



# Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority Inc.



February 24, 2021

**TO: NITHA Partner Community Mental Health & Addiction Departments**

**Re: *Adjusted Recommendations for Emergent Counselling Situation Guidelines***

In response to inquiries into what is considered “Emergent Counselling” following the Public Health Measures effective on November 19, 2020. This indicated that face to face counselling is permitted with masks worn in session, however, due to the increasing cases of COVID-19 in our First Nation communities, it is with prevention measures that we look at counselling services of our Mental Health & Addiction staff, and recommend refraining from all face to face counselling until further notice with telephone and online counselling (using Pexip Platform) being offered in the meantime.

We understand in some cases there is a need for face to face counselling and in those cases where there are emergent needs of a client, the following are situations that are considered emergent:

- Active suicidal ideations, moderate to high-risk suicide assessment results;
- Active psychosis requiring assessment (if within your scope of practice to assess) or referral to appropriate service;
- Disclosure of mental health concerns (i.e. Panic Disorder) that could have an overall impact on one’s health causing further distress that requires face to face observation;
- Disclosure of danger; this would include domestic violence being reported, with victim services oriented counselling required;
- Palliative care not related to COVID-19.

Please implement social distancing efforts (2 meters apart), and proper protective equipment (mask). In the case of a pandemic, no teams will be deployed, due to high-risk exposure until Public Health deems risk to be low.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Mental Health & Addiction Advisor, and/or contact your direct supervisor.

Sincerely,

Glenda Watson BHSc., M.Ed. (Psych), CCC  
Mental Health & Addiction Advisor