**Self-Care opinion piece**

*As part of NPI’s strength had always been our multidisciplinary membership and our openness to more than one path being valid, we wanted to highlight supporting various practice approaches to this pandemic and note that this variety provides a more robust network for clients to have choice and support during this time. Thus, we share some of our members’ thoughts. Sincerely, Cynthia P. Lucas, Ph.D.*

Colleagues and friends,

As we all cope with the tremendous stress of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, most psychotherapists appear to be offering telehealth-only at present.  I understand and respect this choice.  However, I and some others are choosing to continue to meet in person with some clients, with precautions, as long as it remains legal and we and they remain asymptomatic.  For some therapists and some clients, the power of physical presence is an inestimable part of the therapy.  I would like to advocate for this choice as being a viable option in some circumstances, made with care and forethought, rather than being inherently "irresponsible" as a colleague on Psychology Today has suggested.

Factors we need to consider include:

* Our own level of health risk, as well as risk tolerance
* Whether we live with, or care for, elders or children
* Whether our practice setting has ample space for social distancing
* The needs, risks, and situations of our particular clients
* Our own level of anxiety with meeting in person vs. via telehealth

During this time of high collective anxiety, when health security, basic life and work routines, social and community interactions, economic support, freedom of movement, and many coping strategies have been altered, with no known end date for the suffering, the service we provide as psychotherapists is indeed "essential."  Thank you all for continuing to show up for yourselves and your clients, whether in the office, an outdoor setting with privacy, across the screen, over the phone, or some combination.  May we be channels of wholeness and peace.

Respectfully yours,

Laura Kreiselmaier, PhD, LCPT

To esteemed fellow mental health care providers: While for many telehealth is an equivalent option, in other situations – barring unacceptable risk factors – the powerful, dynamic meta-communication of physical presence should continue to be offered.

Dr. David Thornton,

Under supervision for licensure as Clinical Pastoral Therapist