

March 12, 2020

Good morning!

My husband and I have been tracking the development of COVID-19 very closely since early February, and I have felt dismayed by the prevalent approach across countries and communities of being reactive instead of proactive. I feel so much suffering and chaos could be minimized if we look ahead and act now, from a place of calm and consideration.

I hope we at our wee centre can lean into the proactive approach, as part of our civic responsibility and especially as we are often treating people who are immune-compromised.

For this reason, I suggest we come up with some shared agreements as a collective - much of what I imagine we are all already doing :) - see attached doc, and I have also included two examples of communications sent out by colleagues of mine - one from massage therapists and the other from a fellow counsellor. Perhaps they can inspire you/us to do similarly?

With love,
miriam

As a healthcare team I feel we could have some shared agreements, such as:

- **Wash your hands with soap for 20-30 seconds.** Wash them so much. The current best guess is that coronavirus is transmitted via close contact and surface contamination. Wash your hands each time you enter a new building and after being in shared spaces, in addition to the standard practice of washing after using the bathroom and before eating. Hand sanitizer also kills this virus, as does rubbing alcohol (the main ingredient in hand sanitizer).
- If you are **sick, stay home.**
- **No handshaking!** Use a fist bump, hand on heart, slight bow, elbow bump, etc.
- **Use only your knuckle** to touch light switches, handrails, door handles etc..
- **Open doors with your closed fist or hip** – do not grasp the handle with your hand, unless there is no other way to open the door. Especially important on bathroom and doors.
- **Facial awareness:** Don't put your fingers in your mouth, on your lips, or nose or in your eyes. Surface contact works like this: you touch something dirty. Maybe it's an elevator button. Virus sticks to your hands. Then you

rub your eye. Then you touch your sandwich, and put the sandwich in your mouth. Now there is virus in your eyes and mouth. An observational study found that people sitting at a desk working touched their eyes, nose, or lips between 3 and 50 times per hour.

- If possible, **cough or sneeze into a disposable tissue and discard. Use your elbow only if you have to.** The clothing on your elbow will contain infectious virus that can be passed on for up to a week or more!
- Wash your hands with soap for 10-20 seconds and/or use a greater than 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer **whenever you return home** from ANY activity that involves locations where other people have been.
- **Only visit elderly friends, neighbors, grandparents if you are healthy.** Stay away if you are sick. They are the most vulnerable.
- **Keep your immune system strong!**
- Get creative - is there a way **what we offer can be moved online for a while if needed?** If any of you want encouragement to use zoom, I am happy to help (I have used it for years now as a way to connect with clients). I know this is not possible for massage and needles... but if ever we all really need to hunker down for a bit, perhaps there is some element of what you offer that can be done virtually?
- Put **disinfectant at clinic entrance with clear directions** to use them.
- **Educate clients on the necessity of hand and face hygiene.**
- Ensure the **washroom facilities** (esp. taps for handwashing) are **in good working order**, with plenty of soap and warm water.
- **Daily sanitation** of doorknobs, light switches, shared keyboards at schools, salad bar tongs and other commonly-touched surfaces, and moving from green cleaners to more powerful **anti-viral cleaners**, including alcohol and bleach, for the immediate future. Perhaps we can coordinate this effort?
- Posting **Public Health Canada hygiene tips** in all bathrooms, offering advice on hand washing and other ways to stay safe.

And below **two examples of how colleagues have shared with their clients how they are being proactive and implementing physical distancing** (I prefer this term to social distancing) – so important to keep nurturing our social connections!

From a massage therapist friend:

OUR COVID-19 PROTECTION PROTOCOLS

We have always

... had a strict cold/flu symptom policy (see below)
... washed our arms and hands thoroughly after each and every session and used
hand sanitizer
... changed the headrest covers (and sheets!) for each client

NOW FOR EVERYONE'S PROTECTION:

******Face cradles are wrapped in towels and are then covered with a disposable face cradle cover. Towels are changed between each client (and face cradle is sanitized along with everything else).

******After each client every surface you come into contact with on your visit (door knobs, faucets, drinking water dispensers...) is disinfected.

******We have a medical grade air purification system: Surgically Clean Air, which uses a 6-stage filtration system and that filters particulates and allergens out of the air, kills bacteria, viruses, mold, fungi. These filters meet the guidelines* for general surgery applications.

*ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 52.2-2007

Contact us if you'd like your own unit in your home or workplace

****** Burning sage - sage has been shown to have antimicrobial properties that help kill bacteria, viruses, and fungi

Important Reminder:

**Please DO NOT come in with any symptoms of cold or flu,
even if you are at the tail end of it**

We ALWAYS have this policy but with the the COVID-19 situation this is even more important.

From a counselling colleague:

Dear clients,

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, I wanted to let you know my thoughts about it as it pertains to my counselling practice. I am of the belief that it is better to be over-cautious with this one, rather than under-cautious!

First and foremost, please cancel any in-person appointment with me (or with anyone!) if you have any cold or flu symptoms. Typically I am comfortable with mild cold symptoms, but for now let's err on the side of caution. If you still feel well enough, I am very happy to meet by phone or video instead of in my office. I will also cancel sessions if I have any symptoms.

As this thing gets more widespread, please also cancel or request a virtual appointment if you have been in contact with anyone who may have the Coronavirus. I will do the same.

If you just feel more comfortable meeting by phone or video even though you aren't sick, I am very happy to accommodate that — just say the word!

I will be using sanitizing wipes on surfaces at the office on the days I am in. I will wash my hands regularly and avoid touching my face. Please wash your hands when you arrive at my office building — there are bathrooms on both floors.

I will not be doing any handshakes or hugs for the next while. I will position our chairs slightly farther apart than usual. Please know that this is only for health reasons.

I will be assessing risk as things progress. I have three different people, all over 60, who provide childcare for me while I work. If one of them becomes ill, or if someone in my family does, I will have to cancel sessions, likely on short notice. I apologize in advance for this and I hope it doesn't come to that! But I think it important to be prepared right now.

Some of you may not be very concerned yet, and I know some of you may be experiencing a lot of anxiety. Whichever camp you are in, I am sending wishes for health and ease to both you and your loved ones. I encourage you to stay virtually connected to loved ones near and far — let's minimize the isolation even while taking precautions to keep everyone safe.

Please do let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Warmly,

