



## GIL INSTITUTE MEMORANDUM - CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

March 10, 2020

Dear Gil Institute Clients and Families,

As you may know, the COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, has been reported in Northern Virginia, including Fairfax. Given this pandemic poses a serious health risk to our community, particularly those vulnerable to illness, Gil Institute partners and providers will remain vigilant in our efforts to reduce the risk to our clients by adhering to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, following cleaning procedures daily, and communicating any specific concerns to each client and/or parent of a minor client should a direct threat to health in our building be identified.

In response to this fluid situation, Gil Institute wanted to inform you of our internal efforts. We also wanted to ensure you of each provider's flexibility should there be a need to cancel, reschedule, and/or proceed with services by way of phone or video call.

### OFFICE CLEANING

- Individual therapy and play offices will be thoroughly cleaned in between clients with products recommended by the CDC. This cleaning will include sand trays, miniatures, toys used during the session, supplies or books used during the session, and all surfaces within the therapy office.
- Our waiting areas, kitchen, all table surfaces, doorknobs, and waiting area toys will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- The entire suite will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by an outside cleaning company twice per week after the offices have closed.
- Hand sanitizer is in the waiting area and each therapy office. Providers will have children use before and after the session.

### APPOINTMENTS

Gil Institute is a group of private practice therapists. Please work directly with your provider to cancel or reschedule an appointment should you or your child show signs of illness. Providers are committed to extending as much flexibility as you need during this time of heightened awareness. While 24-hour notice for cancellation is standard across providers, clients will not be charged for



cancelled sessions due to illness within 24 hours. However, please contact your provider immediately and directly to cancel, reschedule, or explore an alternative should phone or video conference be an appropriate and available alternative.

Please do not come to the office if you or your child are showing signs of respiratory illness or had a fever within the last 48 hours. We also ask that you assist us in our efforts to maintain a clean environment by overseeing your child's hand washing before coming into the Gil Institute space.

### **TALKING TO CHILDREN**

While we are all appropriately concerned and arming ourselves with information to help limit the spread, we are also cognizant of ways in which children watch us respond to the news around us. Here are a few little things you can do to reduce anxiety in children, particularly important for children who may already feel stressed or in recovery from a stressful or traumatic event:

- Stay informed but limit to when children are outside earshot distance.
- Reassure them of their immunity more often than you remind them of the risk.
- Limit conversation about the spread of this virus to a few minutes with an emphasis on "less is more" for children. They just need to know they and their parent(s) will be okay and are doing everything required to stay healthy and safe.
- Do most things the same (routine) so their homes remain a respite from external stress and a protected space from frightening world events.
- Be vigilant about cleaning but be mindful a hypervigilant parent can cause children to feel uncertain. Children have fewer resources than adults to cope with uncertainty and cannot exercise the kind of critical thinking that we can. They need our words to feel secure and our 'wise brain' to reassure their 'feeling brain!'
- Reassure them with the facts of the flu and the low risk of serious illness this virus poses to children. Just like in the past, they may get sick and they will recover.
- Remind them that the hand washing, hand sanitizing, and other precautions are important to protect the community, but these efforts do not imply they will become seriously ill if they "forget." That is, these precautions are a community effort to mitigate the risk of healthy individuals carrying the virus and exposing a vulnerable individual.



- Explain that community responsibility is the reason for these precautions versus a fear that they or their parent will become seriously ill.
- Children are watching and listening! Let them see grown-ups “got this” and will inform them if there is a reason to worry. Until then, keep up the play and maintain a relaxed and calm environment at home so they can bring their worries to you and not worry that you’re too worried to hear about it!

Thank you for the trust you have placed in Gil Institute. We will notify you if the status of the risk to our immediate community becomes more serious. Until you hear otherwise, we got this!

Sincerely,

Eliana Gil, Jen Shaw and Myriam Goldin

Founding Partners of Gil Institute