

Telehealth in the Time of Pandemic:

Strategies and Insights for Individuals & Families

What is telehealth?

Telehealth is the application of telecommunications technology to the delivery of [therapy] services at a distance by linking clinician to client...for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation.



Tips for Success

- *Create a safe, distraction-free space.*
- *Expect awkwardness at first. It's natural!*
- *Be flexible.*
- *Use different tools that the internet has to offer.*
- *Introduce your pets to your provider. It can break the ice and ease tension.*
- *Practice being verbal with your emotions in the absence of body language and verbal cues.*
- *Give your provider feedback.*
- *Take time to decompress after a session.*

How do you choose the right provider?

Make sure your problems and concerns are treatable through telehealth. Psychosis and emergency situations may require mental health crisis intervention teams.

It is critical to ensure your provider emphasizes the importance of confidentiality and privacy.

Some types of therapies compatible with teletherapy include: tele-behavioral health, telepsychiatry, speech pathology, case management, occupational therapy, yoga therapy, art therapy, and anger management.

What are the benefits?

- **Accessibility:** Patients can call from wherever, even rural locations. Telehealth cuts out traveling, which can be an issue for individuals with disabilities and people who are self-isolating.
- **Flexibility:** Through teletherapy, sessions are not offered solely through scheduled and limited office hours. With the current pandemic, the federal government has loosened laws on telehealth, allowing providers to deliver services in states where they are not licensed. Apps like Zoom and Facetime are also now HIPPA-approved for telehealth sessions.
- **Safety & Privacy:** Some people feel more comfortable revealing more about themselves if they are not in-person. People with anxiety, depression, and OCD may have many barriers that make it difficult to attend or be honest in-person. In an office, usually people have to generalize skills used in therapy to their home environment. Now, these skills can be learned at home and incorporated much quicker.
- **Removing Barriers:** People who feel uncomfortable talking face-to-face, even through a screen, can record themselves talking and send the video to their provider. Individuals who have speaking difficulties or non-verbal disabilities can be engaged via sign language, picture cards, and speech-generating devices. Shorter, more frequent sessions and the use of a facilitator or the involvement of a family member can ease these barriers.

Data from "Telehealth in the Time of Pandemic: Strategies and Insights for Overcoming Barriers for Individuals, Families, and Providers" by Brad Richards

Find more Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources at http://namimd.org/coronavirus_resources



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