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Tips from the Therapy Couch: Nervous About Online Services? Switching to e-Mental Health services during COVID19

New experiences can sometimes bring a sense of unease and uncertainty, we are here to help...

Isn't psychotherapy all about the in-person connection? Will telemental health or video conferencing psychotherapy work? You may be asking these questions while looking into e-therapy services during COVID19.

Research over the last several decades supports e-psychotherapy in being as effective as face to face therapy



During this global COVID-19 pandemic so many things have changed to virtual and remote services. It is to protect our health, but if you've stood in a grocery line for more than 20 minutes just to get into the store, or have to do curbside pick-up and can't return the wrong item you've purchased – you know some things were definitely better in person during pre-pandemic times. So, what about tele-mental health or video conferencing psychotherapy? If you're considering online services, you are likely wondering if it is as effective.

Luckily, research studies from well-regarded journals like the Journal of Technology & Human Services, Journal of Affective Disorders, Journal of Psychological Disorders and the Journal of Behaviour Research & Therapy have all compiled thousands of reviewed studies demonstrating that e-Mental Health Services are just as effective as live face to face psychotherapy. Particularly, e-Mental Health interventions like Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, have been demonstrated to be very effective in improving mental health and wellness.

Tips for Transitioning to e-Mental Health Services

Know you are NOT

- It's okay to feel nervous. This is a different way of interacting and one you

*alone. Others have
been feeling similar
feelings and your
psychotherapist likely
has heard similar
thoughts expressed.*

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may not have previous experience with. Be open with your therapist about how you are feeling in the moment. Be aware of your thoughts about the process and new experience.

- If you're feeling anxious about teletherapy or virtual services, let your therapist know! Often just voicing it out loud helps to reduce it and makes things more comfortable.
- Don't be afraid of "awkward" silences! Pauses and moments of quiet are welcome online, just as they are in person.
- If you find yourself distracted by looking at yourself, use a sticky note to cover that part of the screen.
- Lean into the unique parts of e-therapy. There are some things you can do in online therapy that you can't do in person. For example: we love being introduced to your furry companions!
- Be open to sharing your emotions more explicitly- as your therapist we are normally able to observe your bodily cues and facial expressions. This can become more challenging online, so it can be really helpful to begin naming your reactions and emotions in a descriptive way. This is a powerful means to develop greater self-awareness especially done within a safe environment.
- Don't be afraid to give your therapist feedback! We are all learning to adapt to a new "way of being," so it is important to be your own best advocate in this process. Keep communication open and transparent and don't be afraid to ask for what you need.
- Try to find a private space so that you can attune to yourself, your therapist and the moment.
- Make sure you have good service or Wi-Fi to reduce any interruptions.

