

Tips for Telehealth Video Sessions

Here are some suggestions to help you get your space and your tech set up before your online sessions.

1. Create a confidential space where you feel comfortable. Things to consider:
 - Is the space private? Try to be in a quiet environment where you can speak freely.
 - Can you lock the door? If not, will others who have access to the space respect your request for privacy and not enter the room?
 - Can others outside the room hear you talking? If so, consider placing a white noise machine or a phone with a White Noise app just OUTSIDE the door, to ensure sound privacy. The sounds should be on the side of the door where you do not want people to hear (not inside with you).
 - You may wish to wear headphones to increase privacy and sound quality.
 - Last resort: your car parked in a safe, private spot. (We want to emphasize that private does not mean secluded. Please make sure you are in a SAFE location.)
 - Public Wi-Fi is not secure and is not recommended.

2. Technical Setup:
 - Make sure you have a working, charged device with a functional camera and microphone.
 - A laptop or desktop computer are ideal - preferably the biggest screen size that you have available to you (that you can also have in a comfortable, confidential/private space).
 - Whatever device you're using, please make sure that the camera is about level with your eyes. It may require propping up your device or monitor on other items, such as books.
 - If possible, please make sure that you're well-lit and don't have a bright light source directly behind you.

3. Clear Your Internet: Consider quitting/closing out/shutting down all background applications to ensure your telehealth video app receives the majority of your internet's bandwidth, especially applications that use your camera. Some examples of programs to quit are:
 - Skype and other video chat apps. Make sure you've quit the app - not just closed its window.
 - Dropbox, Google Drive, and other file synchronization/sharing services.
 - Cloud backup software. These programs are usually mindful about not clogging your Internet pipe, but it may be best to shut them down for the duration of sessions. Remember to start them back up when you're done.
 - Close web browser tabs or windows that you don't need. Many websites and web applications do a lot of Internet back-and-forth while you have them open.
 - Anything else you can find that is open.

4. A poor or unstable connection can cause the screen to "freeze". To minimize poor connection issues either move very close to the Wi-Fi router so the signal is stronger, connect your computer to the Wi-Fi router or connect to it with a cable. If you still experience an unstable connection, make sure that no one at your house tries to stream videos (such as Netflix) or play online games during a session, as these can slow the connection.

5. Silence Notifications (emails, text or iMessage, Facebook Messenger etc.) to reduce auditory distractions. Environmental noises such as nearby conversations or the sound of television can interfere with the sound on the call. Limit background noise, including fans, barking dogs, phones, etc.
6. Make sure your antivirus program and system software updates are not scheduled to run during the session. Allowing a system update to run during a session may cause your computer/device to automatically restart. These updates can be accessed in your system settings.

Adapted from: *Online Therapy Pre-Intake Preparation for Clients* (Person Centered Tech)

Preparing Your Child for a Telehealth Video Session

1. Prior to the teletherapy session, engage your child in a quiet activity. For many children, it would be challenging to transition from highly active play (like rough housing) or highly engaging activities (like video games) to sitting and watching a therapist on a screen. Preparing your child ahead of time with activities such as coloring, shared book reading, or crafts can help their bodies be ready to learn.
2. Set your child up in private space if possible, such as in a room with the door closed.
3. Use a computer or iPad if possible and secure it so it does not move around or fall over so your child's hands are free to do art activities or movement, much as they would in the therapy room.
4. Provide art materials and toys for your child (colored pencils, paper, crayons, stuffed figures, action figures, etc.)
5. Your therapist will explain the features of the ZOOM screen when they meet with your child for their first session.