



Mental Wellness During COVID-19

Tips for Providing Virtual Care and Support

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Video Conferencing:

- Ensure good lighting for both you and your client
- Bandwidth: make sure you have a stable connection and adjust as need be.
- Watch your background; make sure there is nothing inappropriate behind you i.e. files, other computer screens, personal information. Create a neutral background if possible.
- Clothing; consider wearing solid colors so your clothing is not a distraction.
- Consider using a headset or earphones so there is clear communication with no feedback.
- Client setting; ensure client is in an appropriate setting and where no one will walk in. Make sure you know who is in the room - request the client let you know if there is another individual in the room who may be off camera before beginning the session
- Ensure you know the platform you are using is secure.
- Choose an office/work space that is comfortable and be mindful of your background
- Limit distractions. Avoid; eating your lunch, glancing at your cell phone or texting, looking at another screen on your computer, being interrupted, back ground noise, etc.... the client will see all of these distractions.
- Adjust your screen so you are eye level with your screen and do not sit too close to your screen.

Therapy over the phone:

- Often used for crisis calls, forgotten appointments or quick check-ins between appointments
- For clients who do not have access to internet or video options or have safety and privacy concerns use of telephone therapy may be another alternative option for telemental health therapy
- Ensure the security of your phone connection- if you are using a voiceover IP phone or internet phone, use due diligence as you would your internet, making sure it is secure and no one can listen in.
- You cannot see the non-verbal so you will have to acknowledge the client with verbal cues such you are paying attention such as MmmHmms and Aaaaahs.
- Pay attention to your pitch, quality, tone. Try standing while you talk.
- Be wary of pauses in conversation, you may want to keep pauses shorter so you do not feel disconnected.
- Telephone therapy can be effective for a variety of concerns and people like this option.

Email Communication

- All email should be encrypted.
- Ongoing reminders about safe communications; not to leave email open, log out after each use.
- Keep emails short, address one or two points.
- Suggestions and homework can be sent to clients.

References and Acknowledgments

1. A special Thank You to Dr. Chris Mushquash who shared his experience and knowledge on using virtual technology on May 1, 2020 during our Promoting Wellness & Providing Support virtual gathering.
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3. <https://blog.medisys.ca/what-is-virtual-healthcare>
4. Dr. Christine Korol https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2lasrqN6ic&list=PLFmT332_Jx4u18qpVfo5B95uWJgEnvd7A
5. The Right Path Counselling & Prevention Services- Guide to Tele-Therapy

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