

Newfoundland & Labrador
**College of
Social Workers**

Physical Re-Opening of Private Practice Office Spaces

On June 8, 2020, private health care clinics, that were previously ordered to close as part of the pandemic response, were permitted to reopen their physical offices in accordance with provincial health guidelines and measures. As social workers in private practice consider the physical re-opening of their office spaces, the following considerations may be helpful in planning to adjust workplaces to a 'new normal'.

COVID-19 Public Health Information – Information related to COVID-19 and public health measures continue to evolve daily. It is therefore important that social workers keep abreast of current and reliable information related to COVID-19 and follow public health guidelines accordingly. For information on COVID-19, changes pertaining to the provincial 5-step alert level system, and public health orders, please visit the Government of NL website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>.

Virtual Care – Many social workers have adjusted to the delivery of electronic social work services as a result of this pandemic. Continuing with virtual care where possible is advisable. Social workers in private practice should engage in conversations with clients on how services will continue in the best interests of clients.

Risk Management Strategies – As physical offices begin the gradual process of re-opening, social workers should be aware of and follow public health measures pertaining to physical distancing, client screening for COVID-19 symptoms and exposure prior to office visits, hand washing, sanitation and disinfecting protocols, and use of PPE as appropriate. Other areas of consideration include human resource management to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.

Documentation – Social workers should continue to document the informed consent of clients in relation to the plan for service delivery and steps taken to comply with public health measures. Information related to the assessment of client symptoms of and exposure to COVID-19 should also be documented.

For more information relation to COVID-19 and Social Work Practice, visit the NLCSW website at [https://nlcsw.ca/COVID-19 Social Work Practice](https://nlcsw.ca/COVID-19_Social_Work_Practice)