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## Adult and Pediatric Outpatient Occupational Therapy: Decision Guide for COVID-19

**In the rapidly changing health care landscape, the ability to evaluate, plan, and adapt is vital; occupational therapy practitioners have unique skills to address this challenge.**

- The following checklist can assist in the development of a facility-specific algorithm and work plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Occupational therapy practitioners and rehabilitation managers should work closely with facility management and the infection control department to develop a plan and maintain continuous monitoring to address emerging factors and guidelines.

### Staffing Considerations

- Implement measures to support remote work for complete or partial shifts in order to minimize the risk of exposure
  - Consider client-related tasks that can be completed at home (e.g., telehealth visits, documentation, development of client and staff educational materials, caregiver training)
  - Consider equipment or systems that need to be in place to support remote work (e.g., access to telehealth platform, web conferencing)
  - Determine the viability of telehealth and e-visit services
- Implement support measures to prevent staff burnout
  - Adjust schedules, allow time off, and promote social supports
  - Share external support resources (e.g., employee assistance program, mindfulness/relaxation app support)

### Patient Care Considerations

- Establish a system for implementing care for PUI, COVID-positive, and COVID-negative patients, including [clinical decision-making guidelines](#) about the necessity of care
  - Develop a screening process for determining if there is an urgent need for therapy
  - Develop guidelines for determining if telehealth is appropriate
- As part of the occupational profile, inquire specifically about client's access to groceries and prescription medications, changes in caregiver support, social support, and ability to interact with others outside the home via technology
  - Consider potential for occupational deprivation
  - Screen for depression and anxiety

### Staying Safe (Personal and Patient Safety)

- Utilize methods of remote service provision when possible
  - Develop a facility protocol to ensure patient confidentiality and compliance with regulations, if new services such as e-visits and telehealth are being provided

*Note:* CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CMS = Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; ICU = intensive care unit; OSHA = Occupational Safety and Health Administration; PPE = personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, face shields); PUI = persons under investigation (status unknown for COVID +/-)

- If necessary to see clients in the clinic, implement a pre-visit screening strategy including:
  - Call clients prior to visit to inquire about symptoms, contact with others who have had symptoms, travel, and to determine whether client is a member of a high-risk population
- Provide staff education on mechanism of transmission, clinical scenarios with highest potential for exposure, and best practices for preventing transmission
- Standardize use of PPE and infection control procedures, as indicated in the guidelines for CMS, CDC, and facility infection control department
  - Utilize the [OSHA standards](#) and [control and prevention guidance](#)
  - Implement a staff competency measure for correctly donning/doffing PPE
- Develop a system to regularly update staff on the latest guidelines for [health care professionals](#)
- Prepare your clinic space based on the [CDC guidelines for clinics](#):
  - Rearrange waiting, reception, and treatment areas to allow adequate space during interactions
  - Provide tissues, trash cans, hand-washing facilities, and hand sanitizer
  - Remove reading materials and toys from waiting areas
- Utilize case examples compiled by AOTA to address phased reopening
  - Pediatric Ambulatory Care Case Example
  - Adult Ambulatory Care Case Example

## Ethical Considerations

- Utilize AOTA's Code of Ethics when considering:
  - Agency policies and procedures relating to provision of occupational therapy
  - Clinical decision-making