

CB State of Mind was approached by the paper and asked what are we doing to help manage mental health concerns during the Coronavirus outbreak, how are we working together as a community to help those in need and what trends do we see.

As a mental health provider that lived in New York City and provided disaster relief counseling through the American Red Cross during 9/11, I witnessed an outpouring of help from local New Yorkers that came together in ways never imagined. There is no comparing this virus to 9/11, however the human kindness looks very similar. Their inclination to go out and help in any way they could was unprecedented. Anything from striking up conversations with strangers in a city park to donating an abundance of money, water, food and supplies were ways they sought to become more resilient and be present for one another.

We are a different community from New York City. We care deeply about our people and have collectively come together in creative ways to address this pandemic. Some of my observations include watching a local individual shovel a walkway outside a store for a woman trying to get around in her wheel chair. Neighbors and friends reaching out through a group text asking how they can help i.e., groceries, getting each other's mail, picking up prescriptions, to dropping off cookies on each others door steps! Witnessing our children engage in spontaneous and creative play outside i.e., building snow forts and kicker jumps to sledding down a random hillside are all things created out of their own imaginations that feels free and fun for them. Lastly, I was struck late Sunday evening when a firework display happened outside my window. Bringing the 4th of July early to CB when everything else is cancelled or postponed was clever yet risky. Lastly, thank goodness for the Nordic Center as they have come up with a system that allows locals to get outside with their families and friends thus leaving us to appreciate that we are living here and not New York.

Getting in touch with our creative selves is one way to manage anxiety and depression. This may be the only time in our lives where we are forced to slow down, be present, and not production focused which, is counter intuitive to our culture. With a lockdown looming over us, we need to prepare to be still and do less. Immersing in this creative energy giving us an opportunity to look within leading us to more internal happiness and joy in our lives.

Reaching out to our CBSOM therapists and volunteers, together with GVH and community members here are some of their responses:

Garland Middleton a private practice provider and member of CBSOM states, "In this time of uncertainty and change in routine, try these tips: take this one day at a time. Find something of a goal to complete each day. This time does not have to be centered on writing that novel you've been meaning to write (but it can be!) This is a time to slow down, and check in with your self. Gentleness with self, kindness to others, these are the things we can control."

According to Marcie Telander, "not in our lifetime have we experienced this kind of Pause and Poise." She mentions, "clients coming out of GVH that have been quarantined have a deep need and request to be of service. She states, "it has been meaningful for y client to focus their immediate attention on action steps—nothing is too small—on getting groceries and dropping them off for the self-sequestered folks, picking up prescriptions and children's products for others." We have a responsibility to manage our health first, and then proceed with support of families, friends, and extended community.

Kelly Banas, another private practice provider and CBSOM therapist has written a wonderful article titled "How to Manage your Mental Health in the Face of the Coronavirus" www.honeybook.com/risingtide/coronavirus-mental-health. She mentions she is beginning to see acute anxiety, fear and worry about the future are becoming tangibly real as we begin to name what's happening and the uncertainty we feel with no concrete expectations of how long it will

last. She also states, “ it’s important to be flexible, open and creative about connecting differently and accept this as our present reality instead of resisting it.

Darlene Egelhoff another private practice therapist in town discusses the importance of supporting ourselves biochemically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. In turn this helps to support a robust immune system, better manage our emotions, and stay in the present moment and what e have to be grateful for. Things can always be worse, focus on what we DO have and what we CAN do.

Joe Peterson, Peer support specialist at GVH is available to talk to anyone in our community needing support. He can be reached at 970-596-8182. He reports, taking care of your emotional health during his time will help you think more clearly and react to the urgent needs to protect yourself and your loved ones.”

CB State of Mind will be doing a pilot launch of their Therapy Scholarship program during this time if need. With the support of the Katz Amsterdam Foundation, we will be able to offer up to 6 scholarships for up to 10 sessions each in the first 6 months. Please contact Meghan Dougherty for more information mdougherty@cbstateofmind.org. Don’t need counseling yet want to help those in need of free counseling? Please make a donation to www.cbstateofmind.org now.

Nationwide resources include:

[Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)

[Talking With Children: Tips for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)

[English Spanish](#)

[Coping with Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)

[English Spanish](#)

[Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)

Local Resources include:

AA meetings are available via Zoom. Please email. Keir Wark keirmalo@gmail.com

Crested Butte AA is having 2 open meetings everyday at 12pm and 7pm on zoom. There is also a Thursday woman’s meetings at 3pm. Anyone is welcome to join and we have people with all sorts of connections to our community on there, it’s been amazing. First they must download the app. Then here is the code of the 12pm:

672900925

Here is the code for the 7pm:

482255012

Anthony Poponi Webinar series. Here’s the link – there are 12 more spots available and a recording of the webinar will be available after the fact.

[CLICK THIS LINK TO REGISTER](#)

This is the first in a series of webinars I’ll host focused on happiness and well-being coming out weekly.

The yoga community here offering zoom classes. Emily Crohare is offering sessions Monday evenings, 6-7:15. Her zoom number is 869-696-9143. (Zoom is free to download) These are donation based yet not required, donations can go to her Venmo at @EmilyBrianaCrohare.

Body scan meditation is free to use for anyone. The link for that is <https://soundcloud.com/garland-middleton/compassionate-body-meditation>

If people have facebook they can go to the Gunnison Marketplace page and look for a posting from Max Lasky (posted on Tuesday the 17th I believe). He is offering free software engineering courses once a week. You must have facebook to participate.

Buy local gift cards! We can buy them online, or by the phone at most places, and can use them in the future. You can also donate to your favorite local non profit organization!

Some trends that we are noticing is the move to Telehealth that currently corresponds with the school closures. Clinicians and clinics are using video conferencing which are HIPPA protected platforms and/or audio phone sessions. According to the Center for Mental Health if you are an established client or one who has telehealth capabilities and, who's not requiring medication or a medication change than, you are able to attend sessions over the phone that is also similar to what we are seeing with our private practice providers in Crested Butte and Gunnison. Most clients are feeling relief with telehealth as it allows them access to mental health services in the comfort of their home while minimizing the risk of infecting themselves or others. We are also understanding from a few clients that they prefer a more traditional method of face-to-face sessions thus waiting for the pandemic to dissipate and returning to in office appointments.

We don't see Mental Health as a business that is slowing down rather we are seeing an upsurge of increased access to mental health needed to address those having difficulty managing their symptoms of anxiety.

As a mental health provider in the community, I have heard from clients and community members about how do I "manage my own anxiety or the anxiety of my child?" Work with my "feelings of depression," "loneliness and boredom".

As rates of fear and anxiety will likely increase as our lives continue to be disrupted and social distancing becomes necessary, we must work together as a community with a sense of patience, empathy, and understanding with one another.

Staying informed of the facts and reference reputable organizations with information as 'facts' help to manage anxiety. Some of these sources include the World Health Organization, the Center of Disease Control and referencing our Gunnison County website for the most up to date information re our county is recommended at specific time of the day. Lastly, continue to stay connected with your social and family networks via technology or writing letters, keep daily routines, exercise regularly and practice habits that you enjoy and find relaxing.