



## Coronavirus Impact on Side by Side Programs

April 14, 2020

With shelter-in-place restrictions for all of California still in place, life continues to be challenging and stressful for everyone on so many levels. Shutdowns, lay-offs and slowdowns are negatively impacting so many of our friends and loved ones. At Side by Side, as a first responder in terms of mental health and a provider of essential services, we are endeavoring to offer the maximum assistance that we can to the vulnerable young people we serve and our larger community.

However, we still face financial challenges that include reductions in expected revenue from canceled fundraising events and billing uncertainties due to necessary changes in our program services. As a result of the shutdown, some clients lack basic human needs and many more don't have the necessary technology or internet access to maintain mental health services remotely. Please consider contributing online to Side by Side's Relief Fund at [SidebySideYouth.org/donate](https://SidebySideYouth.org/donate).

Side by Side is doing the utmost we can to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus, while meeting the needs of our clients and their families.

- To the fullest extent possible, we are maintaining continuity of service for our clients through phone or video sessions and electronic educational instruction. **In-person meetings with clients at their home or at our offices will only be offered if absolutely necessary. In any case where a client or family member is ill, phone or video sessions will be used in place of in-person visits.**
- Our staff and clinicians are all following the California Department of Public Health and CDC recommendations including hygiene, social distancing, and staying home when sick.
- Office locations are cleaned throughout the day and extra cleaning has been scheduled for all locations.
- All administrative staff able to work remotely are doing so and all non-essential in-person meetings have been suspended through June 1. Community events before June 1 have been canceled or postponed.

Due to differences in our program services, please note the following program-specific information about closures and services provided:

- **Community Counseling** – Marin, Alameda, Sonoma, and Napa clients are being served through phone, video or inperson visits if phone/video sessions are not feasible. Sonoma's previously school-based clients were referred for office or video-based services.
- **Irene M. Hunt School** – Hunt School will be closed for onsite instruction through the end of the spring semester (June 4). Individualized online learning is available remotely to all students with internet connections. For students without internet access, teachers are providing a weekly hard copy package are being delivered to the student. Therapeutic services are continuing via phone sessions complimented by remotely accessed video instruction.
- **Our Space** – Clients are being served primarily via phone and video sessions. The Community Center drop-in hours on Wednesday afternoons have been replace by virtual drop-in sessions. The Queer Love Youth Pride youth cabaret performance has been postponed for a later date. Please check the Our Space Facebook page (@ourspacebyside) for more information.
- **Real Alternatives** – Youth are being supported via phone sessions or in-person visits by their Clinical Case Managers and Youth Specialists. Bi-monthly community meetings for youth are being held virtually. All youth have been educated on hand hygiene and limiting their time in crowded public spaces.
- **TAY Space** – All full-service clients are being served via phone or in-person visits. The TAY Space drop-in center has been closed during the shelter-in-place restrictions. Youth should call the office at 415-870-9298 if they need food, support, or housing and we will meet their needs through other means.
- **YouThrive** – YouThrive group sessions are suspended until schools in Sonoma and Marin re-open. YouThrive staff have started virtual groups for all schools in Petaluma, Healdsburg, and San Rafael. A virtual book group and online FIFA soccer tournaments are offering other ways for the youth to connect virtually and receive support.

For frequent updates on local information, resources and guidelines related to coronavirus, I encourage you to visit your local county resource page:

- Marin County: <https://www.marinhhs.org/coronavirus>
- Alameda County: <http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>
- Sonoma County: <https://socoemergency.org/emergency/novel-coronavirus/>

While this pandemic changes every day, please know Side by Side will continue our unwavering commitment to the young people we serve. In the meantime, do what you can to manage your own stress and anxiety. Turn off the TV, get offline, take a break. Don't forget to wash your hands and remember how important we all are to each other!

**Side by Side | 300 Sunny Hills Drive, San Anselmo, CA 94960 | 415-457-3200 | SidebySideYouth.org**