

25 March 2020

Dear Whānau/Family,

This week has been trying for New Zealanders. We are now at Pandemic Risk Level 4 as the country enters lock down. We are doing our best to explain the dire situation to your loved ones and most of them understand the restrictions, even though we may need to remind them at times. Overall, we have been surprised with how well most of our clients are accepting their predicament and making the most of this situation. We are doing our best to keep them engaged. We are already helping some of them video-chat with you, the family members. Please, if you would like to phone or video-conference your loved one and need help, let us know. We have therapists and nurses who are happy to facilitate this. We want you to maintain contact with your loved ones. In some ways, these restrictions have been the hardest for you, whānau/family. We have spoken with many of you already through your tears. We want to acknowledge that what you are doing in restricting physical contact is a testament to your love. You are putting your own desires aside so that your loved ones remain safe.

We have had multiple requests by whānau/family to drop off supplies. We understand that some changes of clothes or toiletries may be required, and we want your loved ones to receive these tokens of home. ABI staff held an urgent meeting last night to discuss the safety issues concerned. We have developed a protocol where we WILL be able to accept drop-offs. These must be phoned in advance so we may instruct you of the drop off location and so we will be available for the pick-up. Once we accept the delivery, we will then isolate the package in storage for one week. This allows sufficient time for any potential coronavirus contamination to clear. After the one week, the supplies will be distributed to your family members. Please keep the storage time in mind when assembling the care-packages. Do not include any items that require refrigeration and do not include any valuable items.

In the meanwhile, ABI will supply toiletries or clothing if your loved one is in need. We continue to reinforce that they are loved by their whānau/family, and that you will be allowed to visit once the government lifts its nationwide restrictions.

Again, thank you for your efforts in protecting your loved ones. We recognize that doing the right thing is sometimes extremely difficult. We will do our best to help you through this stressful time.

Best,

Tanya Harris & Chris Howard-Brown