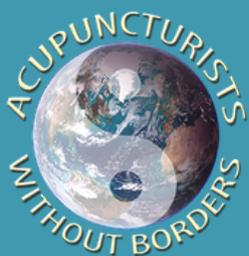


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**How to Run a Safe AWB  
Community Acupuncture  
Healing Circle  
(aka Mobile Field Clinic)  
During CoVid-19**

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# How to Run a Safe AWB Community Acupuncture Healing Circle (aka Mobile Field Clinic) During CoVid-19

Momentous events of the past year, including the CoVid pandemic and deepening racial, economic and social injustice, are creating heightened stress and trauma around the world. While everyone is affected by these disasters, the heaviest trauma burden is carried by healthcare and essential workers, indigenous communities, people of color, and those without economic, educational, and social resources.

Community acupuncture and Chinese Medicine can help prevent and reduce trauma. AWB's goal is to support this healing work in as many communities as possible, in collaboration with local practitioners and service organizations.

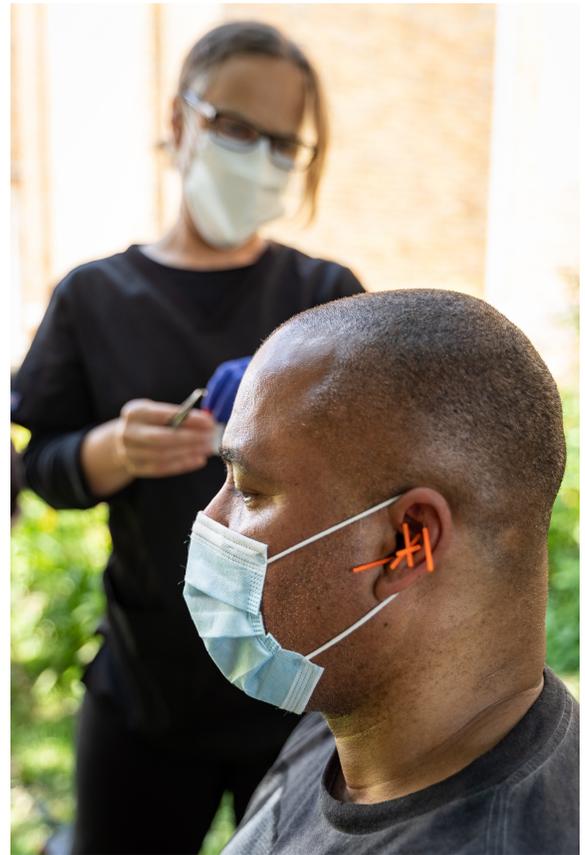
This document was developed by Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) as a guide to setting up safe community acupuncture healing clinics "in the field," during the CoVid pandemic, and the *trauma pandemic* that will last much longer than the infection.

**"In the field"** means: Healing circles, or clinics, that are discreet, mobile treatment opportunities, offered in temporary settings, safe for practitioners and patients.

**"Safe"** means: Places for people to experience healing with one another, where they are respected and cared for by skilled practitioners that live in their communities, with minimal exposure to the spread of infection.

***This guide is designed for practitioners who are already familiar with AWB mobile clinic protocols, and/or for those who are able to take AWB training before setting up clinics.***

It is based on AWB's work of the past fifteen years in the US and internationally, delivering group ear acupuncture (and other CM services) in disaster situations and conflict regions. Mobile clinics and field acupuncture in chaotic, under resourced settings require





*planning, structure, and smooth team work* to be effective and safe. Mobile field clinic work is different than individual clinical practice, and even different from working in a community acupuncture setting, because field conditions are often unpredictable and volatile.

If you have not already taken an AWB *Healing Community Trauma* training course, we encourage you to do so, not because you will need greater clinical skill than you already have, but because AWB training provides a guide to the planning, structural clinic model, and team preparation that you'll need to work well in the field.

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The training helps you create short and long-term community trauma healing projects, details all the supplies you'll need (medical and “administrative”), as well as documents for patient education and informed consent. The course prepares you to offer trauma-informed care and supports you to take care of yourself as you work with trauma survivors. You can take the *online version* of AWB field training, called *Healing Community Trauma in Times of Crisis*, by registering here:

<https://acuwithoutborders.org/healing-community-trauma-in-times-of-crisis/>

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**This guide includes two sections:**

- **Part 1 outlines AWB mobile clinic roles and protocols.**
- **Part 2 revisits the outline with adaptations to CoVid-era mobile clinic set up and practice.**

Not every field team will use all these suggestions. We tried to include the most important elements in this guide, and we welcome feedback and additional suggestions! Thank you for your consideration and all that you do to help heal our communities during this critical time.

# Part 1: AWB Clinic Roles and Protocols for Field Work

## CLINIC ROLES

### TEAM LEADER

- Assess the unique situation for each clinic
- Assign team roles to other people in the group or gain consensus on roles
- Help ground the team (can use Qi Gong, HeartMath, etc.)
- Divide clinic venue into sections (if appropriate), and give each needler a section. Have them work from front of room to back in each section
- Check in with each needler periodically to see how they are doing
- Remind needlers to take breaks periodically and drink water or sit down
- Handle any situations; i.e., fainting, etc.
- Make sure requisite paperwork and follow up are completed
- Let needlers know when to move to a different section or area of room
- Let needlers know when to take out needles
- “Close” the clinic for clients
- Check in with each person as to how they are doing; do they need a break, water or food



### NEEDLERS

- Needle patients, remove needles
- Make sure that patients are safe and comfortable

### GREETER

- Stays at door or entry to say hello and welcome people to the clinic

- Directs people to where they should go for next steps (either to sit, or to fill out documents)
- Make sure patients receive client information and sign consent forms

## DOCUMENTER

- Have binder with all paperwork for clinic
- Give team leader/translator the outline for Client Talk to read/summarize/translate at the beginning of the clinic
- Be in charge of clinic start time and communicate that to team leader
- Let team leader know when it is close to the end time
- Do a head count and let team leader know at the beginning of the clinic how many people there are to treat. Fill out any other documentation needed



## HELPER

- Be available to practitioners as needed
- Hand out alcohol swabs
- Pick up trash as clinic is going along
- Hold hand gel for practitioners in between treatments
- Address clients in need of help
- Pick up dropped needles and mark with post-it notes
- Help with documentation

## WATCHER

- Does not needle
- Responsible for watching clients at all times to see if anyone may be on verge of fainting
- Responsible for alerting others on team if there are needs in room that are unattended

- Does not ever leave the treatment room, does not talk during treatment
- Does clean sweep at the end of clinic
- Handles Post-It note system

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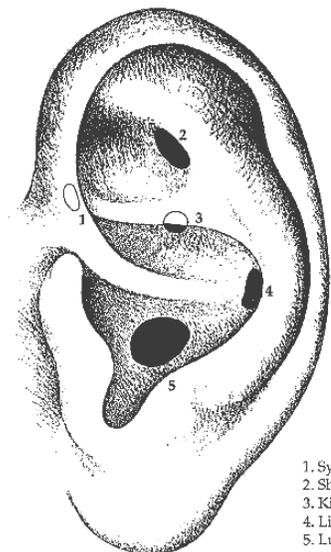
## CLINIC FLOW AND PROTOCOLS

### **Before the clinic if you do group treatments:**

- Have the necessary documents copied and ready to go (data collection forms, outline for Clinic Talk for translator if possible)
- Set up chairs, documents and treatment fields. Put out AWB banner
- Make sure all team members know their roles
- Be sure that volunteers are familiar with protocols and documents, and have signed volunteer waivers
- Pull out Data Collection Sheet for each new clinic. Record start and end time
- Prepare team to hold space and be grounded

### **During the clinic:**

- Pull out the NADA ear points diagram or hand-outs to show to group or model ear if you have one
- If treatments are starting at the same time do a Clinic Talk before inserting the needles
- Make sure all clients have signed a consent form
- Allow patients to swab their own ears with alcohol
- Be sure the “watcher” has their eyes on those receiving treatment



National Acupuncture Detoxification Association  
Auricular Protocol

- Treatments should last 45 minutes
- If you pick up a dropped needle please note this on post-it and put near the client
- Keep a Q tip in hand when removing needles in case of bleeding
- Use a paper bag for trash, a zip lock for trash containing blood and a biohazard bag if there is an excessive amount of blood
- Use hand sanitizer between each participant

### **After the clinic:**

- Organize paperwork and prepare post-treatment clinic documentation
- Have the watcher do a “visual sweep” of the area to ensure that there are no stray needles on the floor or furniture
- Be sure that your biohazard containers are tightly closed and ready to be transported

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### **WORKING AS A TEAM IN THE FIELD**

- Be on time to daily team meetings at the agreed upon time
- Have your personal needs met so that you are ready to work
- Write any information or advice you feel is relevant for future teams in the Notes you compile for the team (for the Team Leader’s report)
- If problems arise with misunderstandings or communication among team members, please try to solve it with the individual. If that’s a problem, bring it to the Team Leader or debrief meetings
- Make a commitment to yourself and your team members for a daily debriefing time in the evening (this is an important habit to make in the beginning as this time will become increasingly important as time goes on)
- Provide feedback and suggestions to each other and to AWB on how to improve the system
- **Do self-care daily!!!!!!**

# Part 2: Protocols for a Running a Safe AWB Field Clinic During-CoVid-19

## PLANNING THE CLINIC (THINGS TO DO AHEAD)

1. Know and follow the public health regulations in your state and county
2. Take the *Healing Community Trauma in Times of Crisis* online course if you don't already have AWB training
3. Read the AWB Community Service Clinic Manual (comes with the training)
4. Ask AWB for a list of practitioners/students in your region that have participated in *Healing Community Trauma* field trainings
5. Form a team of practitioners/helpers to provide healing circle treatments
6. Integrate awareness of the 3 C's into all your planning. Studies reveal that there are three C's that increase CoVid infection rates: Crowds, Closed Environments, Close Human Contact. Avoid crowding, closed spaces, closer than recommended physical distance between patients, minimize team/patient physical closeness by defining team tasks clearly (see below)
7. Look for an **OUTDOOR VENUE** for the healing circle, if the weather is good. Parking lots; large outdoor church patios; outdoor athletic spaces; etc. When AWB does disaster relief work, we often work outside because indoor conditions are not available
8. In addition to regular mobile clinic supplies, gather additional CoVid-era supplies **INCLUDING:**
  - » plastic boxes that act as a clean field, and contain treatment supplies for each practitioner (right).
  - » hand sanitizer and other disinfectant supplies for wiping surfaces/chairs
  - » N95 masks/helmets for practitioners
  - » treatment gloves (optional)
  - » surgical masks for patients
9. Make sure your team signs AWB volunteer waivers and each participant has appropriate licenses/malpractice insurance



**Example of supply box:  
Available at art stores. Sections in  
the box can be set up flexibly.**

10. Prepare patient documentation (large sign with informed consent info posted at venue is good or put information in plastic sleeves that can be wiped with disinfectant wipes)
11. Reach out/market to let people know about the circle!

## DAY OF THE CIRCLE

1. Set the circle(s) up with chairs eight feet apart
2. Place extra supplies in an easy to access location (clean field table)
3. Disinfect chairs/surfaces
4. Divide the circle into sections and assign practitioners/greeters/helpers/watchers to each section to reduce chaos and practitioner movement. Each person knows exactly what section of the circle they are working in  
AHEAD OF TIME



5. Make sure there is a portable hand washing station or plenty of hand sanitizer in multiple locations throughout the venue so that patients can wash their hands before they enter the circle
6. Make sure everyone on the team knows their role and who is doing what:
  - » **Team leader** is responsible for overall safety and all trouble shooting. Team members agree to check in with team leader if problems arise before working outside of their circle section
  - » **Greeters** check patient temperatures with no touch temp scanner before they enter the circle (optional) and CoVid S/S checklist; supervise patient entry, seating and exit; make sure informed consent is completed for each patient in their section of the circle
  - » **Needlers** insert and take out needles/ear seeds
  - » **Watchers/Helpers** (watch patients for safety, dropped needles; assist practitioners as needed)

- » **Clinic Talk Presenter** tells the group about the treatment and what will happen (unless it's a "rolling" clinic)

7. Figure out how patient flow will go:

**Suggestion:** Mark the circle entrance and exit with bright duct tape-arrows on ground. Greeters bring patients to their section one by one, and guide patients to leave one by one at the end in the same exit direction

8. Put up signage in the venue to provide basic directions (Please wash hands, wear your mask, etc., exit here, etc.)
9. Ground the team and affirm your intention! HeartMath, Qi gong, breathing...

### **CIRCLE FLOW**

1. Make sure patients do not wait for the clinic to start in an enclosed space that cannot incorporate proper distancing
2. Once team is ready and grounded, greeters begin checking in patients.
3. **Check in consists of:**
  - » **temperature scan** (if you choose),
  - » **symptom check list** (have a list with large font ready and ask person to read and tell you if they have any of the symptoms-if so, refer to different treatment area or home)
  - » **providing a mask** for patient to wear *at least* during needling if patient does not have one
  - » **handwash** before sitting in circle
4. Patients enter circle one at a time, greeter indicates the seat
5. Needlers give alcohol swabs to patient and ask patients to clean ears, needlers collect refuse
6. Greeters wait to obtain informed consent; watchers stand outside circle
7. Once everyone is seated, clinic talk presenter gives talk (N/A if it is a rolling clinic)
8. Greeters obtain informed consent. **Clean pens between signers!**
9. Clinic talk presenter or team leader does breathing/grounding/HeartMath with circle
10. Greeters withdraw from circle to "hold energy" around the circle
11. Needlers insert needles. **Hands washed between each patient, even with gloves**

12. Watchers WATCH!
13. Needlers withdraw to hold energy of the circle
14. Team leader calls the time
15. Needlers withdraw needles. **Hands washed between each patient, even with gloves**
16. Ear seeds can be done at separate station if desired or if needlers have time to do this in the circle
17. Greeters guide patients one at a time out of the circle/to ear seeding station
18. Watchers make sure all needles are accounted for with needlers (do a ground swipe for any needles)
19. Chairs and surfaces are disinfected for next circle.



## POST-IT SYSTEM

- Assumption (standard) is 5 needles in each ear
- If fewer than 5 needles in an ear, write number on post-it, place on patient's chair or floor
  - » Example: 4 put in, Right
- If needle drops, AND you pick it up, note how many remain to be collected
  - » Example: 4 put in, Right; 1 picked up; 3 remaining to pick up
- Can use post -it for staggered treatment times – to keep track of start time
- Do not let people walk with needles in their ears!

## SUPPLY LIST - TREATMENT & OTHER SUPPLIES

### Treatment Supplies

- Antimicrobial hand wipes or other hand sanitizer
- Anti-germicidal soap
- Needles (.5 or .25 cun, 36-38 gauge ear needles in 5 or 10 packs)\*

- Sharps containers – (we recommend having multiple containers, with screw-on lids for safe transport)\*\* or shuttle sharps
- Alcohol swabs
- Small trash bags (brown paper bags)
- Small Ziploc bags (for blood on cotton balls)
- Biohazard bag (only use for a lot of blood)...must be disposed of as medical waste



- Gloves
- Cotton swabs/cotton balls and Q-tips
- Clean field boxes (see below)
- Tweezers
- Ear seeds or beads (if you plan to use them)
- Telescoping magnet for finding lost needles (can be found at most auto supply stores) – make sure to wipe bottom w/ alcohol after picking up needles
- First aid kit with band-aids, betadine scrubs (check re: iodine allergy before use)
- Eye wash kit (can be purchased at a drug store)
- Masks (if necessary – N95 is the higher end for smoke, etc. – can get at Lowe’s, Home Depot)
- Tackle box for mobile treatment kit
- File box for backup supplies/paperwork
- Peaceful music and way to play it

***\*A note about needles: We have often used Carbo acu-detox needles for community style ear treatments. While insertion can be slightly more uncomfortable, these needles have a small “barb” (it sounds worse than it is) on the tip and in our experience are less likely to come out during the treatment. Some people prefer Seirins and tubes.***

## Clinic Information

- All of these supplies can generally be kept in one or two medium sized tackle or file boxes. These boxes become your “mobile clinics”. We have found that plastic file boxes with handles and small compartments in the lid work the best because they are large enough to hold paperwork, biohazard containers and small items as well. We suggest printing a copy of this list and keeping it in your mobile clinics as a supply checklist.
- Disposal of needles: With an approved biohazard disposal company.

## Additional Supplies

- Apron, tool belt, fishing vest or similar
- Lab coat if you want it
- Business cards of the acupuncturists who are treating as well as from AWB
- Signs, Marker Boards, Markers
- Post-it notes (for noting dropped needles on patients)
- Three to five clipboards (it’s a good idea to have pens attached)
- Headlamp or flashlight (may want to look for cap that has headlamp on it)
- Hand Mirror (in case someone wants to see needles in ear)
- Rubber bands
- Bobby Pins
- Pens
- Tape (blue masking tape that doesn’t mark up things is good)
- Scissors
- Several energy food bars
- Water
- Duplicate receipt books to track all donations
- Manila Folders to keep paperwork contained
- Stamped envelopes to mail things back to AWB
- File box or cardboard box for paperwork

### **AWB APRON**



- Notepads or books to track expenses, donations etc.
- Paperclips
- Blank paper
- Nametags for volunteer acupuncturists
- Donation jar or box
- AWB T-shirts
- Lanyards, ID badges (you can get lanyards that snap shut and easily open)
- Plastic ear models can be put out with needles inserted in 5NP positions for people to see.
- GPS – If you have one, bring it – get one donated if you can!
- Google “Plano Tool Box” – Amazon.com or Big 5 Sporting Goods
- Music if you want to have it!
- Earplugs for your personal use if you need them
- Essential oils can be nice to have
- Donation Boxes
- Give people the opportunity to donate
- PUT BOX WHERE PEOPLE HAVE TO TRIP OVER IT TO GET OUT THE DOOR
- Staples.com/ snap boxes
- Sign that says “Treatments Are Free, Donations Gratefully Accepted”



**Tip from Melissa Hammesfahr, L.Ac.:**

*I use one of those rolling tiered utility carts outside and one of the simplest things I've set up is just having an empty bin designated for stowing contaminated objects that have been used & need to be wiped down/disinfected after the session, e.g. forehead thermometer, ear probe, buzzer, etc. Also, cutting up the plastic sheets that hold ear seeds and putting out a few at a time so I'm not constantly touching the same ear seed sheet for multiple people. And spraying a gravity chair with 3% hydrogen peroxide solution & left to dry is so much easier than using a ton of wipes to wipe it down.*