



COVID-19 RESPONSE

Updated May 19, 2020

As we try to get back to some semblance of normal, all of us at RWPS remain 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, what you can expect when you come to our office, and **how you can help** us in this endeavor.

- We will be continuing to provide **in-person services** at our office as we believe that this is the best way for us to fulfill our mission and provide you the highest quality care, integrating the best of psychological science and the truths of the Catholic faith. We want you to know that as **healthcare providers**, our therapists are exempt – and have been from the start – 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 – some surfaces multiple times daily.
 - We will empty all wastebaskets daily.
 - We have also intensified the overall cleaning schedule of our building.
 - We will be using exhaust fans, dehumidifiers, and air purifiers to clean and ventilate the air.
 - If any of our staff show symptoms of respiratory illness, is running a fever, 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 want you to know that **RWPS therapists will not be wearing masks** as we believe they interfere with our ability to provide the best psychological care that we can. Patients and other staff are free to wear masks if they choose to do so.
- 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 to the office for in-person services under these conditions, 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 are pleased to offer **telepsychology services** as an alternative to in-person sessions.
 - Telepsychology entails 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 it is not suitable in every case, many find telepsychology to be a very workable and satisfying substitute for in-person sessions. Your therapist will explore this with you and provide guidance on determining whether and how to utilize this option.
 - 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. 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. 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.