



COVID-19 RESPONSE

April 7, 2020

During these uncertain times, all of us at RWPS are committed to being a reliable support to you and providing strong continuity of care. Your health of body and soul and that of the general public are vitally important to us. We want to let you know what we are doing to protect our collective health as well as continue fulfilling our mission as a ministry. We also would like to let you know how you can help us in this endeavor.

- Our number one commitment is to our mission of developing and providing services that integrate the best of psychological science and the truths of the Catholic faith – empowering people to more fully embrace and live out their vocation to love according to God’s plan. We believe that the best way for us to fulfill this mission is through in-person psychological services. Therefore, we will be continuing to provide in-person sessions at our office as long as possible. We want you to know that as healthcare providers, our therapists are exempt from the Governor’s stay-at-home order, and the public are likewise free to come to us to receive mental healthcare.
- In order to keep our office a safe place for everyone, we are taking extra precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These precautions include the following:
 - We have rearranged our waiting area and – to the extent possible – our offices to allow for greater social distancing. We will be foregoing physical touch (e.g., handshakes) for the duration of this pandemic. We will be washing our hands frequently throughout the day as well as wiping down commonly touched surfaces at least daily. We will empty all wastebaskets daily. We will be using exhaust fans, dehumidifiers, and air purifiers to clean and ventilate the air. We have also intensified the overall cleaning schedule of our building. If any of our staff show symptoms of respiratory illness or tests positive for COVID-19, we will stay home. Likewise, if anyone with whom we live or associate tests positive for COVID-19 or we have good reason to believe they may have the virus, we will stay home.
- We cannot do this alone, though. **We need your help.** Here’s what you can do to help us keep our office safe for everyone:
 - When you arrive at our office, please wash your hands with soap and water in one of our restrooms. Consider washing up again after your visit.
 - Please use good hygiene by covering sneezes and coughs, using the anti-viral tissues we provide as needed and disposing of them in the wastebaskets, etc.
 - Please do your best to follow social distancing guidelines by maintaining 6 feet of space from our staff and from other visitors in the waiting room or other common areas.
 - If you have a fever, are showing any signs of respiratory illness, have tested positive for COVID-19, live with or associate with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or whom you suspect may have the virus, please do not come to the office. Rather, notify

- your therapist and make alternate plans (such as telepsychology sessions, discussed below) to continue your care.
- Similarly, if you are elderly or medically vulnerable, we ask that you consider – in dialogue with your therapist – the possibility of switching to telepsychology sessions. If you and your therapist decide to continue in-person services, then we will work with you to bypass the waiting room and ensure our offices are as clean as possible when you arrive.
 - We recognize that some of our patients may be uncomfortable coming in to the office at this time, and for some, it may not be prudent or even possible for them to do so. We also recognize that circumstances may arise in which we are not able to come to the office or see patients in-person. Because we strongly value **continuity of care**, we have been working hard behind the scenes to put measures in place so that we can continue to provide you high quality services even under these circumstances.
 - If either you or your therapist cannot or choose not to meet in-person, we are willing and able to provide sessions over the **telephone** (audio only) or via a secure, HIPAA-compliant **video conferencing** platform (audio and video). Please talk with your therapist about these options to see if they are a suitable way to continue your therapy. While they are not suitable in every case, many find them to be a very workable and satisfying substitute for in-person sessions. Your therapist will explore this with you and provide guidance on how to utilize these options for meeting. Please note that policies and procedures regarding scheduling and fees remain unchanged whether sessions are conducted in-person, via telephone, or via video conferencing.

Lastly, we want to encourage you to exercise good stewardship of your physical and spiritual health during this time. We encourage you to make sure you are getting plenty of good, restorative sleep. Most adults need 7-8 hours per night. We encourage regular exercise. Remember that even under the stay-at-home order you are free to get outside and enjoy the spring air. Go for a walk, run, bike-ride, etc. If you can't get outside, then use a treadmill, stationary bike, or elliptical; do some calisthenics or strength-training. We also encourage good nutrition. Try to eat appropriate quantities of healthy, natural food while avoiding excess sugar, alcohol, caffeine, highly processed foods, and the like. Stay connected to your loved ones and nurture your relationships. We need others and others need us!

Most importantly, we encourage you to use this time to deepen your prayer life. With our churches closed, it is now up to us to nurture our faith at home. Understandably, many people are experiencing increases in anxiety, anger, and/or depression right now. For some, this drives them toward addictive or other problematic behavior. However this pandemic is affecting you, we invite you to make an act of surrender any time you feel anxious, irritated, or out of control. Put the situation in God's hands and re-focus on what I can do right here, right now, rather than on what is beyond my power. Let Him take care of the rest. Then, try to spend the last few moments of each day exercising gratitude by prayerfully reflecting on the many blessings of the day.

All of us at RWPS are grateful for you and the opportunity to serve you. We are praying for you and your loved ones, and we ask for your prayers as well. We look forward to continuing this journey with you. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to give us a call.