

Dear Clients;

Today the Oregon Counseling Association sent a request to counselors throughout the state asking that we adapt to the new social distancing guidelines. They have requested that we transition to a telehealth model during these next few weeks while the state and the world tries to contain COVID-19. For some of you this will not change how we conduct our appointments as I already utilize telehealth or video conferencing in my therapy work. For others you may have questions about how this works. Please reach out to me with any questions you may have, and we can discuss how we can make this work for you.

As your mental health professional I also want to provide some tips for managing the anxiety that is inherent during a wide spread event such as the current coronavirus pandemic. Also please know that if you need additional services during this time I will work to accommodate additional appointments as needed.

Tips for Managing Your Anxiety during the Pandemic

Anxiety is your body's natural response to being in an unknown or unfamiliar situation. It is a helpful emotion that tells us to stop what we are doing, review the situation, challenge our assumptions, and gather more information.

By consuming the news throughout the day we are signaling to our bodies that there is danger, that we are in a constant unfamiliar situation. Although a global pandemic is an unfamiliar situation with a variety of unknowns, every moment of our day is not unfamiliar. There is a routine to our days that is predictable, and focusing on the familiar and the routine helps calm the nervous system. Below are 5 tools that you can use to help manage your anxiety.

1. Set 1 to 2 times during the day when you will check for current COVID-19 updates that may impact the way you are currently behaving.
2. Once you consume the news ask what did I learn that will change my plan for the day. Give your news consumption purpose.
3. If there is no information that changes your behavior for the day take 3 deep breaths and engage in a self-soothing exercise. Activate your 5 senses.
 - a. drink a cold glass of water
 - b. Listen to a calming sound, music, or birds...
 - c. Take a hot or cold shower
 - d. Put on a cozy pair of socks or a favorite sweatshirt
 - e. Go outside and smell the rain, the fragrant daphne, or even the snow.
4. Take time every day to pray, connect with God, and ask him to meet your needs. Sit with him in silence, share your fears, joys, and thoughts.
5. Connect with a loved one - social distancing is an isolating experience, and as humans we are social beings. Take time every day to connect with other people, your children, your spouse, parents, siblings, a friend, or a co-worker. If you are working from home try to use video conferencing rather than text, e-mail, or voice only.

Thank you for your understanding and remember you can always reach out via phone, or secure message and we can discuss further. My prayers are with you and your families.

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Everyday Counseling