

To our valued patients/clients,

As COVID – 19 has now reached our community, the Registered Psychologists at Dr. Hubley Carruthers & Associates have chosen to work in consort with our government and public health leaders to “flatten the curve” and help to protect the most vulnerable in our community.

Given these are challenging times, it is clear to me, as the Practice Leader, that we have to do the following: 1) put the health and safety of our clients, our Associates and Staff, and the greater community, especially those that are most vulnerable, as the *first* priority, 2) continue to prioritize your mental health care treatment and put measures in place to provide continuity of psychological care during these distressing times, and 3) remain flexible and adaptable.

As of Monday, March 23rd, 2020 until Friday, May 1st, 2020, we will be conducting all sessions using Telepsychology Services, after which we will re-evaluate the necessity based on data from the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Chief Medical Officer for the Province of Nova Scotia, and other official sources.

Fortunately, our profession is well equipped to provide such Telepsychology Services and as Registered Psychologists, we have had guidelines and training in the delivery of Telepsychology Services since 2011. Our governing body, the *Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP)*, has adopted the *Model Standards for Telepsychology Service*, developed by the *Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO)* and has issued an Advisory for Psychological Practice, which we will be following. In short, although meeting with your Psychologist in-person may be preferred, we are well prepared to deliver care either by phone or video conferencing until which time in-person services can be reinitiated.

As valued clients, you will be provided the option of a phone session or a video session. We will be conducting our video sessions using ZOOM. This video conferencing service has served many facets of the Canadian health care system including clinicians, scientists and medical support staff over the last several years. ZOOM complies with Canadian Data Protection regulations, including the *Personal Information Protection and Electronics Document Act (PIPEDA)* and locally, here in Nova Scotia, the *Personal Health Information Act (PHIPA)*. Please see: *Model Standards for Telepsychology Service Delivery* on our website. In our opinion, ZOOM is the best video conferencing service to protect your privacy. **Please note: You do NOT require a subscription to ZOOM. You will simply be sent a link by email that and you can access using a browser on your laptop or tablet at no financial cost to you. If you are using a cellular phone, you will need to download the ZOOM app at no charge.**

If you have an appointment scheduled during the 28 day period between March 23rd, 2020 and May 1st, 2020, the practice will be in touch with you (during the week of your appointment) to determine your preference for services and to assist you in setting up either phone or video conferencing. Our Office Manager, Ms. Alisia MacKenzie, will work with you, in advance of your scheduled session, to troubleshoot any concerns and help to ensure your services are “hassle free” as possible.

We appreciate that these new delivery options may not work for everyone and that the rare appointment may need to be postponed/rescheduled. In that case, please contact Ms. Alisia MacKenzie, to discuss your options.

As we endeavour to not either under-respond or over-respond to this pandemic, and to continue to meet the psychological health care needs of our clients, we appreciate your patience, and flexibility. We will get through this together.

Kind regards,

Dr. Kathy Hubley Carruthers