



Missouri Department of Mental Health

Deaf Services Telehealth Guidelines

Client Criteria

1. Telehealth Services should be considered based on the client's communication needs, clinical needs, and functional ability to use the equipment.
2. Telehealth Services should be considered if the client lives outside of an area accessible to one of the Specialized Outpatient Centers.
3. Telehealth Services may not be conducted in a client's private home.
4. Careful selection of sites with Telehealth equipment must be considered where staff can be physically present in case of an emergency.
5. High-risk clients should not participate in Telehealth services; in those cases, appropriate referrals must be made. General exclusion criteria are as follows:
 - Clients who reject Telehealth services in the informed consent process
 - Acutely violent or unstable clients with poor impulse control
 - Acutely suicidal clients
 - Severely decompensated clients with immediate need for hospitalization
 - Client to whom services might be better delivered in person (as determined in collaboration with a sign and cultural fluent clinician)
 - Clients with specific mental illness symptoms that might be exacerbated by Telehealth services may need special consideration (e.g. ideas of reference regarding televisions).
6. Should any questions arise regarding the eligibility of a client for Telehealth services, please consult with either the DMH Director of Deaf Services, or one of the Specialized Outpatient Center clinicians.

Client Informed Consent

1. All clients must receive a full explanation of the risks and benefits of Telehealth services, and a written Telehealth Services Informed Consent form must be obtained from the client or designee before beginning the use of Telehealth services.
2. Documentation of the client's understanding of the Telehealth Informed Consent Form is required.
3. The original signed Telehealth Informed Consent Form must be included in the client's chart and updated annually.
4. The client may terminate the use of Telehealth services at any time.

Client Privacy and Confidentiality

1. Client privacy must be maintained at all times while receiving Telehealth services.
2. Clients' sessions should not be viewed through the video by others without the client's knowledge or prior written consent.
3. If other personnel or visitors come into the video-receiving site, the client must be made aware of their presence.

Client Assessment/Progress Notes

1. A comprehensive intake assessment needs to be completed at the point of entry to services and should be shared with the Specialized Outpatient Center clinician once the client is referred for Telehealth services or consultation is requested.
2. The Specialized Outpatient Center clinician that engages into services with the client should also complete an assessment to further determine and/or confirm the client's clinical need for Telehealth services.
3. The Referring Agency will maintain a chart for the client and the Specialized Outpatient Center will also maintain a chart with progress notes for the therapy services given through Telehealth.

Client Education

1. Client should receive training on using the Telehealth equipment if s/he does not know how to use one.
2. Client must be given clear instructions as to who to ask for in case technical problems arise with the Telehealth equipment.

Administrative Procedures

1. Use only the Missouri Telehealth Network/poly comm equipment for the delivery of Telehealth Services as this is a secure line.
2. Changes in frequency or termination of Telehealth services sessions will be treated like changes in other parts of the treatment plan and must be documented in the client's chart.
3. Testing of the video connection prior to the first appointment with the client should be done to ensure video quality and connectivity, especially when connecting with new video sites.
4. Full efforts should be made to enhance the video quality if the video deteriorates during a session.
5. In case of video equipment failure, a procedure between the Referring Agency and the Specialized Outpatient Center should be created to ensure prompt client contact and measures to ensure continuity of care must be in place (e.g. a way for the therapist to connect to the client's assigned case worker).
6. Procedures must be in place to ensure that no identifying client information on the Telehealth equipment can be seen. Delete all dialed calls, calls received, and missed calls after each use.

Emergency Procedures

1. Emergency procedures must be developed in collaboration with the client and all appropriate providers prior to the delivery of Telehealth Services.
2. Police phone numbers for the client's location must be listed in the Specialized Outpatient Center's client chart in case of an emergency, as well as a direct number to the client's case worker. It is the therapist's responsibility to locate the phone numbers.
3. Phone numbers of the client's primary care physician or psychiatrist must be listed in the Specialized Outpatient Center's client chart.
4. Potential emergencies should be discussed in advance with the client, and the possibility that the therapist may not receive online communication immediately should be addressed.
5. If the client expresses suicidal ideation, a suicidal plan, the intent to harm oneself, or the therapist has suspicions that the severity of the client's suicidal ideation and feelings are greater than expressed, the therapist will adhere to the following plan when conducting Telehealth Services:
 - a. Attempt to keep the client connected on the Telehealth equipment.
 - b. The therapist will contact the client's case worker for immediate assistance.