

How can I manage my anxiety while home with my kids?

As an anxiously wired person, my nervous system is having a hay day with this one. I'm still navigating this but here's what's working so far:

- Examine what I'm ACTUALLY worried about and what I'm not. I'm sensitive to other people's anxiety, including online. When I get a little distance from what they're worried about I'm able to answer honestly- I'm worried about my parents and my parents-in-law. I'm worried about the small businesses I frequent which have much higher overhead and whether they'll be able to reopen. I'm worried about the employees of those businesses and their families. I'm worried about private practice therapists feeling hopeless when I honestly think we are in a better situation than most other professions. I'm worried about the kids who don't have meals now that school is closed and old men shuffling into the grocery store. There's some more but saying that out loud makes me more anxious. The things I'm not nervous about mainly come from my privilege. I'm NOT nervous about getting it myself. I'm in good enough health that I would likely recover well. I'm not nervous about my household getting it. I'm not worried about paying my employees. I'm not worried about any pay cut I may need to make for myself. I'm not nervous about not having enough food, though toilet paper will be another story soon... we'll just take more showers. I'm not nervous about homeschooling on the fly but I was initially. This is getting long but basically, it's best to examine your actual concerns, not the concerns of all people everywhere right now AND be in action. With regard to my actions- I've talked to my parents more. They are clear I want them far away from all humans. I've bought gift cards and left large tips at some of my favorite local businesses. If you have the funds, You can do this by calling- you don't even have to go in. I'm doing Ask Allison's and interacting a ton in the Party FB Group. I'm texting with other consultants so we can share info and all help our people better. I've donated to a nonprofit that is making sure those hit hardest by this have resources. I considered offering to shop for the old man at the store but I have cold sx and wanted to stay away.
- I'm also noticing what's triggering my anxiety the most and it's news and social media, which contrary to my current actions, don't need to be refreshed every 43 seconds. So I'm setting a phone rule for myself: 5 IG checks per day to collect the questions y'all are DMing me. 2 FB checks on my computer. Morning and afternoon to offer support. You might not *need* the news if you'll be socially isolating anyway. I'm going to limit it to one check in the evenings. Things are changing so fast and what I see at 9am is really different from what I see at 9pm. Refreshing that feed throughout the day isn't helping.
- What's calming my anxiety is being really present with my kids. Science experiments, baking, riding bikes, playing tag, reading, badly teaching, etc. Also being outside, hiking, walking the dog every evening. Exercise of any kind that I enjoy, I never do exercise I don't love but I'm especially not trying to make my life harder right now.
- Also, this is unprecedented stuff we're dealing with. I'm trying to be gentle with myself around the whole "I'm freaked out! I'm fine!" cycle I'm in. No one has been through this before. I'm trying to be as compassionate with myself as I was with my kid when she

coughed and immediately started crying b/c she thought she'd caught coronavirus. It's ok to be scared. It's ok to feel powerful. It's ok to feel both at once. Shit's messy. Our kids will pick up on it. It's great to be the safety in the storm for them and we're not going to do this perfectly. Expecting that is setting yourself up for failure

I live in a state that has been highly impacted by this but is taking slow steps to social distancing. I work for a group practice and our Clinical Director is offering teletherapy to all clients but isn't requiring it. How can I suggest to my group practice owner that we go 100% online without losing my job? Their theory is that we are okay as long as we don't have symptoms, which you and I know isn't true. I feel really torn.

This is an unprecedented time. You suggesting teletherapy exclusively may be met with defensiveness or it may be met with a sense of validation for a route they were considering going. I've seen a lot of group practice owners be kind of wishy washy with making this call because they're trying to wrap their heads around it, wanting to maintain continuity of care, wanting to maintain clinical support for clients for whom online might not be an option, taking care of their employees, etc. They're worried about money too and if they think clients will leave, which from what I'm seeing is less common among the students I'm talking to about it, they may be making decisions from a scarcity based place. I want to have empathy for them too.

None of us know what the hell we're doing at a time like this AND I believe it's up to the leaders in our communities to be decisive. It freaked me out when the bay area shut down yesterday but I respected the decisiveness and know that many of us will need to step up in different ways to make sure those that can't work from home are able to get their needs met.

I don't want you to put your job at risk AND I believe speaking up is the right thing to do. It would be a clinical nightmare to fire somebody right now. Ethically immoral for the care that you're providing clients. If they come back with a threat of that, calmly remind them that you're caring for people who need consistency, that you wanted to share your opinion. My guess is that as this progresses the owner will see the wisdom of telehealth and either forget they threatened or apologize.

I also have concerns about you working for someone that you think might fire you for advocating for what you believe is right. That's not something I think you should be in action around right now, though.

Is it safer for my practice to be insurance based or private pay right now?

I've thought about this for about a week. At first glance it seems almost obvious that insurance would be safer. It's less expensive after all. I braced myself when my private pay group practice shifted online, expecting some fall out. But everyone is continuing.

I think they're even. Here's why: the people who really needed to use their insurance may feel a bigger hit with that \$30 copay than the people paying \$200 for a session. Not everyone can work from home, and it seems that those that can are among the more economically privileged. These are the folks most likely to have 3-6 months of expenses in an emergency fund and often savings on top of that and they're still earning.

People need therapy right now more than ever. Everyone is overwhelmed. New clients will keep coming in. People may catch their breath for a minute first. We are so lucky we're in an industry that won't be impacted long term. We aren't the restaurant that just opened with rent and equipment that totals \$10K per month and employees we have to lay off. We're in healthcare and not the kind of healthcare that requires us to be on the physical frontlines, thank goodness. But we are on the frontlines of the emotional wreckage that many are experiencing. And we're having to deal with our own as well.

I'll be back tomorrow with more. DM me your questions on IG where I'm abundance_practice_building or shoot me questions via email at hello@abundancepracticebuilding.com