

# BAPIC

BAY AREA PRACTICUM INFORMATION COLLABORATIVE

Dear BAPIC Agencies,

Thank you for all that you have been doing to adjust to the COVID-19 crisis over these past few months. We appreciate your flexibility, hard work, and compassion for clients and trainees alike. It has been amazing to see the way sites have set up telehealth training, supervision and services of various kinds, including creating training on the spot in telehealth formats and providing support for trainees who have been coping with illness, loss, and trauma at the same time as their clients.

As we all begin to think ahead to a loosening of county shelter-in-place restrictions, we want to stay in close communication and share all of our best ideas and practices with one another. BAPIC has been gathering information from the APA and other places to put together some guiding principles to make it easier for students and sites to figure out how to maximize safety for everyone involved while considering clinical and other needs. As some agencies have begun to inquire about schools' policies on students returning to practicum in person, we thought it important to relay some important considerations and criteria.

**Sites continuing with Telehealth Training and Services:** Many sites plan to continue telehealth training and services for the near future, and will adjust their training needs and methods as situations evolve. For these sites, please continue to communicate with your students and schools regarding changes and concerns. (See APA telehealth resources: <https://www.apa.org/members/your-growth/practice-management/telepsychology/> for more information.)

**Guidelines and Criteria for Practicum Requesting Students Return in Person:** For sites that are considering and/or asking students to return to practicum in person during the Summer or Fall, please consider the following:

1. **Options:** Practicum trainees may choose to continue to provide telehealth services even after the shelter-in-place order is lifted instead of returning to in-person services. There may be many reasons for such a choice (e.g. personal health, family health, client health, transportation constraints, etc.), and such choices are to be respected for the time being, without requests for documentation. Please work with students who are not ready to return, so they can continue to provide telehealth training and services whenever possible. We all want to strive to be flexible during this time and offer options whenever possible.

2. **In Person Service at Practicum:** Some sites are requesting that students return to practicum for in person training and/or services. For practicum trainees who choose to provide some in-person services and/or training, sites must provide a COVID-19 safety plan with specific precautions outlined in writing based on the practicum agency's county safety and health requirements and guidelines. (Examples include social/physical distancing, everyone will wear masks, clinical spaces are well ventilated and frequently disinfected, plastic shields, intermittent schedules, outside options, only one clinician will use an office each day, and so forth. This list is not exhaustive nor prescriptive but are examples of precautions sites have taken). These safety plans and precautions should be provided to the student and school in writing before the student returns to the site in person.
3. **Polices regarding illness:** Follow county requirements regarding staff and students being ill and not returning to work until it is safe to do so.
4. **Consultation and Communication:** Please consult with the trainee's doctoral program when a situation is unclear, not working out as planned, or conflictual. Please be in close communication with students as we seek to take care of our clients and ourselves.
5. **Specific Schools and Programs:** Schools will be notifying agencies on particular aspects regarding their students and their guidelines.
6. **APA Guides and Suggestions:** In addition to county requirements and guidelines, agencies can make use of suggestions from APA on returning to in person psychological services (<https://www.apaservices.org/practice/news/in-person-services-covid-19>).

We hope to support all agencies in providing the best care possible while also supporting trainee health and wellness. We look forward to hearing from you about your best practices and encourage sharing among agencies.

Wishing everyone safety and good health,

The BAPIC Board