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The Arica School®

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COVID-19 Guidelines and Rationale

The Board of Arica Institute has produced COVID-19 recommended guidelines for face-to face programs hosted by either Arica Institute Sponsors or The Oscar Ichazo Foundation Organizers in group trainings and practices. While some requirements remain, most final protocols for any person-to-person training event are determined by the local Sponsor or Organizer after a careful examination of the degree and severity of coronavirus infections in their local area.

The guidelines recommended below are intended to significantly reduce the risk of serious infections in all face-to-face situations in which the *Arica*® Work occurs. It is vitally important to explain to all potential attendees that, even when followed strictly, these guidelines *reduce but do not eliminate* the risk of infection from the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease.

In all cases, even in less formal group gatherings, Aricans need to make responsible and ethical decisions to protect themselves and fellow participants from the worst consequences of the disease. That means making a serious assessment of one's overall health before enrolling or participating in a face-to-face Arica event.

It is important to consider the reputation that is reflected in our level of responsibility in the School, and also Oscar's legacy, when we make decisions with respect to the coronavirus. It is our realized Ethical ground and Spiritual maturity that is essential to address this matter appropriately.

These recommended guidelines may be additional to, or overruled by, local and national regulations. These guidelines have recently been revised from previous, more stringent versions. However, if COVID-19 variants again become more

epidemic, we will revert back to required guidelines for more aggressive disease containment.

PROGRAMS PRESENTED BY ARICA INSTITUTE SPONSORS

Arica Institute Sponsors are licensed to present Arica Institute trainings, and therefore have the responsibility for applying all recommended Institute guidelines and policies that they feel are necessary in their local region. Arica Institute trainings range from one day up to two weeks in length. There are also short introductions to the Arica Work. The recommended guidelines for the longer residential trainings (ten days or more) and the shorter trainings and introductions (two days or less) differ in scope due to the consequences of an active infection occurring in a group that works closely together over a series of days. In cases where longer trainings include concurrent shorter trainings, the recommended guidelines for longer trainings should apply throughout.

Longer Residential Trainings and Concurrent Shorter Trainings

The ten measures detailed below, when used in combination, can substantially reduce risk of infection within a training group based on current scientific knowledge.

These recommended precautionary measures include:

1. Vaccination Protocol
2. Testing Protocol
3. Maintaining the Training Bubble
4. Mask Policy
5. Reporting Symptoms
6. Venue Requirements
7. Social Distancing
8. Surface Hygiene
9. Modifying Close-contact Exercises
10. Supervision

Prospective applicants, participants and training staff must be informed of the Sponsor's required guidelines in place before the training begins (e.g. advertising,

website, emails) and may only enter the training after recognizing and accepting the guidelines, providing negative test results, submission of proof of vaccination, and completion of the Release of Liability Agreement (RLA).

1. Vaccination Protocol

Proof of vaccination prior to the event opening is highly recommended for attendance at all face-to-face residential Arica Institute trainings. To be fully vaccinated, attendees must have their second shot of a two-shot vaccine, or single shot of a one-shot vaccine, 14 days or more before the opening day of the event. If a booster vaccine is advised for your age group and available in your region, it is highly recommended (and future updates of these guidelines may require it). Those with pre-existing health conditions that may reduce the effectiveness of a COVID-19 vaccine, or place them at greater risk of serious illness, should not register for face-to-face Arica Institute trainings at this time.

Requests for medical exemptions from vaccination may be considered by the training Sponsor at the Sponsor's discretion. If vaccination is normally required, the Sponsor must inform TASC and all attendees and staff prior to the event that unvaccinated individuals will be in attendance.

Rationale:

Unvaccinated individuals account for the vast majority of serious infections, hospitalizations, and deaths from the virus. The most important function of the vaccine requirement is to protect us from these worst consequences. Although "breakthrough infections" do occur in vaccinated persons, and vaccine protection does decline over time, vaccination has been proven to substantially reduce the frequency and severity of infections.

Data about the transmission of the virus (including new variants) by vaccinated as compared to unvaccinated individuals remain inconclusive, but notification regarding attendance by unvaccinated individuals is necessary for transparency.

2. Testing Protocol

For its longer residential trainings (and the shorter trainings that are concurrent with these long trainings), Arica Institute recommends that participants and staff maintain public mask-wearing and social distancing

for two weeks prior to the event. Furthermore, it requires three diagnostic tests to be administered prior to and during the training. All participants are required to take a standard nasal-swab COVID antigen test (also known as a lateral flow test) three days prior to the event.¹ Those individuals with a positive test result will be asked not to attend the event. The training Sponsor has the responsibility to deal with refunds that may apply in these cases.

A “welcome” antigen test is administered at the opening of the training. At least one “repeat” test is administered 24 to 48 hours later, on the second or third morning of the training (depending on whether the “welcome” test was in the morning or evening). The Sponsor may, at their discretion, require additional repeat tests. Testing kits for use during the training should be provided by the Sponsor, who may pass the cost to participants in the registration fee.

Those with positive test results must withdraw from the training. Once virus free, those individuals repeating the training may be accepted for readmission at the discretion of the Sponsor.

Rationale:

Testing is essential to indicate probable freedom from infection but, like vaccination, testing is not failsafe. Most COVID-19 infections can be detected by testing 3-5 days after they were contracted, but some can take up to 14 days to incubate before becoming detectable.

The nasal swab antigen self-test gives an immediate (15-minute) result. Antigen self-test kits can be purchased at pharmacies or online,² and can be performed anywhere. These tests pick up the most infectious individuals by detecting material

¹ Although different names are in use for commercially available at-home covid tests – antigen test, self-test, or lateral flow test – they refer to essentially the same thing. In this document, we use antigen test, which is most widely recognized. The term “antigen,” which means virus material, contrasts this type of test with an antibody test that detects the human body’s immune response. The term “lateral flow” describes the mechanics of the testing kit that produces a visible result. Some tests use different swabbing methods to obtain a sample, but any of these are acceptable for the present purposes.

² Sponsors in countries where antigen self-tests are not readily available should inform TASC in advance of the number of testing kits and dates needed, and an effort will be made to provide these kits by mail from the U.S.

from the surface proteins of the virus. The antigen test has a high specificity, meaning that false positives are extremely rare. However, false negatives can occur if the test does not pick up enough viral material. One common reason for false negatives is that there may be a narrow window of time during which the amount of virus peaks in an individual and can most readily be detected. Since this time window is easy to miss, the test must be repeated.

While “polymerase chain reaction” (PCR) tests are more sensitive than the common lateral flow tests and have fewer false negatives, they require visiting a testing location and a waiting period of several days to receive results from a laboratory. It is therefore impractical to require PCRs as part of a testing protocol.

3. Maintaining the Training Bubble

Once a training has commenced, it is recommended that all contact with individuals outside of the group of participants and training staff (training venue personnel, caterers, cleaning staff, etc.) requires mask-wearing (full protection of nose and mouth with a well-fitted N95 or KN95 mask) and social distancing. Leaving the training venue should be limited to essential outings only, and is subject to approval by the Sponsor. An in/out form is recommended for tracking purposes. To maintain a virus free group experience, correct mask-wearing and social distancing is highly recommended while away from the venue. No visitors or friends are allowed to any Arica Institute training, training party/gathering, or meal event during the pandemic unless they have a negative antigen test at admission or can show negative antigen test results within the prior 24 hours. The Sponsor may, at their discretion, permit a training participant to be accompanied by a spouse/partner. In such a case, the partner must strictly abide by the same protocols as all participants. All participants and staff need to be instructed in advance that, for the health and safety of the entire training, they must make a serious commitment to maintaining the bubble.

Rationale:

Maintaining a training bubble is an essential element for protecting the group from possible infection while longer trainings are in progress. Since transmission risk within the training group cannot be eliminated, it is recommended that external contact be actively minimized.

4. Mask-wearing

Complete coverage of the nose and mouth in a form-fitting mask is highly recommended in all situations in which training participants have contact with non-training personnel. Medical grade masks (N95, KN95) are recommended. Mask-wearing is not advised during more strenuous exercises such as *Psychocalisthenics*[®] and *The Arica 9 Ways of Zhikr Ritual*[™].

Rationale:

Mask-wearing significantly lowers the risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2. Only well-fitting, medical-grade masks protect the wearer, while cloth masks and surgical masks with a looser fit mainly serve to protect others from exhaled droplets and aerosols.

Unlike all the other risk-reducing measures, mask-wearing has a direct impact on training exercises, especially breathing and physical exercises. Therefore, these guidelines prioritize other components of an overall risk-reducing strategy, and leave to the Sponsor's discretion when masks are to be required within a training.

5. Recording Symptoms

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are an above-normal temperature, nasal discharge, continuous cough, sore throat, headache, body aches and pains, and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. If any of these symptoms are reported, a negative LFT test is required before re-entry to the training.

6. Venue Requirements

During the pandemic, longer trainings can only be offered in a residential setting (unless this requirement is specifically waived by TASC, in consultation with the Executive Team of the Board of Directors), and the venue must be able to accommodate all participants and training staff. Training rooms and eating areas must be well-ventilated, with open windows and/or efficient mechanical ventilation. Commercially available air filters are recommended. Where possible, outdoor training locations are encouraged.

Rationale:

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is transmitted by aerosols (microscopic floating particles or droplets). The risk of transmission is reduced by frequent air changes indoors, and is substantially lower outdoors. Air filters help remove airborne particles while circulating the air. Residential settings provide the isolation necessary to create an effective training bubble.

7. Social Distancing

Social distancing should be observed wherever practical, particularly for contact outside of training participants and staff. A minimum of 6 feet (1.8m) is recommended in both indoor and outdoor environments. For strenuous exercises, social distancing in excess of 6 feet (1.8m) is recommended wherever practical.

Rationale:

The greater the distance between individuals, the less of each person's exhaled breath will be inhaled by the other.

8. Surface Hygiene

It is recommended to wipe all surfaces with alcohol/disinfectant that are touched by the group frequently, and for all participants to wash their hands with soap and water or use an antiviral hand gel every time they re-enter the space.

Rationale:

Although transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is primarily airborne, and infections from surface contamination (fomites) are exceedingly rare, good surface hygiene also helps reduce the risk of other infections such as influenza or the common cold. A regular cleaning ritual also serves as a reminder of the need for continuous risk awareness.

9. Modifying Close-contact Exercises

Prior to a training, Sponsors will need to strategize and prepare for modifications of exercises where participants have physical or aerosol contact, lie down, speak or sit in dyads, and sit in circular groups.

Particular attention should be paid to performing *The Arica Nine Ways of Zhikr* Ritual or Training, *Psychocalisthenics* Training or Practice, and *Kath State Generation Movements™* in an outdoor and/or well-ventilated space with increased distancing (more than 6 feet) between participants wherever practical. Depending on circumstances, it may not be feasible to conduct these programs at all.

10. Supervision

For each training, a dedicated staff person, communicated to TASCC, needs to be responsible for maintaining compliance with COVID-19 protocols by both participants and staff during the course of the training.

***In Case of a Suspected Infection**

In the case of reported symptoms, including a high temperature during the course of any training, the person or persons with a suspected infection must immediately take an antigen test.

If the results of this test, or any routine test during the training, are positive for COVID-19, the individual or individuals must immediately quarantine in an isolation room and should either return home, or in exceptional circumstances, return to the training, only when it is considered safe to do so as per current CDC Guidelines. In addition, the individual or individuals should be permitted to leave quarantine only after receiving a negative antigen test result. Remaining participants in the training do not need to quarantine unless they experience symptoms, but must wear masks and socially distance within the training for five days, stay aware of symptoms, and take an antigen test on the fifth day after the positive test was recorded. Strenuous exercises such as *Psychocalisthenics* or *The Arica 9 Ways of Zhikr Ritual* should be suspended in the event of a positive test within the group.

The Sponsor's refund policy, read and signed by each participant, must clearly articulate the rules for such an occurrence, including reference to the cost of an isolation room.

Rationale:

These procedures follow the current U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [guidelines](#). Since the antigen test has a lower sensitivity but high specificity, a positive test result must

be considered a near-certain case of COVID-19 infection.

Non-Residential Shorter Trainings and Introductions

Many of the requirements for longer trainings are also recommended for shorter trainings. The Sponsor needs to explain clearly that these protocols will reduce but not eliminate the possibility of contracting a COVID-19 infection during the training or introduction. Due to the increased intensity of breathing and/or close contact required by *Psychocalisthenics*, *Kath State Generation Movements*, *Chua K'a Bodywork*[®], *Vortex Points*[™], and especially *The Arica 9 Ways of Zhikr Ritual*, proposals for these trainings cannot be approved during the pandemic unless offered as part of a longer training event where a training bubble has been established.

Rationale:

The guidelines for short trainings follow the same overall strategy of reducing risk through multiple layers of protective measures, with somewhat different emphasis based on practical considerations. For a shorter training, it is feasible to rely more heavily on masking and social distancing, but infeasible to create a bubble through isolation and repeated testing. Therefore, the emphasis shifts from minimizing the chances that any attendee could be infected with COVID-19 toward minimizing the chances that they could transmit it to others during the training.

1. Vaccination Protocol

Vaccination is highly encouraged. The Sponsor may mandate a vaccination requirement at their discretion.

2. Testing Protocol

An antigen test is highly recommended for all participants and staff as they arrive on location each day of the training. Individuals who receive a positive test result must immediately leave the venue and self-isolate. If no antigen test is administered, then it is recommended that the temperatures of participants and staff should be taken each morning of a training. An attendee with a recorded temperature above 99 degrees Fahrenheit, or 37 degrees Celsius, should not be admitted to the training.

The Sponsor's refund policy, read and signed by each participant, must clearly articulate this.

3. Mask-wearing

Complete coverage of the nose and mouth in a form-fitting mask is recommended throughout the training. Medical-grade masks (N95, KN95) are advised.

4. Venue Requirements

Training rooms and lounge/eating areas must be well-ventilated, with open windows or effective mechanical ventilation. Leaving the training venue for outside meals or breaks is discouraged; lunch/snacks should be served on-site. Where possible, outdoor training locations are encouraged.

5. Social Distancing

Social distancing should be observed wherever practical, and must be observed for all contact outside of training participants and staff. A minimum of 6 feet (1.8m) is recommended in both indoor and outdoor environments.

6. Surface Hygiene

It is recommended to wipe all surfaces with alcohol/disinfectant that are touched by the group frequently and for all participants to wash their hands with soap and water or use an antiviral hand gel every time they re-enter the space.

7. Supervision

For each training, a dedicated staff person needs to be responsible for maintaining compliance with COVID-19 protocols by both participants and staff during the course of the training/introduction.

PROGRAMS PRESENTED BY THE OSCAR ICHAZO FOUNDATION (OIF) ORGANIZERS

OIF Organizers present monthly one-day group practices, which currently occur principally in Zoom presentations. When such practices are opened for face-to-face attendance for participants who are not members of the same household, it is recommended that Organizers follow the same ground rules applying to non-residential Arica Institute programs.

All members of the Arica community are encouraged to witness the fears, beliefs, subjective opinions, and polarities in our societies, to stay aware of the real science and local and national regulations regarding COVID-19, to recognize that conditions may change rapidly, and that we are all responsible for our own health and safety and for protecting those around us.

TOHAM KUM RAH

The Arica Institute Board of Directors

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