

NBCAAM IS HERE TO HELP COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGES OF YOUR
PRACTICE IN AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD
Lola Michelin March 2020

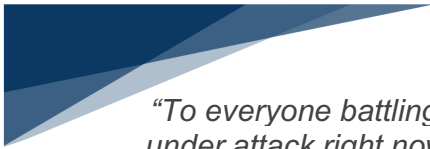


TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- NBCAAM recommends that everyone strongly consider avoiding contact with your clients and their animals at this time. Continually changing information indicates that animals may or may not be at risk, but their hair can definitely serve as a fomite or surface for transmission that poses a potential risk to humans. Whether you choose to schedule client sessions will depend on your region and day-to-day changes. Follow all the recommended health and hygiene practices to keep yourself safe and limit exposure.** Updated information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/>
- Stay hydrated on and off the job. Drinking small amounts of lukewarm water every 15 minutes is best. Set yourself an alarm if needed, don't wait to be thirsty to hydrate.
- Wash your hands before and after contact with animals and every chance you get. Wash your hands before leaving home, upon arriving, before leaving and between facilities/clients. Soap and water is your best friend right now. Wash your hands. Go, right now, wash your hands!
- Keep tissues, hand-sanitizer and moisturizer at the ready. Pre-load your jacket pockets and your automobiles so you are never without. Use a tissue or glove to open doors and handle objects such as halters, leashes, equipment. Avoid shaking hands with clients. Wipe down surfaces before and after contact when possible. Adopt these practices when caring for your own animals as well as others.
- Pack snacks, lunch and water to minimize stops along your way if you will be out for the day.
- NBCAAM does not recommend home visits at this point in time.** If you must see clients in their homes, minimize contact with others, avoid contact with surfaces as much as possible, politely decline offers of water or food and consider wearing personal protection equipment (specifically gloves). Ask in advance what protocols they are using in the home to minimize risk. Ask to reschedule if inadequate measures are in place.
- If you do not feel well, cancel your appointments and stay at home or, if warranted, seek medical attention. Remember that Corvid-19 is contagious long before symptoms may appear.**
- Time on your hands?** Take walks, meditate or sit quietly and take deep breaths, get plenty of sleep, take your vitamins and supplements, listen to uplifting music, watch funny shows and movies and stay connected with others virtually or in safe environments. Great time to read those textbooks you have been pondering or take an online class.
- Exercise but don't overexert yourself, eat well, *give yourself and others grace*, remain optimistic. "Keep your head where your feet are". In other words, stay present and hopeful and when you feel overwhelmed, breathe and reach out. NBCAAM is here to support you. www.NBCAAM.org

TAKING CARE OF CLIENTS

- Remember, our first promise to our clients (human and animal) is to DO NO HARM. We do not know the extent of the risk we represent at this time. If you do not feel well or even if you do, strongly consider cancelling your appointments and stay at home, or if warranted, seek medical attention. Your clients WILL understand and WILL appreciate your diligence.**
- If you can provide your service without the owner present and feel safe having contact with the animals, offer them this option.
- If you are going to their home or barn, can you provide your service in a safe zone (a yard, a porch, mudroom, foyer or out of the back of your vehicle)? Minimize the number of rooms or spaces you need to pass through. If needed, can the owner put the animal in an area for you to access without contact between the two of you? Again, NBCAAM cautions everyone about the potential but as yet unknown risk of contact with animals.
- We do not recommend having clients travel to your location.** If your client is coming to your location, can you provide your service in a safe zone? Minimize the number of rooms or spaces you need to pass through. Can the owner drop the animal off?
- Can any of your services be offered remotely? (energy work/communication/online conferencing)
- Minimize contact with your clients, observe social-distancing protocols and do not share items such as leashes, halters and leads, brushes or blankets whenever possible. Use disposable gloves when possible. Remember to use a tissue/gloves to open door handles, stall doors or to touch items such as water buckets...especially if others have had contact with those items (barn staff...)
- Keep tissues and hand-sanitizer at the ready. Consider bringing extra items in a Ziploc bag that you can provide for your client if they did not bring their own.
- Be sure to check in with your client before arriving. How are they feeling today? Is anyone in their home affected? Are they following recommended protocols? If you do not feel the environment is safe for you or your client, politely decline to proceed and offer to reschedule. Waive no-show fees for clients. Be flexible and generous whenever possible.
- Communicate early and often. Let your clients know about the steps you are taking to protect them, their animals and yourself. Notify them of changes as quickly as possible. Be proactive in letting them know that everything is subject to change given the circumstances.
- Use digital or electronic communication for documentation and payments to avoid passing paperwork and currency between you and your clients.



"To everyone battling a difficulty or under attack right now, smile, keep your head up, keep moving and stay positive, you'll get through it."

– Germany Kent
Happierhuman.com

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

- Stay abreast of developments so you can make changes you need to make them in real-time!**
- Time to get creative! Are there services you can offer remotely? Can you generate income through product sales or online consulting? Have you prepared your clients in the past with training that you can now do guided online sessions with them?
- Packages and gift cards/certificates are great for income without social impact...just be sure you don't overcommit for the future. And set 10-20% of that income aside now. When you are back in full swing and need to fulfill all those packages, you don't want to be in a different sort of cash flow challenge.
- Speaking of money, avoid dipping into business savings if you can. Save a little more from any income you have coming in if possible to weather further downturns. Spend less where you can tighten your belt. Hold off on big investments in equipment or technology. Invest in education and health instead!
- Contact your accounts payable and vendor accounts to see if you can adjust payments, get debt relief or lower interest rates/fees on loans, debt, checking account now. Financial institutions may be offering low-interest or interest-free lines of credit or loans so consider applying. The best time to get LOCs are when you don't need to use them!
- Consider your professional community. Do you have other therapists you can connect with? Perhaps you can join forces, help each other cover responsibilities if one of you has to take some time off to heal. Collaborate to capitalize on what you offer differently to create unique package experiences.
- Can't get out to see clients and have explored all of the above? This is a novel (oops) opportunity to sit back, reflect on what is going well in your practice, where you want to build or make changes. Journal, daydream, mind-map, lucid dream, plan, clear out clutter, catch up on filing, learn a new skill.
- If you haven't explored some of the online communities for our industry yet, now is a great time. Power of Touch for Animals, Horse World Connect, Equine Massage Network are just a few of the great places to connect with your tribe, learn and share and raise the vibration together in safety.

ON THE OTHER SIDE...

- This too shall pass. We cannot predict what things will look like, but business people know that where there is challenge, there is opportunity. Take time now to get clarity on your mission so you will recognize which opportunities align with you when they present themselves.
- Be sure to contact clients, vendors, accounts in the aftermath. Check in to see how others fared and if they have the same needs, new needs or changing needs for their animals.
- If you can, volunteer in some capacity. So many organizations will need so much help getting back on their feet. Not only will it feed your heart and inspire you, it will create important relationships for the next round of challenges and it is the right thing to do if you can.
- You have a whole new perspective after an event like this. You will be changed. You will have grown as a business person. Give yourself time to write this experience down. What were you doing (well or not well) before your awareness of the health crisis began. What did you do during the crisis to stay safe, to grow, to stay connected and to protect your practice? What were the impacts? What lessons did it offer? What do you want to change going forward? What are you grateful for?