

# TELEPRACTICE CONSIDERATIONS

## FROM SPG

These past few weeks have brought uncertainties and unexpected changes to our field. We are all in the same boat and we wanted to share some tips and lessons that we have learned and continue to learn along this journey together into teletherapy.

### Things to Remember:

- The skills you already possess as a trained clinician are what matter most, even in telepractice.
- Telepractice has been around for years. You are not the first one to be figuring this out. There are many resources and support networks out there.
- There will be errors and tech glitches. What a great opportunity to be open with our students about learning a new skill!
- Therapists across the nation are having similar concerns and are similarly overwhelmed, but we are putting our heads together to come up with solutions to the problems we face.
- Not everyone is going to adjust immediately to teletherapy. We have how-to videos on how to engage students and encourage people to think of multiple ways to retain student interest by using the online platform.
- This will be hard, we won't figure it all out today or even tomorrow, but we will slowly get to a place where this isn't all overwhelming (personally or professionally).

### What Does the Therapist Need to Prepare For?

Although you may have been a therapist for years, not everything will translate directly from the therapy room to the virtual therapy room. Make sure you attend any training sessions for teletherapy and your designated platform as well as set aside time to practice and hold trial sessions to work out any questions or issues.

When beginning with a new family, they might need a quick overview of how to use the chosen platform. It may be helpful for the therapist to provide email and contact info to the family in case they have any last minute difficulties. Make sure all devices are plugged into a power source and you are in an area with strong reception.

## What Does the Student / Family Need to Prepare For?

At times, a parent/guardian may be needed to assist with the session. They might be asked to sit through the session to make sure that student attends to the session and participates in the activities. They might also be needed to follow some of the technological directions during the session. The therapist will go through session expectations with parent/guardian prior to commencing therapy sessions.

## Practical Questions a District Might Want to Consider:

1. Is your district sending out Prior Written Notice or Amendments to families and has this been completed?
2. Has the district made a decision about amending IEPs to include this service and how is this being handled?
3. Has the district considered the role that consultation may play in support to students and families, in conjunction with individual services?
4. Has the district verified with parents they are wanting services delivered via telepractice and that they are able to support the student during the session?
5. Will the district request all service providers coordinate a plan to set up regular meeting days/times with student/parent? What is the best method to ensure that scheduling of service is not overlapping?
6. Not all students can be served appropriately through teletherapy. How will it be decided which students are candidates?
7. Will the district be providing digital therapy materials for the therapists? If not, do you have guidelines for what you would like our SLPs to develop/utilize?
8. Will the district ensure that students have access to the technology and are familiar with the technology needed to engage in teletherapy (e.g. a district-provided device or a family owned device)?
9. Has your district decided on what platform therapists will be using or is it acceptable for each provider to use their own HIPAA/FERPA compliant platform?