

Telehealth Information for Clients

What is Telehealth?

Telehealth is the use of telecommunication to provide speech pathology services to clients. The speech pathologist typically uses an online communication platform (e.g. Zoom) to deliver live client sessions via videoconference but may utilise other formats such as email or telephone.

What do Telehealth Sessions Involve?

- Your clinician (speech pathologist or student speech pathologist) will discuss your communication history with you and, where appropriate, will offer information and advice.
- You may bring a support person with you, as you might in a face to face session.
- If you attend a health or education service to participate in a Telehealth session, other professionals may be present and may need to examine you according to your speech pathologist's instructions.
- Your speech pathologist may use different tools to make the session look and feel as close to an in-clinic service as possible e.g. use of video via webcam with audio, screen share to show items to you, drawing and typing functions to allow you to interact with screenshared materials.
- At times, audio and video recordings of sessions may be taken to support the clinician's work and/or student education, as might occur in a face to face consultation. You are not permitted to video or audio record the session, unless your speech pathologist gives you permission to do so.
- For clients under 18 years, an adult must be present for the whole session sitting next to and supporting the child through the activities. Parents are responsible for behavioural management of the child during sessions.



What are the Potential Benefits?

Improved access to speech pathology services, especially for people who live in rural and regional areas or who find it difficult to attend appointments.

- It can save you time and money as you don't have to leave home or work to travel to an appointment or ask someone to take you to an appointment.
- Parent/carer skills in delivering intervention is often enhanced via telehealth as it is the parent/carer who must deliver the intervention, under the guidance of the clinician.
- Allows speech pathologists to gain increased insight into the home/work experiences for their clients which can increase opportunity for generalising gains into everyday situations.
- Decreases exposure to infectious diseases for you, your family and the clinician.

What are the Potential Risks?

Telehealth might:

- Be negatively impacted by technical problems, such as delays due to technology failures.
- Not offer the same visual and sound quality for observations and modelling.
- Require someone onsite with you to support the speech pathologist.
- Not feel the same as an onsite session.
- Include practices and procedures that are not as well understood in a telehealth setting as they are onsite.
- Increase privacy and digital security risks.

Fees

The fees for telehealth sessions is the same amount as a standard face-to-face session unless advised otherwise (see Fee Schedule). Payment can be made by credit card/EFTPOS via a payment link we will provide or over the phone with Clinic reception staff. Cancellation fees apply.

Attending Your Video Session: A Telehealth Guide for Clients

STEP 1: Scheduling the session

- Your speech pathologist will discuss with you your suitability for telehealth and what you will need to make your telehealth session a success. Your consent to participate in telehealth will be sought and you will be provided with a form to sign.
- The speech pathologist or clinic receptionist will organise a suitable appointment time with you and send you an invite with a web link to access the online communication platform to be used in your browser. Most platforms used do not require you to download specific software.
- When making your appointment ask how you can practise connecting before the actual video session if you are unsure

STEP 2: Check your equipment

- You will need a computer or tablet with either a built-in web-cam or a USB web-cam. You can use a mobile phone, but it is not the best option. Ensure your video device is charged.
- Ensure your internet connection will give a clear audio and video signal. If you can watch YouTube clips your connection is probably good enough for a video session.
- Ensure you have enough data to allow videoconference sessions.
- Your network should be secure and prevent others from being able to access your data. Do not use public or unsecured networks.

STEP 3: Prepare for your video session

Once you have an appointment here's how to prepare and get the best out of your video session.

- Before your video session, ask others in your home to stop using internet applications that might slow your connection, such as video streaming or gaming.
- Have at hand relevant health records, reports, and copies of any home practice tasks completed.
- Prepare a list of things you want to discuss and have a pen and notepad handy to write down notes.
- Set up in a quiet, private and well-lit room.
- Try not to sit with bright light behind you e.g. face the window rather than having your back to the

window. This will help to ensure your face can be seen clearly.

- Connect your laptop or tablet to the Internet.
- Sit close to the camera so your head and shoulders are in view.
- If there is someone with you, ensure both can be seen.

Approximately 5 minutes before your appointment time, follow the connection instructions provided to you when you made the appointment.

STEP 4: During your video session

- Look directly at the screen.
- Speak a little more slowly than normal to help your clinician hear you clearly.
- Take care not to talk over the top of your clinician. Pause after speaking and be conscious of taking turns to speak.
- If you get cut off and can't reconnect, wait for a phone call from the clinician.
- If you need to move out of camera view, inform your clinician of what you are doing.
- Write down any advice or instructions, and make sure you understand the next steps (e.g. homework, who to organise an appointment with).
- Repeat the instructions back to the clinician.
- When you've both said goodbye, end the call.

References

1. Caffery, L., Hobson, G., Mothershaw, A., Haydon, H.M., Snoswell, C.L., Thomas, E., Zurynski, Y., Smith, K., Clay, C. Smith, A.C. Quick guides for telehealth. Available online: <https://coh.centre.uq.edu.au/quick-guides-telehealth> Published 21 April 2020. Accessed 5 May 2020.
2. Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels <https://www.pexels.com/photo/people-on-a-video-call-4226256/> . Accessed 1 July 2020.
3. Certain information in this brochure has been sourced from the Speech Pathology Australia documents 'Informed Consent for Telepractice template' and 'FAQs from the general public - Telepractice / Telehealth' with their kind permission for adaption. Available: https://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SPAweb/Resources_for_Speech_Pathologists/Professional_Resources/HTML/Telepractice_Resources.aspx?WebsiteKey=fc2020cb-520d-405b-af30-fc7f70f848db . Accessed 5 May 2020.