Therapists on Vacation Tipsheet By Catherine Sullivan, MSW, RSW

1. Tell your clients that you're taking vacation

- This may sound simple but I think that some professionals worry if they tell their clients they're taking time off it will upset them.
- I think that the more lead time and warning you give your clients the more they can prepare.
- You can also incorporate safety planning for when you'll be away into sessions.
- 2. Don't check your phone, e-mail or social media on vacation
 - A vacation is exactly that a vacation!
 - Put an alert on your social media that if you don't respond or post for a while it's because you're on vacation.
 - Put an out of office alert on your e-mail and your voicemail for the dates you're away and indicate when people can expect a response.
 - Create these boundaries and stick to them! This is good modelling for your clients of how to do this. They need to know that you have boundaries and expect them to be respected.

- 3. Give clients resources they can contact in an emergency
 - Put a message on your out of office e-mail and voicemail that instructs people to call 911 if they are experiencing a mental health emergency.
 - Give them numbers of local or provincial distress lines that they can contact on a separate page on your website
- 4. What happens if you're away for an extended period??
 - Personally I tend to only take 1 to 2 weeks of vacation at a time.
 I think it's reasonable to expect that clients will be alright during this time, especially if you're only seeing them bi-weekly.
 - If you're away for 3 weeks or more and you're in a group practice you can get one of your colleagues to take clients on an emergency basis.
 - If you're in a solo practice like myself I'm not sure about the answer to this. If you're reading and have a suggestion please email me at catherinesullivancounselling@gmail.com and let me know what you do in this case.