

Clinical Department COVID-19 FAQs

First, we wanted to address the over-arching concern about student mental health. Students wanted to know:

What is the faculty doing to support the mental health needs of the student body and how will they demonstrate flexibility in terms of milestone deadlines and class assignments and deadlines?

- We have heard you! Numerous responses on our survey, as well as individual consultation, has told us that many students feel they are working at half-power right now. Some students expressed feeling overwhelmed, distracted, and focused on their families and own security. Many indicated they simply aren't able to work at the same level that they have in the past.

We *emphatically encourage* you to come to us (your advisors, your supervisors, your individual instructors) should you need either support or flexibility in continuing with your good work. **Please lower the threshold at which you come to talk to us** – by email, phone, or Zoom!

Flexibility can come in all shapes and sizes and *we address each milestone below*. In general, we are going to maintain the general structure and timeline for major milestones (program proposals, comps, clinical orals, dissertation proposals, etc.). While wishing for flexibility, a number of students have also told us that they desire some structure now, and that they want to “just keep moving.” So we'll keep the general structure in place, but we have also encouraged **ALL FACULTY** to *be sensitive to individuals needing flexibility*. This can amount to large and small accommodations. Need extra time on class assignments or need to adjust the requirements? Speak to the instructor. Concerned about how you'll study for comps and perform online? Speak to your advisor. Need to reschedule a clinical oral? Speak to your committee. All faculty have been instructed to be sensitive and responsive. Have any problems with faculty being sufficiently responsive? Come to Angelica, Nancy, or Brian. We're in this together.

We will be having cohort meetings over the next week-and-a-half so that we can address cohort-specific questions and concerns.

We have appreciated your understanding as we have ramped up remote instruction and telehealth and we hope to meet your needs even as things continue to evolve. The Faculty is deeply committed to your success and well-being and will continue to work to ensure your good progress.

What other resources are available for managing this crisis?

- The Dean has established a fund to help students confront current financial challenges Students in need should complete GSAPP's COVID-19 **Student Emergency Assistance Request** Form: https://rutgers.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9zCG5g2VnUglvHv
- Rutgers Food Pantry: <http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/>
- GSAPP Comprehensive COVID-19 Response page:
 - <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/gsap-guidelines-for-covid-19/mental-health-support>
- NJ Mental Health Hotline: **1-800-962-1253**
- NY Mental Health Hotline: **1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355)**

What about my financial aid?

- Financial Aid questions are best directed to the Financial Aid Department at Rutgers: <https://financialaid.rutgers.edu/>

Should I be attending practicum?

- No, you should not be going in to your practicum placement for **any reason**. This includes both in-person face-to-face work with clients and going to the site to complete paperwork or documentation.
- This decision has been made to align with Rutgers decision to suspend in-person work and extends through May 31st.

Can I do remote work through my practicum placement if it is offered?

- Yes, we encourage you to do remote work through your practicum if it can be offered.
- This includes supervised work that can be done through telephone or video conferencing.

What if my personal situation makes it difficult for me to engage in telehealth?

- If your obstacle relates to technology needs, please complete the technology request form. <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/gsap-guidelines-for-covid-19/office-of-information-technology#Technology%20Request%20Form%C2%A0>
- Otherwise, please reach out to your supervisor to discuss your concerns.

Will this telehealth work count toward my clinical hours?

- Yes, as of March 2, 2020 you may count Telephone hours as assessment and intervention, or support (if it just consists of scheduling appointments for example).
- Intakes done by phone are considered “Intervention”
- Video conferencing can also be counted toward Assessment and Intervention.
- Time2Track has added activity categories for telephone-based assessment and telephone-based intervention. Please use those.
- Please use the “tag” feature in T2T to track intervention and assessment hours done by video. Time2Track is in the process of further updating the system for easier tracking. They are collaborating with APPIC.
- Text based work does not count toward assessment or intervention hours.
- Telehealth work at your practicum site is covered by Rutgers liability insurance.

Will I be required to make up my practicum hours?

- No, we have suspended in-person practicum work through May 31st. You will not be required to make up this time.
- Students will move on to their next externship experience. We will be working with individual sites on how and when to phase students into the site.

Should we contact our externship site supervisors and let them know, or would you prefer that we wait and let you contact them instead?

- You may contact your supervisor to discuss this with them.
- If in doubt, please reach out to Connie (connie.hoyosnervi@rutgers.edu)

I am at CAPs. They cannot offer remote work. Can I transfer my clients to the Clinic?

- Connie is working on the best options for this but we do not have an answer at this time.

What about summer classes?

- Summer classes will be conducted online. There is a \$100 fee waiver that will be waived

I am supposed to take my Comprehensive Exam this summer. What is happening with that?

- We are moving in the direction of an online take home exam but this has not been finalized
- We are watching APA's response to make sure that our decision is in line with APA
- We are planning to maintain a summer time schedule if we can ensure a fair and equitable administration. The timeline will follow our ability to hold to that standard.
- Comprehensive exams: <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/current-students/general-clinical-comps>

What about Oral Comps and Dissertation?

- Dissertation proposals and defenses have been moved to virtual meetings.
- Please discuss any need for change in timing with your faculty
- For more information on how to format this:

I am involved in research, how is this affected?

- Speak with your supervisor, advisor, or chair if involved in research with humans.
- Some restrictions on the type of research that is allowed
- New enrollment paused for now
- Exceptions for clinical trials that provide direct benefit

I see clients in The Psychological Services Clinic. How is this work affected?

- The Clinic has developed a protocol for training to deliver telehealth services
- Telephone-based therapy may now be logged in Time2Track and counted toward your clinical assessment and intervention hours.

Once we get the Zoom Health invite, have our clients submit the consent on Therasoft, complete the self-training modules, and do our technology check in with our supervisors, should we be able to move forward with the telehealth sessions at that point?

- YES

I was wondering if when zoom is up and running clients will be able to pay remotely or will they continue to run up balances?

- Dolores is working on this. We are not quite sure how this will work, but clients should be made aware that telephone or video sessions will be charged in the same way the in-person sessions were charged.
- If your client's financial situation has changed, please make us aware of this so that we can re-assess their fee structure if possible.

If I have a client who is not literate, what are my options for obtaining consent for telehealth?

- In this case, you should speak to your client by phone to obtain informed consent and then document this discussion in the client's record.

What's the best way we can go about recording phone sessions if we opt for phone over video?

- You can also make calls from Zoom. Here's a how-to article:
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/200942859-Using-Telephone-Call-Out>
(Thank you Michael Marks)

Is there a central location we can go online for updates and all of the information that has been disseminated?

- <https://gsapp.rutgers.edu/gsap-guidelines-for-covid-19/mental-health-support>