

March 19, 2020

Due to the recent Declaration of the State of Emergency in North Carolina due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Federal social distancing policy that has been implemented, the ways in which therapy is conducted is being reassessed. Therapists have been strongly encouraged to move our practice to all on-line telehealth through HIPAA-complaint video/audio platforms.

If you are interested in moving your sessions to telehealth, together we will investigate your health benefits to ensure your coverage and evaluate the best way to conduct sessions that will preserve your confidentiality and your ability to participate actively in session. (For example, moving appointment times to fit your “new normal” with your life and responsibilities at home.) Accessibility to telehealth only requires internet and can be done from any phone, tablet, or computer that has a camera and microphone. Telehealth appointments will be conducted using either Doxy.me or Google Meet, both HIPAA compliant platforms. Due to the demands on the servers with telehealth companies, if one platform is experiencing problems, we will have the option to switch to another platform that may have a more stable, reliable connection. You will have the opportunity to read all about telehealth and the risks/benefits in the INFORMED CONSENT FOR TELEHEALTH document that you will receive and are required to sign.

If you do NOT wish to participate in telehealth sessions, there are 2 options to choose from: 1) choosing to postpone all therapy until in-office sessions can be resumed (at this point, we do not have even a tentative date for this) or 2) brief “check-ins” via text, email, or phone calls until in-office therapy can be resumed. These brief check-ins are not designed to replace therapy, but to serve as an anchor to services until in-office sessions are available again for those who do not wish to participate in telehealth. Should an emergency arise, you should contact me as you normally would via my work number, which forwards directly to my work cell-number if I am not in the office.

I will closely monitor CDC and Department of Health recommendations when considering appropriateness of reopening access to in-office therapy.

If you are seeking information regarding COVID-19, I encourage you to gather information about COVID-19 directly from reliable sources. For more information about COVID-19, please visit the CDC’s website at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

In closing, I certainly recognize that the spread and continued unfolding of COVID-19 can feel alarming. I would like to reassure you that this decision was not made in any sort of panic, I am simply exercising my responsibility as a community member and business professional to make an objective, mindful decision that will benefit and protect you and your family, myself and my family, and all of the community members that we come in contact with. We need to think of the elderly, the immunocompromised, those with underlying conditions, all health and service providers, as well as larger structural systems. I certainly understand this news and the entire experience may be triggering, resulting in many flared emotions. Please show yourself patience and compassion. There is no wrong way to feel right now. It is important for us to mitigate hysteria and remain informed. Coronavirus is serious, and also, there are precautionary measures that are undeniably effective in reducing the viral spread: Handwashing, not touching your face, avoiding large crowds & social distancing are included. I am here to support you. Please take care of yourselves, and by doing so, know that we are all taking care of each other.

Warmly,

Cheryl