policies we are implementing to minimise and manage the risks of living with COVID in our community have been developed based on the best advice available to us at the time of writing.

Our policies will be reviewed regularly and updated if that advice changes.

If you would like to provide feedback on our policies and practices, please don't hesitate to email me directly at lynne@lynnedpsych.com.