

Northland

Counseling Center, Inc.

Various Programs Response to COVID-19 Pandemic as of March 25th, 2020

It is of primary importance that we do what we can to continue to provide services for those that we serve while also doing what we can to protect the health and safety of our staff. We are implementing various steps to accomplish this at our service locations as we continue to monitor and follow the recommendations of the CDC and MDH. **These changes have been evolving as the situation and legislation changes so we will try to keep the information as up to date as possible.**

Any staff with symptoms will be asked to go home and/or stay home. Staff are being regularly encouraged to follow the recommended hygiene protocol. Also, staff and others that have traveled outside of the US in the past 14 days, or that believe they may have been exposed, are being asked to not come on site.

NCC Outpatient Mental Health Program- Main Office

- NCC will be closing our office on Fridays beginning April 3rd. Please note, despite the closing, the number of service delivery hours for clients have not been reduced.
- When able, we are transitioning therapy appointment to telemedicine appointments so clients may remain in their homes. If you have not yet, please discuss with your provider.
- We have changed our intake process so it no longer requires an in-person visit and intake packets are mailed to the individual.
- Staff are attending staff meetings via videoconference or telecommunication to reduce contact.
- Clients no longer have to use the telephone on the wall in the waiting to check in for their appointments. They may do so from a safe distance without touching any surface.
- The waiting room has been rearranged and we are utilizing extra space in hallway for less crowding in waiting room to observe 6 feet of distance recommendation
- Support staff have increased cleaning efforts and are sanitizing shared spaces and surfaces every 2 hours.
- Magazine/books have been removed and discarded from waiting room and will be replaced when risk has decreased.
- Monitoring of staff symptoms daily and staff have been asked to take their temperature daily. If they have a fever, they are not to come to work.
- Regular communication between staff is taking place via phone or email rather than in person unless necessary.
- Reminder texts sent to clients asks that clients cancel and reschedule if they are not feeling well.
- When appointments are made over the phone or in person, reception staff is asking clients to cancel if they do not feel well.
- Increased signage asking people stay home if they are sick.
- New cleaning and sanitizing procedures have been implemented in our Play Therapy room.

- NCC has been advocating, with other agencies, to lawmakers and insurance carriers to ensure broad coverage of telemedicine services for as many clients as possible.

Hardwig House

- At this time, the Hardwig House has been closed to clients although it remains staffed.
- Groups have temporarily been canceled to practice social distancing and reduce potential exposure.
- Staff and clients have been encouraged to increase hand-washing and follow recommended hygiene practices.
- Education on prevention has been made available to clients and is posted.
- Services will be primarily transitioned to telemedicine so clients do not need to leave their home.
- Medication monitoring is still provided with the RN and medications can be delivered to picked up by appointment only.
- Lunch is still provided for pick up upon request but clients must call by 11am the same day.

Community Residential Setting

- Eliminated outings and gatherings and only necessary outings are permitted.
- Eliminated all outside visitors and visits may be held using other forms of telecommunication.
- Staff have been encouraged to follow recommendations to stay home unless necessary and practice social distancing and other safety measures when not at work.
- The Crisis Bed, that is housed at the CRS site, has been temporarily closed.
- Staff meetings are held over videoconference.
- Staffing has been slightly reduced to allow for less exposure for clients and staff.

Northland Recovery Pineview Center

- Daily temperatures and symptom tracking for all clients with review by RN.
- Employee temperature and symptom tracking with review by RN.
- Social distancing is practiced by clients and staff.
- Ongoing infection control education for clients and staff.
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting of high traffic areas.
- Visits will be conducted by phone or video communication to ensure safety of all clients and staff.
- Increased flexibility for visit schedule so clients can still remain in contact with friends and family.
- External group activities and outings have been canceled.
- Store visits and passes have been restricted to only necessary trips.
- New admissions are screened for symptoms and will not have a roommate for 2 weeks of treatment.
- Adjustment of staff schedules to allow for fewer contacts between staff and clients with additional staffing on call as needed.

Crisis Response Team

- Services will continue to be 24/7/365 availability; however, the delivery of the crisis services (ie. Face-to-face, phone) can and will change in certain circumstances.
- When calling for crisis services, 211/First Call for Help (our dispatch service) will be asking screening questions for COVID-19. This may take a little more time but is necessary. Face-to-face services may be denied if screening questions are not answered.
- There will be limited face-to-face meetings with individuals in crisis by our team. This is to reduce the number of contacts our team has with individuals for the safety of the individual in crisis and our team. We will most definitely respond by phone to the individual in crisis.
- If a face-to-face meeting happens, the crisis responder may be wearing a mask and/or gloves to prevent any possible exposure. A recommended 6 foot distance will be maintained between the individual in crisis and the crisis responder.
- Telemedicine (video & voice) crisis services are being set-up. The dispatch (211/First Call for Help) will be notified when we are able to do this, so dispatch can let individuals in crisis know when it is available when calls come in.
- Services may be provided only by phone by particular crisis responders on the team who are high risk medically if exposed to COVID-19.
- Transportation by the crisis response team is not an available for any reason.
- Members of CRT will not share equipment to reduce of exposure.

Children's Mental Health Case Management/CTSS.

- Services will be transition to telehealth for clients of CTSS and CM.
- Staff will have opportunity to adjust schedules and work remotely when able to limit exposure
- Additional office space has been made available for staff.
- Staff meetings are held via videoconference.

Thank you and stay safe,

Northland Counseling Center Team