



Groups@work:
Connection • Education • Leadership

This communication is being redistributed to ensure all interested have received it.

March 13, 2020

Thank you for your emails, feedback and responses. We are trying to provide information to our members and to those who attended AGPA Connect 2020, in a way that balances provision of accurate and reliable information with consideration for the privacy of individuals. We have also communicated directly with the Sheraton Hotel and NY Department of Public Health.

It is in that spirit that we are very grateful to the people who have self identified as COVID 19 positive: That provides information about one's proximate contact to an individual identified. That may be helpful information to provide access to testing. To date we have 16 reports of COVID-19 positive tests.

At the same time, it is important to note that others who have not tested positive may still be impacted by the virus, and that an abundance of caution would suggest self- isolation where possible. This is not easy to do for some. That is very clear.

There have been understandable expressions of anger that AGPA Connect went ahead in the current environment. We made the best decision that we could with the information we had at the time, guided by public health information and principles. Things have unfolded in a very dramatic fashion all around us in the last week with cancellations of all forms of gatherings, school, universities, classes and sporting events. We recognize that this is upon us broadly in society at large, with world leaders diagnosed with the illness and in quarantine. At the same time, we deeply regret that our meeting may have contributed to people's exposure and vulnerability to this illness.

We are providing a link to the World Health Organization regarding the pandemic. Accurate, reliable information is critically important to manage apprehension and anxiety – both our own and our clients, as well as our communities more broadly <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>. Also added here is a great article on the psychological effects of quarantines, from the Lancet [thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30460-8/fulltext](http://thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30460-8/fulltext).

A word about self- isolation. In many settings and jurisdictions this is being encouraged as a way of reducing possible transmission and flattening the curve of the disease such that health care will not be overwhelmed with a peak need for care in a narrow window of time. We are modeling with our self- isolation the principles of good and proper care, both at the public and personal level.

We are in a dialectic of holding together both anxiety and resilience. We will work hard to support one another in negotiating this effectively.

It is heartening to see the exchanges on the listservs and people using the listserv to exchange ideas regarding working online, in addition to offering support and expressing concerns about wellness and health.

AGPA will offer training and support for online clinical work and we are also looking at engagement with technology providers to promote access for our members. We can support one another as a community as many of us venture into new territory. The pandemic is going to dictate our adaptability and resilience on many fronts.

Let's hold in mind that self-isolation need not mean social isolation.

Thank you again for your updates, feedback and input. Your messages help in understanding the experience and needs of our members and conference participants.

Wishing all well and strength!

Molyn Leszcz, FRCP, CGP, DFAGPA
President

Email: m.leszcz@utoronto.ca
and

Marsha S. Block, CAE, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer

Email: mblock@agpa.org

American Group Psychotherapy Association

25 East 21st Street, 6th Floor

New York, NY 10010

Toll Free: (877) 668-AGPA

Phone: (212) 477-2677

Fax: (212) 979-6627

www.agpa.org