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Remote Session Guidelines for Periods of Community-wide Isolation
adapted from Russell, G. I. & Essig, T. (2019)

During this time of Coronavirus spread, some of you may wish to have our sessions via phone or screen. "Remote" therapy is not the same thing as what happens when we meet in person or talk to a friend on the phone or facetime. It may feel somewhat artificial or awkward to be alone at your house while talking to me on a device, to not meet in person, and either of us may miss some nuances we typically attend to face to face. I will take care to make the session as comfortable for you as possible and tune in to the same verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication as I do in regular sessions. Please remember to let me know any reactions you are having, positive or negative, that this new medium for treatment generates.

Listed below are some guidelines, not rules but recommendations, for how to get the most benefit as possible from these remote sessions while we are being encouraged not to leave the house.

1. The most important thing is to have privacy. I do my best to provide that when we meet in my office. But now it's up to you. Please do everything possible to make sure you are in a private space where it is unlikely you will be heard or interrupted. You may need to ask others in your space to respect your privacy by doing things like turning on entertainment in another room or listening to something on headphones.
2. Try to make yourself comfortable, but not too comfortable. If you can, settle into a nice, comfortable chair. Avoid lying in bed or on your TV-watching couch as well as sitting on the floor or walking around. Try to arrange yourself in as session-like a position as you can.
3. Put a box of tissues next to where you will be. If you want, pour yourself a glass of water. But avoid having a snack or meal even though you may be reasonably close to your kitchen. Leave that for either before or after the session.
4. Please be sure to dress as you would if we were meeting in the office. Even though I may not be able to see all of what you are wearing, or any of it if the session is audio-only, the reality is that you know what you are wearing.
5. Turn off all devices other than the one you are using to make the call. If using a smartphone or computer, do your best to quit from all programs other than the one we are using and turn off all notifications if you can. It is best to leave your hands free by using headphones. If we are using audio-only then be sure to put your phone screen side down. If using a computer for audio-only, please either turn off your monitor or completely darken your screen.

6. Try to leave yourself an additional 15-minutes both before and after the session to wander around your place and clear your head. It is not a good idea to leave another remote meeting or end a call and then immediately call-in to start the session. You need some time to get ready for the work we are about to do. Similarly, after the session is over, take some time before diving into the next activity. This will give time for the session to resonate before jumping back into whatever you have next.

7. Location is important. Please do your best to always meet from the same place during this period of time, although that is not always possible. Also, when we meet in-person we share the same location. But now we do not. If you find yourself curious about where I am, please feel free to ask. I will do the same so I can imagine where you are.

I recognize that these guidelines make the remote sessions a little less convenient. But the additional benefit will be more than worth the effort. And remember, we will get through this together. Hoping everyone will be safe. Hoping this information will be helpful to you.

Judy

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