

# NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING

& SUPPORT SERVICES

Wednesday, April 8, 2020

To Our Community,

First and foremost, I hope that this letter finds you and your families safe and healthy. As we find ourselves in the midst of the unprecedented COVID-19 Pandemic, NCSS is committed to continuing to provide all essential services, as ordered by our Governor and the Agency of Human Services (AHS). As you can imagine, decisions are made as new information comes in and this is a very fluid process.

*On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Gov. Phil Scott ordered Vermonters to “stay home” and “stay safe” to slow the outbreak of the coronavirus in Vermont.*

*“The Governor’s order directs Vermonters to stay at home, leaving only for essential reasons, critical to health and safety,” said a statement from the governor’s office that afternoon.*

*“Effective March 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., all businesses and not-for-profit entities not expressly exempted in the order must suspend all in-person business operations” (VT Digger 3/24/20)*

*On March 26<sup>th</sup>, the Governor announced that schools will remain closed to in-person instruction for the balance of the 2019-20 school year and to implement plans for remote learning.*

By working with our State partners, we have taken significant steps to adapt our supports to our changing landscape. As of this writing, we are now providing the vast majority of care through electronic mediums such as phone, and video conferencing. All of our sites, except 107 Fisher Pond and Residential sites, have been closed to the public and we are supporting staff to work remotely. With the exception of our residential teams, and a few other unique services, almost our entire support system has become electronic. We will protect our employees from COVID-19, while concurrently providing high quality care to the people that need it the most. We have adapted and are providing needed care through electronic structures. We also can deploy core emergent staff to support individuals that are considered “high risk”, providing well checks or needed services. We are committed to continuing our partnerships with community stakeholders and providing essential care coordination on behalf of clients through means that promote safety and quality care.

If you are finding yourself or someone you know in need of crisis services, please call 802-524-6554 ext. 1.

For more information, please see the following resources:

<https://dail.vermont.gov/novel-coronavirus-information>

<https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/information-coronavirus-covid-19-0>

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/infectious-disease/2019-novel-coronavirus>

Also on NCSS website:

<https://www.ncssinc.org/COVID19>