



# DELIVERING IN-PERSON SERVICES **DURING COVID-19 IN ONTARIO**



# IS ABA AN “ESSENTIAL SERVICE”?

ABA services fall under health and social services which are deemed essential by the province of Ontario. Many families rely heavily on the support they receive through behaviour-analytic services and would be at a loss if those services were discontinued.

For some of our clients, this is the only form of education they receive. These situations more closely resemble ABA services to child-care centres and school.

Therefore, if choosing to remain open, safety protocols outlined for those specific environments should be followed.

This perspective should be considered when determining whether treatment should continue or discontinue based on feasibility, safety protocols, access to telepractice services, and related concerns.

## WHAT SPECIALIZED TRAINING IS REQUIRED FOR DIRECT CARE STAFF?

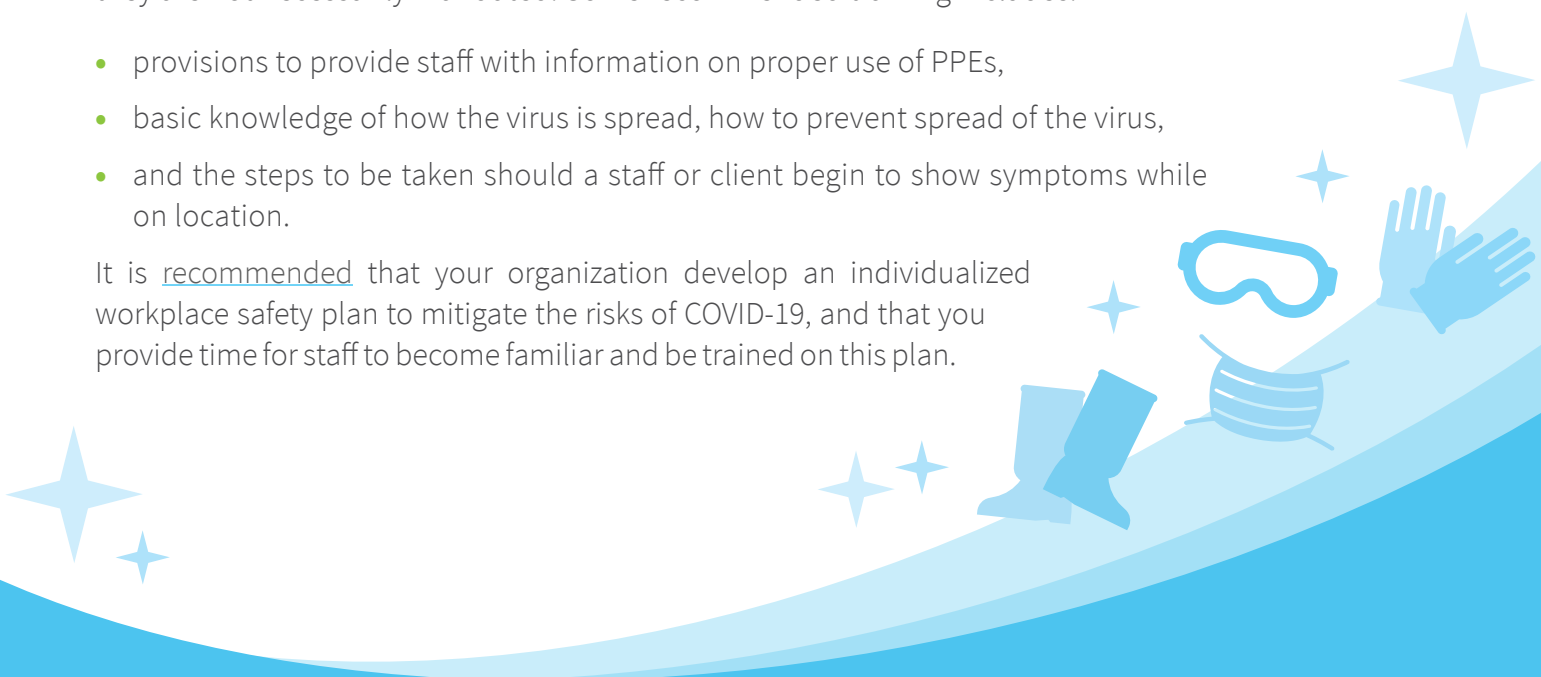
There is no specialized training that is specifically mandated by the government.

Most trainings appear to be dependent on the individual workplace/organization.

There are references to training opportunities and options within the resources listed above, though they are not necessarily mandated. Some recommended training includes:

- provisions to provide staff with information on proper use of PPEs,
- basic knowledge of how the virus is spread, how to prevent spread of the virus,
- and the steps to be taken should a staff or client begin to show symptoms while on location.

It is recommended that your organization develop an individualized workplace safety plan to mitigate the risks of COVID-19, and that you provide time for staff to become familiar and be trained on this plan.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Ontario government has established guidelines for delivering in-person services across a variety of settings (e.g., long term care, schools, etc.). [The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long Term Care](#), [Ministry of Labour](#), and the [Provincial Government](#) pages contain helpful links to the most up-to-date guidelines, as well as other [resources](#).

Determining guidelines for one's particular agency can be tricky as specific guidelines geared toward specific setting do not exist. Therefore, it is recommended that information be derived from similar settings to create individualized sets of guidelines, most notably:

- School/childcare
- Congregate living
- Health care

[Public Health Ontario](#) has some valuable resources, most of which are related to education and related settings. These may be helpful for those practicing within an ABA centre.

Agency-specific requirements can be cross-referenced with items pulled from the guidelines and resources listed above in order to develop a comprehensive protocol for safe in-person delivery. Ontario also has a [guiding tool](#) to provide businesses with a walk through the required steps to ensure consumer and employee safety.

Despite the different guidelines provided by the government, there is still ample room for individualization, which likely yields varying policies and procedures across workplaces.

Much is left to interpretation as to what defines safe, in-person service delivery. This is especially true for organizations that straddle multiple sectors (e.g., agencies providing clinical services and congregate living options; or a centre providing clinical services within a college setting).



## HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES CONTINUED

Requirements that must be followed are requirements that are currently mandated by the government, such as which phase your [region](#) is currently in with respect to lock-down procedures. For example, if you are currently living in a “red zone” there will likely be more strict requirements in place for in-person service delivery, if any is allowed, than if your agency is located in a geographic zone that is currently characterized as “green.”

Both local and provincial guidelines set out by health and safety authorities must be followed.

Most large agencies have a health and safety committee, and some even seek to obtain further advice from an infection prevention and control (IPAC) consultant.





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