



18 March 2020

Greetings to you all,

As we all seek alignment with the health requirements and most current official medical advice related to the prevention and spread of the COVID-19 virus, *Vancouver Island Counselling* is making best practice decisions day by day. We are dedicated to the counselling care of our clients, their families, our many member organizations and the communities in which we work. Truly this is an unprecedented period in the history of our service and in all of our lives. *At the same time we are keeping everyone's health and safety as a top priority. As we all know, there is no existing "playbook" for what is unfolding around us. We are creating it now, as we go.*

Most, if not all, community based counselling services (including province-wide Health Authority mental health service delivery), not for profit agencies and service providers similar to ours have made recent decisions to move to only offer their services by telephone (or online based counselling). I have been in contact with my peers in many of these organizations over the past two days to discuss optimal service delivery options and benchmark my decisions. There is no doubt that we are all deeply committed to providing ongoing services in any way we are able.

*After careful consideration and much discussion, I have also decided that we will offer clients counselling services only by telephone (and soon, online meeting format) for the time being. We will continue to respond onsite to any workplace emergency/critical incident. We continue to be here for you if you need to consult with us. We will provide compassionate and skilled service from all of our locations using all of our counselling and administrative staff. We will do this though, only in ways that keep everyone safe, healthy and aligned with our Provincial Health officials' best recommendations and advice.*

We are contacting all currently scheduled clients by phone to discuss this with them and so far they have expressed gratitude, understanding and heart-felt appreciation. We will be updating our outgoing voice messages and our website information (today). In addition we will be offering Newsletters related to coping and managing the emotional impact of this time in our lives. Please encourage your employees to call us for more information.

*It is possible that Provincial Health requirements will further impact all of our lives and the way we are providing service. I will be in touch if further changes in service delivery are required.*

We remain committed to the service of your employees, families, organizations and communities. Thank you for your trust and understanding. Please be in touch if you need more information or have questions!

Warm regards,

Bruce Youngren  
Executive Director

Vancouver Island Counselling