

Semiahmoo Speech Services Inc. COVID-19 Safety Plan

Semiahmoo Speech Services Inc. provides speech-language and communication assessment services virtually and in-office and in the community (homes, schools, daycare, preschools, residential facilities) for children and adults with communication needs. At this time, we are offering in-office visits as well as virtual visits.

Our safety guidelines are set by the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia (CSHBC), the Provincial Health Organization (PHO) and WorkSafe BC. Under these terms, all clients must 1) complete a COVID-19 self-assessment (the link will be emailed to you before your first in-office session, the self-assessment is available on our website www.semispeech.com) and 2) understand the safety protocols implemented at our office prior to the in-person session. These protocols were developed with the goal of reducing the exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 for the clients and clinicians within our clinical setting. The protocols will be updated as needed.

For up to date information about COVID-19 please visit the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia (CSHBC) <https://cshbc.ca/about-cshbc/> Health Link BC <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca> and the BC Centre for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Staff and Clinic Guidelines

Decision making process: In-person sessions will only proceed when the anticipated benefits of such services outweigh the risks to the client and the clinician. These decisions for in-office sessions will be made by Semiahmoo Speech Services Inc. and will be offered ONLY if we are comfortable considering in-person sessions. These decisions may involve a discussion with the clients and their families. Clients with higher risk profiles and/or weakened immune systems should consider alternatives for care and postpone treatment. Optional service at this time may be virtual sessions.

In order to reduce the number of people at the clinic, we have outlined work from home/virtual arrangements, and we are limiting the number of clients in the clinic.

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Speech-Language Pathologist Assistants (SLPAs) will work remotely when possible and if appropriate for a client.

SLP and SLPAs schedules are more flexible to allow clinicians to work from home on days that they are not normally in the clinic.

Self-Assessment for Symptoms for COVID-19: For Clients and Clinicians Pre-Screening /Prior to Arrival

At the time you book your first in-office appointment you will receive an email with a link to a questionnaire and consent form from Semiahmoo Speech Services Inc. You will be asked to complete COVID-19 self-assessment to ensure that you are healthy prior to your in-clinic session. You will be asked to provide an electronic signature that you understand that the first visit and future visits require you to complete the self-assessment and that you need to be free of COVID-19 symptoms before visiting the clinic. You will additionally be asked to read the informed consent section understanding the risks to COVID-19 when attending sessions and provide a second electronic signature. You will be required to sign the assessment and consent form before the first visit only but will be asked at each visit if you are healthy and adhere to the self-assessment protocol.

Waiting room/office entry guidelines: Clients are asked to arrive at their exact session time to reduce waiting room congestion. Adults are encouraged to wear their own mask. Clients will attend sessions alone whenever possible. If the client is unable to attend the session alone, then only one caregiver may attend the session with the client. You will be brought directly into the therapy room. Waiting room toys and books have been removed. The waiting room is no longer in use for clients or family members to wait before, during or after sessions. ONLY 3 people will be permitted in the waiting room at one time. Others will be asked to wait in the hallway or their vehicle.

Occupancy Limits

We have established and posted the following occupancy limits:

Waiting Room 3 people

Kitchen 1 person

Office reception 2 people

Therapy rooms 3 people

Hand Hygiene: All clients and their caregivers will perform hand hygiene. We will encourage clients to wash their hands with soap and water in the bathroom on the second floor before entering the clinic. As well, we will ask every person entering the office to use hand sanitizer after using the washroom, after sneezing or coughing and after using a facial tissue. Hand sanitizer will be available in each room of the clinic and additional signs posted to encourage handwashing.

Physical distancing: Clients and staff will maintain 2 meter social distance from each other as much as possible. We will avoid close greetings like hugs, handshakes, high fives. Wherever possible, physical distancing will be maintained during sessions. All clinicians will wear either a non-medical mask or a face shield during therapy while in the therapy rooms regardless of whether physical distancing (2 meters or more apart) is maintained. A plexiglass barrier is installed at the front reception for the client and staff protection.

Cancellation

Cancellation fees will not be in effect for any cancellation due to illness. If 3 sessions are cancelled, you will be contacted to discuss your situation.

Materials/Toys: A minimal number of toys will be used during each therapy session. At the end of each session, toys will be disinfected. You may be asked to bring toys to the clinic to be used only by your child if your child requires additional use of toys. Those toys will be disinfected by the clinician before they are brought into the therapy room. Your toys will be taken home after each session and will not be left at the clinic.

Disinfecting procedures:

- o All surfaces in therapy rooms will be disinfected between each client.
- o All high traffic touch areas will be sanitized twice daily: reception counter, light switches, door handles, taps, sinks etc..
- o Staff will minimize equipment and material access in therapy rooms and keep them out of reach of clients if they are not to be used during the session.

- o All toys, materials (including ipads) and equipment (table, chair, door handles and light switches) will be disinfected between clients or used with one client only and disinfected at the end of the day.
- o Staff will perform hand hygiene (wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer) upon entering the office, after using the washroom, after breaks, after meals or snacks, after sneezing or coughing, after using a facial tissue and before and after each client.

Staff Health and Safety screening:

Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the clinic. Each staff will also complete the Self-Assessment for COVID-19.

Staff are prohibited to enter the office if:

Directed by Public Health to self-isolate.

They have arrived from outside of Canada or have had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. In this case, they must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

They have symptoms or had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days. They may work remotely, via teletherapy, if appropriate. Symptoms include but are not limited to fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache.

We look forward to seeing you in the clinic soon and are happy to answer any questions.

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