

Suitability of Premise

1. Introduction

The premises and environment in which counselling and clinical care coordination takes place should be suitable for the establishment and maintenance of a positive and safe therapeutic relationship between the client and the mental health provider.

APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors are expected to carry out counselling and clinical care coordination in premises that are suitable and fit for purpose.

2. Location of premises

- 2.1 The premises used for counselling and clinical care coordination should be easy and safe for clients to access, and appropriate for the practice of counselling and clinical care coordination, including during the hours of darkness. Access to the premises should, if possible, allow clients to arrive and leave without others being aware that they are attending therapy.
- 2.2 The APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors will provide clients with clear directions to and about the premises and inform them about the availability of public transport, car parking spaces, and any other relevant matters, as required.
- 2.3 The premises cannot be the mental health providers home.
- 2.4 Consideration needs to be given to:
 - the potential barriers to accessing the premises for disabled people
 - making reasonable adjustments for clients who have disabilities to access the premises
 - the availability and suitability of a WC for use by all clients, including those who are disabled
 - the management of the arrival and departure of clients that takes account of their privacy and confidentiality

3. The therapy room

The room in which the therapy takes place:

- must be spacious enough to provide comfortable seating for the numbers using it without the risk of the invasion of their personal space.
- should be light, informal, comfortable and prove a space in which therapy sessions are inaudible to those outside of the room
- must be laid out to give the appearance of being devoted to professional activity. Sitting rooms, dining rooms, and playrooms should not normally be used as therapy rooms, unless special arrangements have been made to adapt them.
- should be quiet and private, and during therapy sessions have no interruptions from colleagues, other occupants of the premises, children, animals, or neighbours. Telephones, fax machines, pagers, laptops, iPads, PCs, doorbells and any other electronic means of communication should be switched off or made inaudible during sessions with clients.

Clinical Settings Guide and Checklist

- should not be overlooked in such a way that its occupants are visible to others.

4. Storage of client information

4.1 If client information is kept on the premise, it must be securely stored.

5. Insurance and legal use of premises

APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors should ensure that any insurance cover that is required for using their premises for counselling and clinical care coordination is in place e.g. public liability, accident, professional indemnity etc.

6. Personal safety and care

6.1 Personal safety is an important issue in the delivery of counselling and clinical care coordination. APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors are often alone in their premises with a client or clients. This could leave them open to violent and aggressive behaviour from their clients. Some premises may be more potentially dangerous than others from this kind of behaviour.

APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors should consider their personal safety and have a health and safety protocol in place. This protocol may be their own if in independent practice or their organisation's if they work in an organisational setting.

This protocol should include carrying out an initial risk assessment about whether it is safe for the APMHA HealthCare Ltd. employees and sub-contractors to work with clients. The protocol should also outline practical measures to minimise the risk to their personal safety from clients while ensuring that they continue to offer due respect to clients as well as to the task of counselling and clinical care coordination.

7. References

Appendix A: Checklist for Establishing and Maintaining Suitable Clinical Premises

Appendix A contains a checklist for establishing and maintaining suitable premises for counselling and clinical care coordination.

Clinical Settings Guide and Checklist

Appendix A: Checklist for Establishing and Maintaining Suitable Clinical Premises

Compliance Items	YES	NO
Have you read APMHA HealthCare Ltd. guidelines relating to suitability of premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy and safe for clients to access your premises, including during the hours of darkness?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the therapy room designed as a professional space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there public transport options in close proximity to the premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How convenient is parking for clients, including those who are disabled.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the area around your premise busy or isolated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you provide the client with map/ directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a separate access to the therapy room?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where is the therapy room located within your premise and is it easy to access	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What are the seating arrangements in; a) the waiting room, b) the therapy room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any possible sources of interruption (e.g. telephones, doorbells)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If client information is kept on the premise, is it securely stored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the premises insurance cover counselling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can the premise legally be used for therapy sessions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have and follow a personal safety protocol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a duress alarm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>