

Green House Group, PA

Psychotherapy and Consultation

A LETTER TO OUR CLIENTS –UPDATED: 3/20/2020

This is a stressful, uncertain time for all of us. The novel Coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic has created a situation that none of us has experienced before. **ALTHOUGH MOST PEOPLE ARE NOT AT RISK FOR SEVERE MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS**, the public health crisis is requiring many changes: these range from simple and small things, like frequent hand washing, to more complicated, far-reaching changes like school and day-care closings, working remotely from home, social distancing, self-quarantine, and minimizing activities involving contact with others. Check the national Centers for Disease Control website (<https://www.cdc.gov/>) and New Hampshire's Health and Human Services website (<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/>) for up-to-date information and recommendations.

We have always been committed to the well-being of our clients and staff. Now more than ever, we want people to stay healthy and safe. To this end, here is a summary of our current thoughts, guidelines, and policies in place as Green House Group adapts to these unusual circumstances; we will let you know as these change.

- **YOUR THERAPY:** Our goal is the same as always: to provide high quality psychological services, psychotherapy, and support to our clients. As of Thursday, March 26, 2020, our physical office will be closed and **our practice will continue via telehealth**. All of our therapists can now conduct therapy sessions remotely, by video and in some cases by telephone.
- **TELEHEALTH** means that your sessions can be conducted remotely from your home or elsewhere. Sessions will still be confidential; your therapist will conduct sessions from a private location. Your responsibility is to choose a location that will ensure privacy. Using a headset or ear buds may help prevent your session from being overheard by others. ***At present, nearly all insurance policies will cover telehealth just as they cover in-office sessions.*** If you do not have internet at your home (or a device capable of engaging in video therapy) your therapist may offer telephone contact instead. Most insurance policies will cover this as well during the pandemic.
- **CONTACTING YOUR THERAPIST:** Suite 3004 at the Waumbec Mill will close as of March 26th, but the phone system and answering service will continue to function normally. Therapists will continue to check their messages at least daily.

Many of our normal routines have been disrupted, creating a challenge for everyone. Here are some suggestions to keep in mind as we all try to cope, adapted from Partners In Health (<https://www.pih.org/>):

1. **Social distancing does not mean emotional distancing:** USE TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY.
2. **Put a schedule in place at home**, 7 days a week – don't go overboard, but make sure there are structured activities and blocks of time. Keep the usual structures intact where you can, particularly for children. Example: if dinnertime for the family is at 6:00PM and bedtime for your children is 8:00PM, keep those as is.
3. **Exercise and physical activity are important:** each day, take a walk or a run, or join an on-line exercise or yoga class.
4. **Continue learning and intellectual engagement.** Many school systems and universities are providing remote learning for their students. But for non-students, try books and reading, documentaries, on-line courses and even music lessons.
5. **Create positive family time and activities:** for instance, set aside time for play and family games, baking and cooking, creative activities like making art or music.
6. Don't isolate (unless medically necessary), but **set aside alone time**, outside if possible.
7. **Remember the things you enjoy doing that you can do in this situation**, and find a way to do them.
8. **Limit exposure to screens:** define times where it is ok, and times when it is not.
9. **Remember that humor helps!**
10. **Things will get back to normal eventually.** The world is not collapsing.

We expect people to have questions and concerns, both about the contents of this letter and about issues that come up as we all try to cope. Please feel free to share these with your therapist. We look forward to an eventual return to normalcy – and in the meanwhile, we hope you all stay well.