

## Supporting Our CBT Clients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### PART 1: Best Practices in TeleCBTp

The COVID-19 outbreak has had a profound impact on our daily lives, including increased isolation as physical distancing measures have been put in place. As a result, many clinicians now rely on telehealth encounters to sustain contact, engagement, and treatment during this stressful time. To help with this transition, the [UW CBTp Implementation Team](#) has generated tips and strategies for the remote delivery of CBT for psychosis (CBTp).



#### What does the research say about the use of telehealth for service users with serious mental illness?

- Both via telephone and videoconferencing are feasible and acceptable to clients<sup>1-3</sup>
- Emerging evidence suggests that telehealth improves client outcomes<sup>1</sup>
- Therapeutic alliance is not affected when individuals receive CBTp via telephone vs. in-person sessions<sup>4</sup>
- Using telemedicine post discharge from an inpatient unit resulted in greater treatment compliance, adherence, and satisfaction than those receiving conventional discharge services<sup>5</sup>
- The use of videoconferencing is associated with good clinical outcomes comparable to those seen in in-person sessions.<sup>6</sup>

### Setting up the Therapy Environment

#### Client space

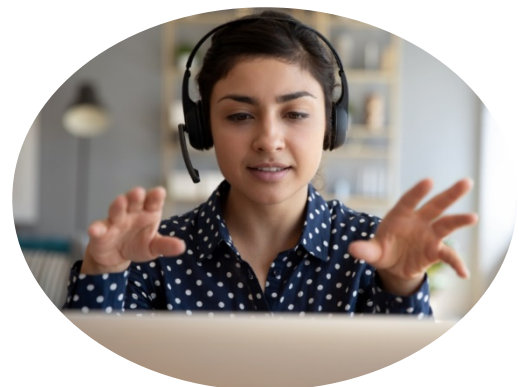
- Safe, private location (important to know where client is located in case of emergency)
- Well lit (both for client and for clinician)

#### Therapist space

- Secure, private, well-lit
- Visible space is tidy
- Limit interruptions
- Ensure webcam is offering quality video

#### Camera set-up

- If possible, cameras should be placed at the same elevation as the eye with the face clearly visible



## Key Considerations for Telehealth Delivery

- Attend to nonverbal communication
  - **Do's:** lean into camera, maintain eye contact, nod, smile
  - **Don'ts:** Eat/drink, type, look down for notes for the majority of the visit
- Greet the person warmly
- Orient the person to the call (e.g., logistics, consent, pertinent features)
- Consider shorter, more frequent calls
  - Enhance opportunities for socialization and avoid client fatigue
- **Avoid frontloading** assessment
- **Frontload** befriending, keep it casual
- Careful of dominating the call
- Factors enhancing the therapeutic relationship (not specific to telehealth but important to keep in mind):
  - Increased symptom severity
  - Broader social network
  - Employment
  - Congruence of gender, age, ethnicity
- Remember to focus on: **ROUTINE, STRUCTURE, ACTIVITY, CONNECTION, CONTRIBUTION**

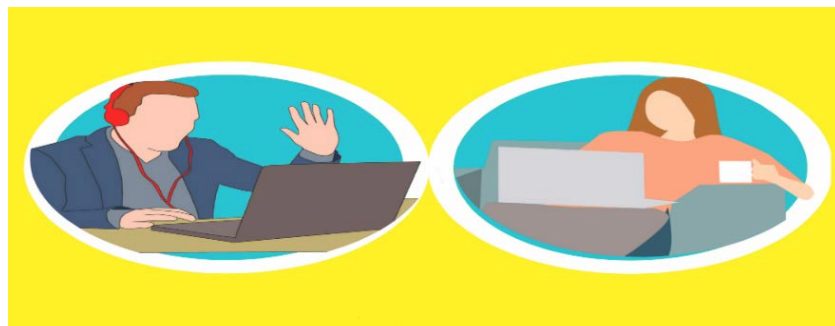


### Technology Needs

- ✓ Computer
- ✓ Webcam with high-quality camera/audio
- ✓ Antivirus software and firewall
- ✓ Headphones with microphone
- ✓ Telephone
- ✓ Stable internet connection (wired connection is preferable if available)

## Setting the Client Up for Success

- Hold a learning session prior to first visit
- Provide written instruction
- Have a natural support accompany client to learning session
- Understand the client's setup (e.g. equipment they are using, data allowance, internet connection, privacy, concerns about privacy/surveillance)



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## Provider Tips for Transitioning CBTp to Remote Administration

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01

Plan for time at onset of each session to help clients navigate telehealth platform (5-10 minutes)

02

Anticipate interruptions; reorient client to discussion upon return

03

Consider brief, concrete, agendas; consider entering agenda items into chat box if you previously wrote these down for clients

04

Share screen to orient clients to worksheets; may need to fill out for clients during session and send completed/clean copies for home practice. Consider virtual whiteboard.



### Telephone Considerations

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- Used if client is uncomfortable with video-based platform, doesn't have access to equipment for video calls, or has active delusions about technological surveillance
- May also be used if a therapeutic relationship is already established
- When providing CBTp via telephone, remember to:
  1. Remind individual of session time and duration
  2. Encourage client to use private and quiet location
  3. Establish a brief and concrete agenda
  4. Provide materials (e.g. worksheets, handouts) in advance

### References

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