

Teletherapy: An Overview



According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), Speech Teletherapy or "telepractice", is the use of technology to deliver speech language pathology services at a distance by linking clinician to client/patient or clinician to clinician for assessment, intervention, and/or consultation. Teletherapy venues include schools, medical centers, rehabilitation hospitals, community health centers, outpatient clinics, universities, clients'/patients' homes, residential health care facilities, childcare centers, and corporate settings.

Who can receive teletherapy?

- Toddlers
- Students
- Adults

What equipment is needed?

- Computer
- Keyboard
- Webcam
- Microphone
- Headphones
- High Speed Internet

What computer skills are necessary?

- Basic mouse skills OR
- Ability to point if using a touch screen

What does Speech Teletherapy "look like"?

Think FaceTime or Skype! Each teletherapy session requires a HIPAA compliant "platform", or a private screen space to conduct the session. Both the clinician and client will be visible on the platform via a camera, and often, there is the ability to "screen share" or display documents and/or videos. Materials are presented similarly to face-to-face "table top" sessions, but in a digital format.

Visit <https://youtu.be/CgxH69CqPbM> to see teletherapy in action!

Teletherapy: The Outcomes



Your Speech Teletherapist

Your teletherapist is a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist who holds a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) from the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA). He or she abides by the ASHA Code of Ethics for telepractice, and is appropriately licensed according to the regulations in the home state of the client being serviced. Your Speech-Language Pathologist is a highly-qualified professional who is knowledgeable about speech & language impairments, and holds a Masters or Doctoral Degree in Communication Disorders.

What Does the Research Say?

Published research studies have documented the efficacy of teletherapy, and several leading professional organizations recognize the benefit of therapy delivered online. The American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) has endorsed TELETHERAPY as an effective way to provide Speech-Language Services.

A 2011 study by Kent State University researchers compared students receiving traditional in-person therapy and those receiving telepractice in public school settings. They found that the *outcomes for the telepractice group were equal or better than the in-person group*. Researchers stated that "Students in both service models made significant improvements...with students in the telepractice group demonstrating a greater mastery of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals." (Source: International Journal of Telerehabilitation, Spring, 2011.)

The MAYO Clinic has also endorsed Teletherapy (1997), stating that Telemedicine can be beneficial to patients with a variety of acquired speech and language disorders, both in rural settings and within large medical settings. (Source: Source: Telemedicine and the diagnosis of speech and language disorders, December 1997.)

Teletherapy: For Teachers, Parents & Paraprofessionals



Things you should know

- You are the "hands" on the other side of the screen. Your speech teletherapist may need your assistance to be successful. Always be available to help the client if needed.
- The therapy schedule is important. Your student or child has been given an appointment time. Similar to any appointment, try your best to log in on time. Often, clients are scheduled in back to back appointment blocks, making it difficult to extend a session past its allotted time.
- If an appointment cancellation is necessary, try to cancel with 24 hrs notice. This allows your Speech Therapist to make arrangements to manage paperwork responsibilities, or schedule make-up or testing sessions with other clients.
- Your Speech Teletherapist may ask for your assistance to help manage behaviors that interfere with therapy progress, (i.e., inattention, vocal outbursts, refusal to participate, etc.). It's important to work together to reward positive behavior, as this will maximize student success.
- The environment for therapy should be relatively quiet, and free from distraction. The room should be well-lit, preferably with natural light, or lit with a lamp near the computer location.
- Have a list of important contacts ready, such as your teletherapist's phone number or email address, in case the appointment does not go as planned. Technology issues can surface, making it difficult to communicate via the platform.
- Ask how YOU can help before we say "goodbye"! Therapy progress depends on everyone involved. There are many things YOU can do to maximize your student's/child's success.

Teletherapy: Your 1st Appointment

What can I expect?



Although each Speech Teletherapist is unique, and each appointment is different, the first session for any client has many similarities. You can expect:

- We will troubleshoot the technology. Our first session will give us information about what works, and what doesn't (i.e., connectivity, microphones, cameras, sound, lighting, etc.). Be patient! It might take us time to make sure every piece is working perfectly.
- We work together to build "rapport". This simply means, we spend time getting to know one another! We might talk about our likes or dislikes, our hobbies, or our families. Building a strong connection helps our foundation for learning.
- We learn how to use the platform! Your teletherapist will need to demonstrate the tools available on the screen. If you are a learning coach, parent or assistant, it may be necessary for you to watch and learn as well. Join us!
- We discuss our goals for therapy (if age-appropriate). What does the client want to learn? What are his/her short term goals? Long term goals? What is the level of motivation for change? What are the established IEP goals? These conversations are always guided by what is appropriate for the client's age and cognitive level.

Teletherapy: Extra Resources



If you'd like to learn MORE about teletherapy or "telepractice", listed below are some sources for additional information.

Keep in mind that, just like with any service delivery, there are variations within the practice that are unique to each individual institution and/or therapist. However, the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) requires that each Speech-Language Pathologist that provides teletherapy abides by the Code of Ethics, including areas specific to telepractice.

<http://www.asha.org/>

<http://leader.pubs.asha.org/>

<http://pinterest.com/> (search teletherapy)

<http://youtube.com/> (search teletherapy)

<http://presencelarning.com/>

<http://vocovision.com/slps/>

<http://www.dotcomtherapy.com/>

<http://info.tinyeye.com/>

