



PANDEMIC PRACTICE ADVICE 9: ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT ADAPTATIONS

EFFECTIVE:	MAY 19, 2020
REVISED – EFFECTIVE:	MAY 26, 2020

Revision: Restrictions for in-person non-essential services have been amended. All deferred and non-essential services can be gradually restarted.

Please consult the website regularly for potential revisions to these documents.

These Information sheets are intended to help audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) to provide in-person patient care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The information sheets include three different types of information:

- 1) **Requirements** – Legislation, regulations and College standards
- 2) **Principles** – Information from various agencies
- 3) **Suggestions** – Ideas on how to proceed

REQUIREMENTS:

- The primary ethical obligation of audiologists and speech language pathologists is to practice their skills for the benefit of their patients/clients ([Code of Ethics](#))
- 4.2.12 Shall utilise all possible resources to ensure that quality service is provided, acknowledging the need for referral in special cases ([Code of Ethics](#))

PRINCIPLES:

Audiologists and SLPs have the knowledge, skills and judgement to:

- plan, conduct and adjust assessments and treatment plans
- use evidence and clinical reasoning to guide professional decisions
- monitor, adapt and/or redesign intervention plans based on patient's responses, needs and the environment

Audiologists and SLPs:

- must ensure they have the required competencies for the services provided
- must have the knowledge of current materials and approaches appropriate to the patient's individual needs

Using your professional judgement, assessments can include the use of formal and/or informal measures, observation, check lists, patient and substitute decision maker (SDM) report.

Assessments can be ongoing as you and the patient become used to alternative models of care.

SUGGESTIONS:

Ask yourself a series of questions before every patient interaction:

- How can I adapt my services to meet my patient's needs?
- If I don't have adequate PPE, what can I do from a distance? or can I use other health professionals with PPE, under my direction, to carry out parts of the assessment or treatment plan?
- What service delivery models can be used?
 - Virtual care: case history information, background referral information, screening, counselling, consultation, reviewing video and audio clip recordings, follow up, sharing results, discussing recommendations
- What preparation can be done ahead of sessions?
 - written instruction sheets, technology troubleshooting, instructional videos on how to..., use of facilitators/helpers, instructional apps, formal/informal assessment options, research online clinical assessment/equipment options, questionnaires, screening tools, patient self-evaluations.
- Are additional consent, privacy and documentation requirements needed?

We cannot predict the consequences of the return to work, consequently further guidance may be added or changed. Also, as a self-regulated professional you must always use your professional judgement. The College's [Practice Advice team](#) is here to discuss issues with you.