

## **NYNJADOT and PSYDNYS Statement and Recommended Guidelines**

### **GENERAL STATEMENT**

The Externship and Compliance Committees advocate for suspension of all non-essential, in-person outpatient psychology services to protect the safety and welfare of our communities during this global health crisis.

### **RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines will be in effect until March 30, 2020. The date may be extended per public health recommendations from CDC, WHO, and federal, state, and local restrictions. Updates will be provided on an ongoing basis as new information is available.

As a guiding principle, we wish to avoid putting students in a position of having to choose between their own health, the welfare of their patients, and personal hardship. These are exceptional times, and they require flexibility, compassion, and rational problem solving.

There are many unanswered questions about the impact of lost practicum hours on training progression as we await guidance from APA, APPIC, ASPPB, state licensing boards, and related organizations. We will continue to work together as a community to share information, evaluate the impact of COVID-19, and mitigate hardship associated with disruptions to patient care and loss of training.

### **Recommendations for externs, doctoral programs, and practicum sites:**

1. Each practicum site will follow their respective state and institution's policies, practices, and recommendations. Consequently, some programs and sites may suspend practicum entirely, while others sites may continue or transition to telepractice/telehealth. We encourage psychologists to advocate strongly for transition of non-essential outpatient psychology services to telepractice/telehealth for the safety and welfare of patients, psychologists, externs, and staff.
2. Practicum sites or programs that have suspended in-person activities will remain in close communication with each other about when and under what conditions in-person activities will resume.
3. If the program and practicum site have not suspended in-person services, we advise:
  - a. Externs have a right to privacy. Externs who choose not to attend practicum due to concerns about their health and safety are not expected or required to disclose the nature of their concerns; their judgment not to attend practicum will be honored and respected.
  - b. Externs who have specific health conditions that may place them at higher risk for complications should they contract COVID-19 (such as heart disease, diabetes, asthma, or other respiratory problems) will evaluate their safety and health risks

in consultation with their PCP, as well as State, CDC and WHO recommendations.

- c. Externs will consider their personal risk of exposure **and also** their potential for transmission to others, both at their practicum site and in their personal networks of family and friends. We encourage externs to practice physical and social distancing as much as possible if they believe they may be at risk due to underlying health conditions or at risk of exposing others.
- d. Externs should not place client or patient need for services at this time, above their own health and safety, and will do so without penalty or risk of negative supervisor evaluation. Practicum supervisors will evaluate externs based on the competencies achieved for services provided and professionalism based on the totality of their experience.
- e. Each program and site have specific affiliation agreements. Due to the unique and unusual circumstances presented by COVID-19, we urge all sites and programs to permit termination of extern assignments, without any potential violation of affiliation agreements. Consult with with appropriate institutional officials, policies, and procedures, if necessary.

#### 4. Telepractice/Telehealth Guidelines

There are currently no known restrictions on telepractice at the practicum level in the APA Standards of Accreditation. There are typically greater restrictions on OMH, OASAS, or other government regulated programs for telepractice, and these guidelines must be followed. Please check with site administrators for what is permitted. Further, externs are encouraged to follow site specific policy and practice for telepractice. Please be advised regulations for telepractice vary state by state per each state's licensing board; refer questions about telepractice to the practicum supervisor.

There are resources available from APA, State Psychological Associations, and related organizations. Here are some helpful links to documents in googldrive, but please note they may be incomplete regarding specific regulations governing telepractice.

You can download and add resources to this link:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MteFlrWFd9Dz2WAjt5dXz7OY3ehAQERj11\\_hVcDhiM8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MteFlrWFd9Dz2WAjt5dXz7OY3ehAQERj11_hVcDhiM8/edit?usp=sharing)

You can download these links:

Telehealth information sheet for Psychologists, created by Jonathan Perle, PhD, ABPP  
[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ylFhjpt1\\_j8plQpbXeQecHIP0l\\_q8BLT](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ylFhjpt1_j8plQpbXeQecHIP0l_q8BLT)

Patient Telehealth Information Form

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=17eBAAbD9bGAveU2XELGpu8tAhJbWtBVk>

**If externs are permitted to provide telepractice, doctoral programs and practicum sites agree to count hours accrued for telepractice, under the supervision of a practicum supervisor, the same as hours for face to face client contact.**

## 5. Telesupervision Guidelines

APPIC typically does not provide recommendations for externship telesupervision.

Doctoral programs follow the SoA implementing regulations, C-13 D. Telesupervision: “Telesupervision is supervision of psychological services through a synchronous audio and video format where the supervisor is not in the same physical facility as the trainee.”

“Telesupervision may not account for more than 50% of the total supervision at a given practicum site, and may not be utilized until a student has completed his/her first intervention practicum experience. Furthermore, it is the doctoral program’s responsibility to ensure that the student has had sufficient experience and in-person supervision in intervention at the doctoral level and possesses a level of competence to justify this modality of supervision in his/her sequence of training.”

**If externs are permitted to provide telepractice, in view of established in person supervisor-supervisee relationships to date, and as long as the total supervision during the totality of the practicum experiences is not more than 50%, *all telesupervision* will count toward hour accrual for students at all levels of training, including students in their first practicum experience.**