

# Practice Management Insight

A report on events affecting Oklahoma providers

April 2020

## Telehealth

During uncertain times, OrionNet Systems has implemented Telehealth inside of ThinkHealth. This keeps all of our counselors still working and also helping our community with their mental health.

Telehealth is the only way that counselors are still working. Our customers have been very thankful that this was implemented. Right now we need mental health services due the social distancing more than ever and we are doing our part to follow state and local guidelines.

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## April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, so we are asking you to help raise awareness about child abuse and neglect in our state, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic. **With an estimated 678,000 children found to be victims of child abuse or neglect nationwide last year**, this is a time for families, social workers, providers, child welfare stakeholders to pause and consider the significant impact child abuse can have in our communities and across the nation.

This year, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is offering a virtual pinwheel event for the month of April with sharable gifs and videos to share on your Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media channels. Each virtual pinwheel shared represents a child who is a victim of child abuse and neglect.

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## 'Dogs have a magic effect': how pets can improve our mental health

What is it about animals? As the bad news about the coronavirus continues, "send me dogs and cats" has become a regular cry on social media, an easy-to-grasp shorthand for "I feel terrible, cheer me up". The response is always the same: a torrent of pictures of animals doing daft things – but somehow it has a magical, calming effect.

The therapeutic value of our relationship with our pets, particularly dogs, is **increasingly recognised** by researchers. Cats can be wonderful too – but dogs have been domesticated by humans for much longer, and, as even the most devoted cat lover will admit, dogs are far easier to train for companionship. Most cats, as we know, are admirable for entirely different reasons. **Marion Janner**, a mental health campaigner and all-round animal lover, says that dogs teach us a whole range of lessons. "Dogs love us unconditionally. They're the ultimate in equal opportunities – entirely indifferent to race, gender, star sign, CV, clothes size or ability to throw cool moves on the dance floor.

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## How Mindfulness Helps You Find Time

*Bee-eeep. Bee-eeep. Bee-eeep.* Ugh. My mind, in a fog of sleepiness, slowly registers the jarring sound. My morning alarm.

It's Monday. The infinitely long to-do list commences its familiar swirling through my slowly-waking brain. Time to bound out of bed and head straight into a full day of busyness. *Like it or not, here we go....*

Did your chest tighten in recognition while reading that? If so, you're not alone. For many of us, much of our lives is spent sprinting on a self-created, stress-inducing hamster wheel. After a while, that stress can become a chronic state where we slip into persistent fight-or-flight mode, the body's heightened response to perceived danger.

*But I'm not stressed!* you might be thinking. The thing is, whether faced with a true threat (an armed intruder) or merely the constant thrum of self-criticism (or work pressures, deadlines, micromanaging superiors), the body and mind respond in much the same way: shallow breath, racing heart, and tense muscles, preparing to take action to keep us safe. We may feel our shoulders lifting toward our ears, or pressure in our chest.

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### How Saunas Can Boost Your Mental Health

We're about an hour into our session at the Russian and Turkish Baths, an old-school bathhouse in New York's East Village, when my friend Matt closes his eyes, throws his head back, and says, "I'm getting hit." The two of us are sitting on a tiled ledge. Half-naked people in robes and bikinis mill about. I'm feeling sweaty and, as usual, anxious. But by the time we emerge onto the sidewalk an hour later, I feel immensely refreshed. My hands are wrinkled and pale, and I'm relaxed in ways I haven't felt in weeks. I got the hit, too. It feels like an accomplishment—a runner's high minus the running.

The idea that extreme heat can improve **mental health** isn't new. The Russian and Turkish Baths opened in 1892. Around that time, an Austrian scientist began giving patients fevers to treat psychosis—a technique that eventually earned him the 1927 Nobel Prize in medicine. While deliberately raising the body's temperature (think sweat lodges and hot yoga) has long been an established practice in the wellness world, medical hyperthermia has seen a slow but steady trickle toward credibility in recent years.

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### A Secret Weapon for Improving Your Closest Relationship

You've always considered yourself a sensitive person, but you've wondered whether you're perhaps too tuned into the way others feel. You're out with a group of people having a good time, and among the **laughter** and joking around, you notice that one of your friends has become unnaturally quiet. Thinking back on what everyone was saying, you realize that one of the jokes may have hit too close to home for this individual. Rather than coming off as teasing, the comment seemed to come off as an insult. Were you one of the people who committed the offense? Should you not have joined in on the joke?

Reflecting on the situation, you wonder if you're making too much out of it. After all, people get teased all the time, and it may almost be a part of the group's general way of interacting. They can give, and most of them can take. Even so, you would prefer not to hurt anyone's feelings, even if it's all in good fun.

When it comes to your closest relationship, in fact, you find that being sensitive to your partner's feelings has proven, more than once, to help stop an argument in its tracks before it becomes hurtful.

[More Information](#)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**April 1**  
[April Fool's Day](#)

**April 2**  
[Sexual Assault Awareness Day of Action](#)

**April 3**  
[ChildHelp National Day of Hope](#)

**April 3**  
[Advanced ASI/ASAM Training](#)

**April 9**  
[Wellness Coach Training](#)

**April 11**  
[National Alcohol Screening Day](#)

**April 12**  
[Easter Sunday](#)

**April 13**  
[Thomas Jefferson's Birthday](#)

**April 15**  
[WellBody Program Training](#)

**April 21**  
[LGBTQ Cultural Competency](#)

**April 29**  
[PRSS Supervisory Training](#)

## Being Mindful of your Mental Health During the COVID-19 Outbreak

With the country rolling out social distancing measures, schools and businesses closing, and companies declaring work from home necessary, Americans are forced to face a new reality.

"We are social beings. We like to connect and touch and be close to people, and we've had to change our behavior, which can create a feeling of isolation," **Patricia Thornton**, PhD, a licensed psychologist in New York City, told Healthline.

While it may feel like life has stopped, there are ways to keep these times in perspective and learn how to carry on.

"Focusing on preparedness, staying calm, reaching out to check on the well-being of others, and self-care will help you through this challenging moment in history.

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Love is about giving freedom and power, not about gaining control or possession.

## 'Have A Purpose For Your Day': Mental Health Expert Gives Advice for Getting Through Another Month of Social Distancing

Adding at least another month to our cumulative effort to "flatten the curve" is a challenge as we deal with the pressures of staying at home.

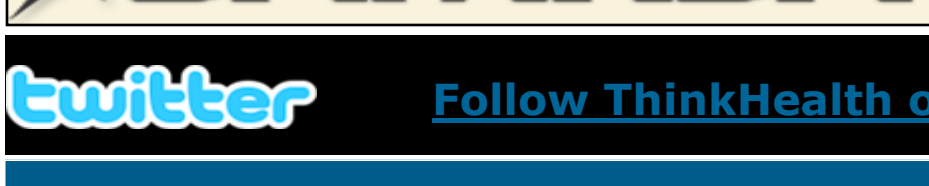
"You gotta do it, you gotta do it so it gets better," says Jean White as she and husband Ed put their groceries in their car on the South Side. Ed's take: "I think we're going to be into August. It's not slowing down."

Roberta Simpson says we're into "one day at a time" territory.

"People are getting sick, people are dying," Roberta says. "You just have to put your gloves on, six feet back, you know, and hope you don't get it."

"The tension and the stress is definitely going to increase the longer we are in scenarios like this," says Kelly Coldren of Family Links.

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