

The New Normal in Psychotherapy: Why Telehealth is as Good or Better than In-Person Therapy

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Why is telehealth or online video-therapy as good or better than in-person therapy? Psychotherapy is a profoundly impactful psychological/behavioral intervention in which the psychologist or therapist engages people in highly specified talk therapies to empower these individuals to improve their moods, overcome emotional obstacles, and manage feelings and relationships in more adaptive, healthier, or more productive manners. Providing therapy online is familiar to quite a few therapists and has grown in popularity over the years. It is especially helpful to students transitioning to college life or people in therapy who go away on vacation and want to continue their therapy. But starting in mid to late March of 2020, most psychologists and therapists moved their entire practices online due to the mandates to stay home during the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

With telehealth, psychologists and therapists have been able to continue providing therapy without any gaps, issues, or inconvenience. We can see the same individuals, children through adults, couples, families, and even groups, just like before the pandemic. We conduct therapy in the comfort and privacy of people's homes, backyards, or offices. So what's really different?

Online therapy does look different. It gives the therapist an up-close view of people instead of their whole bodies. So, while we might miss some of the body language, the most important communication is in the face, and that's where we have the best view. And the people who see their therapists up close, as well! And as you will hear me say: different is not necessarily worse! Different is just that, different.

Online therapy is convenient. You no longer must travel to your therapist's office or wait in the waiting room. So, your time in therapy is limited to just that time of your session. You can schedule it at the times it suits you best.

Online therapy is focused. With nothing but the screen in front of you, you can now focus on your therapy. In fact, we both have fewer distractions when we access our therapy online. But as always, we take your therapy at YOUR pace, so that you can be sure we never go further or faster than a pace that is comfortable for YOU.

Now, what makes **any** therapy **good** therapy for you? The key to getting a good therapy experience is the bond you feel with your therapist. Does she or he really "get" why you are coming for therapy? Do they understand your issues and your challenges? A good therapist helps you feel comfortable in your sessions so that you can do the work that is in front of you. When you are considering a new therapist, you should talk with them to see how it feels. You can even ask to have a video chat to meet them online. That way you can see just how they look, sound, and interact online!

Therapy is a great vehicle for you to gain insight and grow into an even better version of you. Telehealth, or therapy using an online video platform, can bring many of the same benefits of in-person therapy. And one more advantage of online therapy? Being able to have therapy while

staying safe means you never need to worry about possibly catching the novel Coronavirus or spreading COVID-19 to others. That can bring peace of mind in an already tense environment.