



Gateway Counseling Center, Inc.
www.gccnyc.org

Novel Coronavirus COVID-19/2019-nCoV

March 4, 2020

To All Families and Care Providers,

For all of us, the media environment is filled with coronavirus-related alerts: new statistics, new locations, market swings, et cetera. With recent word of New York's first confirmed cases and new guidance from the CDC about foreign travel, we at Gateway Counseling Center thought it is important to write to you. At this time, there are no suspected cases of COVID-19 in the Gateway community and we will notify everyone connected to us if that should change.

We want you to be aware that COVID-19 is the topic of daily analysis and consultation at Gateway Counseling Center. We set that level of scrutiny because we take the issue seriously; it allows us to collectively keep on top of new developments, to make the adjustments necessary to keep our community safe, to communicate clearly and regularly, and to have a decision-making process as dynamic as the situation.

This week, we are taking several steps that we think are measured and prudent, yet decisive. This includes daily sanitization of our transportation vehicles. In our group rooms where surfaces and supplies are constantly in use, surfaces are cleaned twice daily. Maintenance staffers have also been tasked to ensure all soap dispensers are full at all times and bathrooms are wiped down multiple times a day, meticulously. Staff members are also educated on monitoring for signs and symptoms of illness so that prompt and proper medical attention could be sought for those who need it. Gateway staff will scan the temperature of all individuals and clients as they come into the facility/vehicles, and individuals with a temperature above 100.3°F will be sent home and will be asked to stay home until they are well. A parent/guardian/group home staff will be asked to pick up the individual/client in this case. We believe that asking individuals with signs of viral upper respiratory illness and/or fever to stay away from group activities is a reasonable preventative step during this flu season. In this vein, we also ask that you do not send any individual or client with signs of any respiratory illness, cold, fever, cough or flu-like symptoms to programs until all symptoms have subsided.

In abundance of precaution and prevention, we ask that if you have recently travelled or plan to travel in the coming months, please contact your borough program directors as we are monitoring CDC travel advisories daily. Should the destination of travel be deemed an at risk country as designated by CDC at time of travel, further safety measures will be taken as necessary. At Gateway, we are safeguarding our individuals by limiting our community activities to small venues. We will try to avoid large public spaces, where there is high foot traffic and a greater chance of exposure.

It is in this manner in which Gateway will continue to proceed. Just as we are committed to safeguarding our community's health, so too do we think it is important to safeguard the service we provide to our individuals and clients. It is of utmost importance for us to maintain, to the extent circumstances permit us to do so wisely, the daily rhythms of life for our individuals/clients.

We understand how readily uncertainty can give rise to anxiety, and anxiety to impetuosity. That is why we have made the coronavirus the subject of such close and sustained attention - so that we can act quickly and decisively, but not impulsively.

At the moment, the most authoritative voices tell us we can go about our business normally, using the precautions we should typically take in flu season, and so we should. For now, while continuing to be attentive, we should not let our worries get the better of us. We do not need to wear special gear for normal activities at program, and we certainly should not allow those whom medical authorities tell us do not present any danger to be ostracized, bullied, or mistreated.

Perseverance is part of Gateway's character. We at Gateway are proud of and grateful for everyone's steadfastness at this moment. Rest assured, if the moment comes when there is reason to act, or to act more sweepingly, we shall do so thoughtfully but unhesitatingly.

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