Transitioning to Video Counselling with children/adolescents

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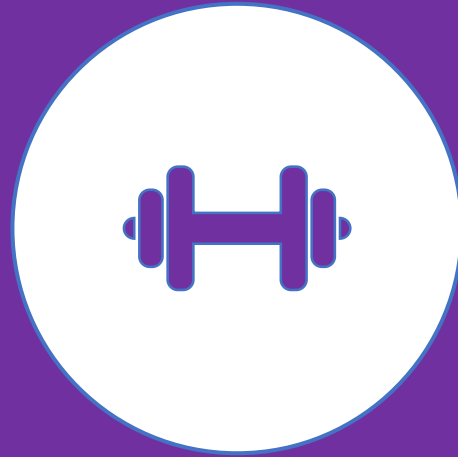
Your strengths and skills as a counsellor will still shine.

Client outcomes are comparable.
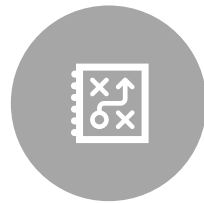
Nurture and draw on your colleagues

You're not alone!

Growth is never linear but practice increases performance

Practice our resilience/recovery/affirmation practices
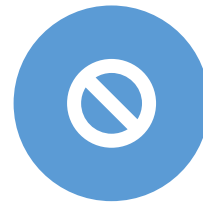
Our new "for-now" normal

6-18 MONTHS

PHYSICAL DISTANCING/ ISOLATION

SCHOOL ONLINE

LIMITS TO PREVIOUS LIFE HABITS

PERVASIVE UNCERTAINTIES

FUTURE CLIENT DEMANDS

Reflect on your current practice

What do you see as your strengths as a counsellor?

How do you establish rapport with your clients?

What areas of interests do you often explore?

What handouts/tools do you prefer to use (eg worksheets, whiteboard)?

Consider
Why vs What

Risk management

📋	Privacy of the client setting (and conditions of service) – including checklist for every session
🔒	Registration form (informed consent, privacy statements, emergency contacts)
⚠️	Safety plans / Contingencies to interruptions
💻	Internet connection - Technical prioritising (configure modem, limit other use) / Phone tethering
🏃	Copyright issues

Clear explicit information for parents

Provide guide for using your video platform and troubleshooting (available from your vendor's website – eg Zoom)

Informed consent / contingency (eg mobile tethering) & safety plans

Parents/teachers as tech support – including preparing them for shorter sessions to ensure technology/additional setups

Parents/teachers to be co-counsellors – ensure they have equipment/tools (eg crayons, paper, play dough) / handouts / setup up music or snacks or drinks, maintain focus

Parents/teachers as bouncers – ensure privacy (from siblings/classmates/other onlookers), reduce interruptions, minimise distractions

Clear explicit information for teens

Provide guide for using your video platform and troubleshooting (available from your vendor's website)

Informed consent / contingency & safety plans

Provide conditions for the sessions – privacy, expectations of focus and attention (no other devices/online & offline activities at same time), reasons why you might discontinue session, shorter sessions.

Discussion of appropriate setting for sessions and conduct (appropriate dress, postures and behaviours)

Use text 'chat' for some interactions (for greater privacy)

At the start of the session/call, confirm

Client registration form completed (informed consent/privacy)

Their current location

They have safety/privacy to speak freely and not be overheard

Emergency contacts

Possible disclosure if safety issues for self/others occur

what to do in case of disconnection

Practical considerations: Set-ups

Physical setup of your room, lighting, ambient sound, background, revealing personal details

Camera (including framing), headset/microphone, professional dress and conduct

Privacy of your sessions – Do not disturb sign, your devices (prevent interruptions, distractions), discussion about recordings

Computer desktop/windows open may be revealed if you use screen-share

Camera framing and angles

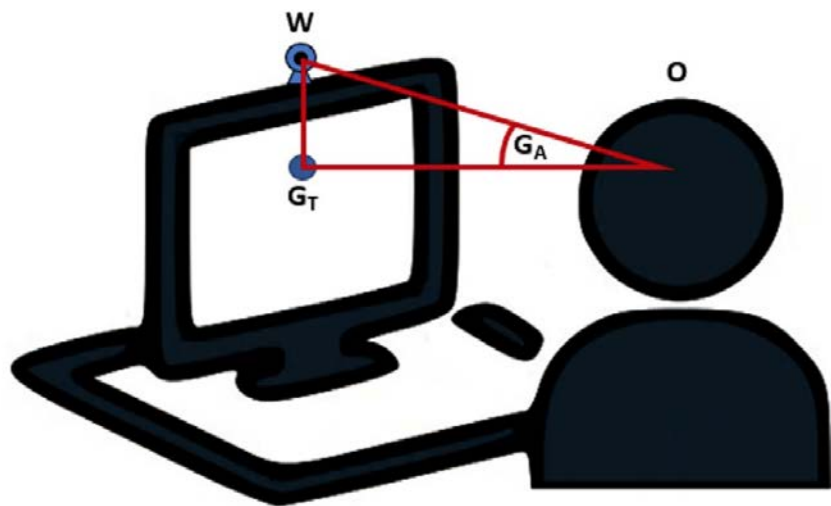Legend: G_A = Gaze angle ; G_T = Gaze target ; O = Observer ; W = Webcam

85%–98% favored a 7° angle (more straight to the camera) vs. a larger (lower on the screen) gaze angle
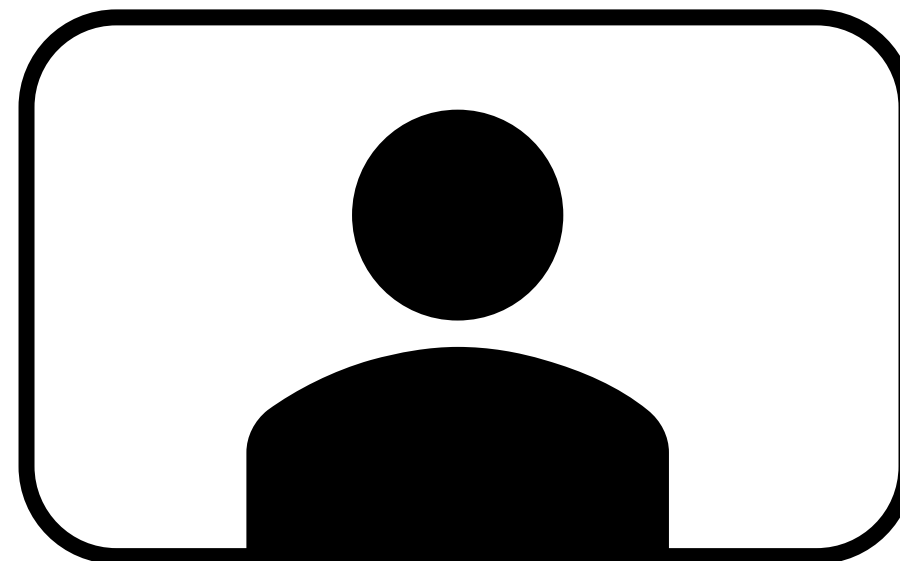
Clinicians favoured an upper-body framing of themselves (Medium Frame Shot), resulting in >60% gestures and arm movements made out of frame

From: Grondin, F., Lomanowska, A. M., & Jackson, P. L. (2019). Empathy in computer-mediated interactions: A conceptual framework for research and clinical practice. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *26*(4), e12298.

Practical considerations – Set-ups

Test set-up with client prior to session, or factor in 10 minutes of technical setup with first session. Periodically check they hear you ok.

Practice with the technology with colleagues before

Have any equipment/tools within easy reach

Have your computer desktop setup – with browser tabs for any resources you want to use

Plan/Arrange shorter sessions. It is likely to be more to take more energy if you are still getting used to it.

Establishing rapport
Reflect on how you do this best.

Believe in the medium: "Research has shown that the quality of the therapeutic alliance using telehealth is comparable to face-to-face."

Enhancing your video presence

Practice self-calming/soothing before session

Be more visual - Less 'Mmms" (to avoid speaking over), more nods, more pronounced verbal and non-verbal cues (eg hand gestures vs your normal body language)

Slow your pace.... Pause often...

Refresh/develop further your auditory counselling skills (eg telephone counselling skills) - More reflecting / summarising and paraphrasing

Refresh/develop further your skills related to 'home visits'.

Disability clients

Hearing impaired: Use 'Live Captions' in Teams, Chat function, share screen – type key points)

Visually impaired: Probably using already screen-readers, focus on auditory counselling skills - More reflecting / summarising and paraphrasing

Physically impaired/Increased sensitivity: Likely to use technology a lot (maybe with modified equipment), online provides greater access than f2f for clients

Learning difficulties: ADHD (share screen – type what goals or content to cover), ASD (discuss what might be helpful)

Anxiety: Individuals with Social-Anxiety Disorder more willing to engage via video than f2f

Being more visual

Have props

Share screen: Whiteboard / drawing program to share drawing together, play games (eg noughts & crosses, hangman, Pictionary), complete social scripts or conversations (with comic strips), drawing family structures and sociograms (eg social relations, channels of influence)

Youtube clips (eg [Time to come in bear](), [Zones of regulation]())

For some clients you might need a visual image to keep them engaged

Games

Share screen: Whiteboard / drawing program to share drawing, play games (eg noughts & crosses, hangman, Pictionary)

Online Games – {Check they work on tablets before using} Connect-4; guess the picture (choose private room), Coolmathsgames

Other – I spy, Simon says, Charades

Games to play over video conversations

Movement for breaks/focus

Youtube clips (eg GoNoodle)

Home scavenger hunt/search: Find 3 things of a matching colour, touch 3 things that make you calm outside your room.

Home kit of sensory materials – (parents/teacher prepared) balloons, squishies, fidget spinners/cubes, etc.

Mindfulness/active activities for kids

Check in activities - counting fingers, showing and talking about where they are, singing a song

Cosmic Kids Yoga – various pop culture themes (4:59-Over 60mins)

[Mindfulness Meditation Breathing Exercise](#) (12:03)

Handouts/visuals

How do you handle conflict? – Mouse/Monster/Me

Emotions vocabulary chart

Online therapies

Crisis: [Kids Helpline](#) (1800 55 1800)

Anxiety: [Brave online](#)

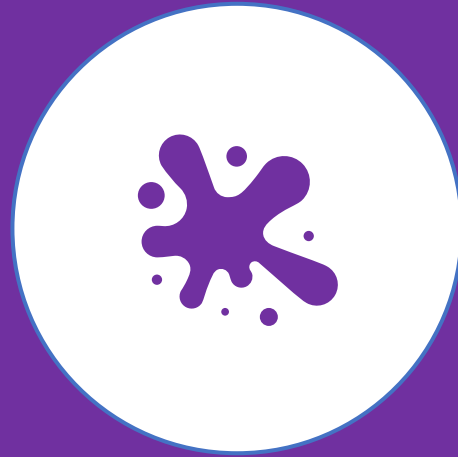Social skills: [Social express](#) / [Secret Agent Society](#)

OCD: [OCD Not Me!](#) ([preliminary results](#))

Relax
if things go wrong
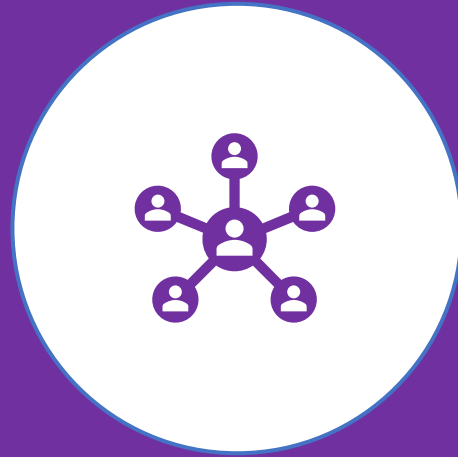
Forgiveness will come.

Ok to admit you don't know
or are not a tech expert.

Growth is never linear but practice increases performance

Practice our resilience/recovery/affirmation practices

Nurture and draw on your professional networks

You're not alone!

Your strengths and skills as a counsellor will still shine.

Client outcomes are comparable.

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