

Guidelines for In-Person Groups

Virtual counseling groups have been largely successful across the state during modified operations due to COVID-19. As we begin to move toward conducting more business in our offices, we are now able to begin conducting in-person groups in areas where it can be done safely. While we want to continue virtual groups there are some groups that are more conducive to being done in person such as parts of the DRC orientation process and Assessment Groups. There are offenders who do not have access to the technology necessary to participate in virtual groups. We have counselors who may not be able to conduct their classes from home due to family dynamics. In those instances conducting some groups in person at an office becomes necessary. In order to ensure that we are providing services to as many offenders as we can, effective Monday, June 8th, in-person groups can resume in the offices.

- The following will continue to be required as well as all other guidelines outlined in the [Phase I Post Covid Operations](#) order:
- Temperature checks and basic screening will be conducted prior to entry in the office for both staff and offenders. Temperature of 100.4 or above, or displaying [symptoms](#) should result in being denied entry to the office.
- [Social distancing](#) as defined by CDC must be in place in all areas of the property, both inside and outside (maintain 6' minimum distance)
- Face masks will be required for staff and visitors during group sessions. At this time, DCS will not provide masks for visitors.
- Modified Classroom Layouts
 - Space seating at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
 - Arrange chairs to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have participants sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Group sizes will be limited to the number that can be accommodated while maintaining the above classroom layout; however, it is recommended that it be limited to 10 per group.
 - If you have a large group/conference room, you may exceed 10 persons, as long as social distancing guidelines are met.

- Post [signs](#) reminding participants of safety standards.
- Sanitize group rooms between sessions.
- Staff and offenders who are at high risk of severe illness will not be required to attend in person.
- Those who cannot attend in person due to high risk conditions should be allowed to remotely connect to the group via video conferencing.