**Personal Protective Equipment Risk Assessment**

**Amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is now especially crucial that we as health and wellbeing professionals are educated in the correct application and removal of personal protective equipment in order to protect both ourselves and our patients. The below document demonstrates our understanding and adherence to the use of PPE**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) donning and doffing is a critical process that requires significant care. This process, particularly the removal and disposal of contaminated PPE, is considered a highly important step in limiting exposure to pathogens.

As a Health and well-being centre, we uphold and adhere to the appropriate infection control and prevention measures.

**What is PPE?**

The term **personal protective equipment** refers to anything used to decrease the risk of harm to the health and safety of the therapists. PPE is used by therapists to create a barrier between the therapist and the client to prevent Covid-19 spread through airborne, contact or droplets modes. The aim is to reduce this risk of contamination or transmission of this virus

## The PPE we use includes:

* Aprons
* Masks
* Face shields

**Using PPE Effectively**

All therapists

* Have been thoroughly informed about Covid-19 and updated on the current policies, procedures and protocols that we have in place along with a thorough understanding of contact, droplet and airborne precautions
* Have access to the necessary equipment to carry out the specified task correctly and safely.
* Follow strict hand hygiene regimes

**Donning**

1. ***Perform hand hygiene.***
2. ***Put on Apron.***
3. ***Put on medical grade mask.***
   * Secure the ties behind the ears or elastic bands at the middle of the head and neck.
   * Fit flexible band to the nose bridge.
   * Fit mask snug to face and below the chin.
4. ***Put on face shield.***
   * Place over eyes/face and adjust to fit.

### **Doffing**

Following a correct doffing procedure is especially crucial in the control and prevention of infection. The doffing of PPE should protect your clothing, skin and mucous membranes from contamination. Remember that all PPE is contaminated after use.

1. **Perform hand hygiene.**
2. **Remove Apron**
   * Unfasten the ties,
   * Pull the Apron away from the neck and shoulders, touching the inside only.
   * Turn the apron inside out.
   * Fold or roll the apron into a bundle and discard in the waste container.
3. **Perform hand hygiene.**
4. **Remove face shield.**
   * Remove from the back of the head by lifting headband or earpieces.
   * If reusable, place in the designated place ready for cleaning. If not, discard in waste container.
5. **Remove mask.**
   * Grasp the bottom ties/elastics, then the top ones, or if over the ear masks both elastics at the same time and remove without touching the front of the mask.
   * Discard in the waste container.
6. **Immediately perform hand hygiene.**

**PPE must be disposed of after use unless it is marked as reusable. Reusable PPE must be thoroughly cleaned before being used again.**

**Other Considerations**

* If PPE is not worn correctly, there is a high risk of contamination
* If shields and masks are worn for too long, they may cause pressure injuries to the face. Ensure you protect bony prominences and/or change PPE frequently if possible.
* Always remember to engage with the client, as it can be quite confronting for them not to see your face.
* Take regular breaks if you can.

**Conclusion**

**Correct PPE use is crucial to infection control and prevention.** We ensure correct procedures for donning and doffing are followed, and all therapists are well-trained and competent.

**Masks**

WHO defines medical masks as: ‘surgical or procedure masks that are flat or pleated; they are affixed to the head with straps that go around the ears or head or both.’

Medical masks are designed for single use and should be disposed of properly after one wear. A medical grade masks have at least a 95% droplet filtration system, breathability and consist of multiple layers of manufactured, non-woven materials such as polypropylene, polyethylene or cellulose. ‘Medical masks are rectangular in shape and comprise three or four layers. Each layer consists of fine to very fine fibres. These masks are tested for their ability to block droplets and particles,’ WHO state. ‘The masks must block droplets and particles while at the same time they must also be breathable by allowing air to pass.’