



Response to Circuit Breaker Measures

With the recent jump in COVID-19 cases and our Government's announcement of the Circuit Breaker plans, Singapore was thrown into turmoil.

Organisations made plans for their employees to work from home and many services were deemed non-essential. Psychological services, unfortunately, was one of them. In times of crisis, the prevalence of mental health issues are at a high. Without timely intervention, this could lead to a public mental health crisis as seen in countries such as China and the UK.

As an advocate for mental health, Singapore Psychological Society (SPS) raised our concerns and pushed for psychological services to be made essential during this time of need, while fully understanding and supporting the need for physical distancing measures implemented by the Government. As a national society, we seek to advocate not only for our clinicians but also for our clients, as a collective voice for those unable to express their needs.

As of 05 April 2020, we are pleased to announce that psychological services have now been considered an essential service on SPS' request. This is a big step forward for mental health in Singapore.

Platforms for Psychological Services

SPS supports the use of telehealth as the main mode of service provision during this partial lockdown. However, we acknowledge that telehealth may not be a suitable or ethical platform for all clients. Face-to-face services will only be made accessible for clients that (i) are assessed to fall within a high risk profile (e.g., harm to self or others) and/or (ii) have conditions that might be unsafe / not beneficial to be seen remotely.

We encourage the public to refer to the list of Registered Psychologists (<https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/srp-membership-directory/>) when engaging psychological services. The Singapore Register of Psychologists (SRP) seeks to protect the welfare of the users of psychological services and to maintain and advance the professional standards of psychologists (i.e., Registered Psychologists are bound by SPS Code of Ethics and are required to maintain their registration through professional development and rigorous standards similar to international standards). The public can be assured of the accountability and professionalism of the Registered Psychologists found on our list.



One Psych Community

Additionally, in recognising the lasting impact COVID-19 has on our society, SPS has stepped up to initiate and provide support to various initiatives for a more united mental health response. We have rallied our members and fellow psychologists to help specifically with the COVID-19 situation:

<https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/events/onepsychcommunity>

SPS has also called for trained psychologists to support the 24/7 National Emotional Support hotline by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). This hotline provides psychological first aid to people who have anxieties or emotional distress related to COVID-19. If you would like to be involved in the above initiatives, please register your interest at <https://go.gov.sg/nch>.

Lastly, and most importantly, SPS reminds all practicing clinicians to connect with your needs and engage in self-care practices as you continue to contribute in immense ways to your clients and the larger community. We have put together a short guide for all practicing clinicians:

https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/One-Psych-Community-In-Response-to-COVID-19_06April.pdf