

# PENTA MANSION GLOBAL

## The Latest Luxury Amenity You Didn't Know You Needed: Therapy

By John Scott Lewinski July 12, 2021 10:39 am ET



A couples massage room in Park Hyatt Aviara.  
COURTESY OF PARK HYATT AVIARA

The luxury and resort real estate developments of the 21st century are in buyers' heads, whether they realize it or not.

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the trend of applying psychological elements to property layouts accelerated. Meanwhile, some venues moved to employing various

types of therapists as a resource for well-heeled residents looking to ease their re-entry to daily public life.

Contractors are busy these days finishing custom homes at the golf community of Seven at Desert Mountain in Arizona. The aptly named seventh community built within the Scottsdale hill country complex came together with planners like Arnaldo Cocuzza, director of athletics and the Sonoran Spa at Desert Mountain, expecting the pandemic to heighten home buyers' desire to socialize after months of sporadic lockdowns.

"During the pandemic, mental well-being became a major concern," Mr. Cocuzza said. "A key to addressing mental health is socialization. With this increasing awareness that being around others is critical to mental health, we continue to add outdoor activities for our residents. Coming to a scheduled event or participating as part of a class or a group fosters a sense of belonging that is so essential."

Seven Desert Mountain buyer Jason Yetter of Colorado explained he and his family weren't necessarily checking psychology textbooks when they went home shopping, but they were seeking the right mood or "vibe."

"We wanted to be among people—to have to engage and socialize with like-minded people," he said. "We don't want to be isolated."

Such attitudes mark a change from pandemic days when many regions of the U.S. saw an increase in home sales "behind the gate," as those with means looked to escape the risk of infection. In these more neighborly times, developers look to experts to help them make residents feel cared for and comfortable.

Dr. Megan Lewis is the VeraVia Director of Behavioral Health at the Park Hyatt Aviara and the adjoining residences in Carlsbad, California. Ms. Lewis offers a variety of services from a series of individual behavioral health and psychiatric-related consultations to behavioral wellness workshops. VeraVia clients pay a \$3,000-per-person deposit when they book a service package, with the remaining balance due 40 days prior to treatment. Offerings range from three-day, \$3,500 "Reboot Express" tuneups to \$9,000-per-week, four week stays. VeraVia does not accept insurance.

Though there was a time when properties offering psychiatric services would've seemed strange, Ms. Lewis believes today's problems forced people to realize the importance of mental health.

"Especially as a result of the pandemic, mental health has moved more to the forefront of people's minds, as we saw individuals who have never had mental health issues struggle" Ms. Lewis said. "We are seeing more large communities in various industries

employ a mental health professional in-house to make mental healthcare more accessible.”

Whether a resident lives at a luxury residence or at a resort-themed vacation home, Ms. Lewis said those who never sought out mental health treatment before might be more willing to try it where the approach is holistic and focused on connecting the mind, body and spirit. She witnessed this trend before Covid-19, but the pandemic strengthened it.

“I believe the trend will continue even as the pandemic and the impact of it resolves,” she said. “It is more accepted now than ever before in history for people to admit or share the fact that they receive mental healthcare.”

On the other side of the country, in the heart of Manhattan at the Four Seasons Residences and Four Seasons Hotel New York Downtown, Nicole Hernandez serves as a resident healer and clinical hypnotherapist. She offers modern hypnosis therapies combined with somatic healing and coaching.



A relaxation room in Park Hyatt Aviara.  
Courtesy of Park Hyatt Aviara

"Our digital lifestyle, paired with the pandemic, forced the hospitality and real estate industries to consider wellness services that reconnect us with our humanity," Ms. Hernandez explained. "I help high achievers improve their lives in various ways, from assisting golfers in improving their focus and confidence to assisting executive women in overcoming people-pleasing tendencies."

Ms. Hernandez charges \$285 per session for Four Seasons clients, with all meetings taking place in-person. Insurance is not accepted. In private practice, she only works remotely for \$195 to \$250 per appointment. Even though she maintains that virtual business, she sees the reliance on technology before and during the pandemic as a factor in many of her clients' feelings of disconnection.

"How often do you see people out with friends or family, and at least one person is on their phone?" she asks. "We aren't listening or engaging with each other in a meaningful way. A feeling of connection and belonging is a basic human need that's not met in our 24/7 digital world. Healers, therapists and wellness practitioners fill this gap."

Ms. Hernandez thinks people are more willing to participate in self-discovery experiences now after the pandemic forced them to look at their lives.

"Mental and physical health have become top priorities, and many people want more from their home life or vacations than just cocktails, art programs and pools," Hernandez added. "They want to experience self-reflection and inner transformations to optimize their lifestyles."

Doug Chambers is the principal co-founder (with Cary Collier ) of BluSpas Inc. The Montana-based company provides consulting, design and planning in wellness concepts and spa management services at a variety of communities and destinations. While the firm's role is making recommendations with spa services, Mr. Chambers says they've seen their clients become much more receptive of programming that falls within the general mental wellness umbrella.

"Our experience is that offerings in the meditation and mindfulness categories are nearly assumed components of programming for most of our projects," Mr. Chambers said. "Additionally, we are developing sleep-related offerings, including sleep coaching, for some of our current projects."

Mr. Chambers said the mindfulness category was well-received in the resort environment, but the pandemic was an accelerant for the trend. He said traditional

counseling and therapy services are more complicated offerings for properties due to staffing requirements and the need to find professionals with very particular skill sets.

Back in San Diego, Ms. Lewis didn't see those complications holding back the emergence of psychological therapies offered as amenities.

"Now, there is a growing public understanding that everyone can benefit in some way from mental health care," she said, "even the most high-functioning individuals at the most luxurious destinations."