

Always refer to guidelines from your professional regulator when considering the use of tele-rehabilitation applications in your practice.

Tele-Rehab: Practical Tips for Using Telemedicine to Conduct Remote Rehabilitation Consultations

General Perspectives on using the Consultation Model via Telemedicine

Assessment

- Keep it simple –observational, based on history
- Take advantage of available camera features e.g. zoom, stylus, portability
- Ask for clarification from client or remote care providers when necessary e.g. how much effort is required to assist client

Treatment

- On-screen treatment often limited to suggestions and/or demonstrations
- Most intervention time is spent after camera is turned off, e.g. contacting vendors, arranging for equipment needs, faxing or mailing exercises, suggestions, requests

Strategies for Communicating and Building Rapport from a Distance

- Work at establishing a connection, show that you care
 - Listen carefully and reflect/summarize
 - Focus on determining and addressing their goals, e.g. tub transfers, raising the couch, getting out of the house
 - Comment on what you are seeing
 - “Your grandchildren love to be with you”
 - “You have a beautiful view from your door”
 - Establish personal connection
 - “I have 3 children too, there’s always laundry to do”
 - “I can’t see without my glasses either”
 - Be aware of power differentials
 - Avoid any use of jargon, clear language is a sign of respect and encourages participation
- Use humour where appropriate
- Articulate the client or the families strengths
 - “I can see you’ve been working hard your balance has really improved”
 - “You’re doing such a great job of helping your mother maintain her independence.”
- Visuals can confirm communication
 - Use gestures and hand signals e.g. nodding and pointing
 - Demonstrate a movement rather than just explain
 - Refine an exercise by repeating demonstration, getting someone else on site to try, getting client to try again with correction
 - Virtually shake on an agreed goal, give a high five

Additional Considerations in Telemedicine

- CONFIDENTIALITY
 - clients can be at home with many other people (e.g. family, support workers)
 - additional sessions may be required for sensitive issues, e.g. phone call or private visits
- CONSENTS / PAPERWORK
 - clients may need to sign consents and/or paperwork which can be difficult as originals are often required, not copies or faxes, requires additional time for mailing or alternative arrangements

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