

A Guide to Using Telehealth

For Enable New Zealand Housing and Wheelchair & Seating Outreach Services

A document produced by Enable New Zealand.

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An introduction

During these unprecedented times, using alternative solutions to meet our client's needs are essential. Approaches such as Telehealth are a vital tool during the COVID-19 lockdown response.

This document pulls together some practical and useful tips we have discovered when providing housing and wheelchair and seating outreach appointments via Telehealth.

The Enable New Zealand outreach teams have been providing Telehealth services for a number of years, primarily when we have been faced with cancelled flights, last minute changes to travel plans or when clients are needing to be seen in some of the far reaching areas of the Enable New Zealand regions.

The information provided in this guide is based on our experience using Telehealth and we hope you find it useful for your own practice.

Using Telehealth during COVID-19

Tele-rehabilitation is the clinical application of consultative preventative, diagnostic and therapeutic services via two-way telecommunication technology.

During COVID-19, Telehealth is a critical way that providers can reduce risk while maintaining contact with their clients.

Continuation of essential services

Enable New Zealand Outreach Services will continue to provide services which 'prevent a risk of serious harm or hospitalisation or support a person's discharge from hospital.' The focus is keeping people safe at home.

During COVID-19, Telehealth options with an outreach Advisor/EMS Assessor will only occur if the referral is essential as per the Ministry of Health definition. The EMS Assessor must check their own DHB guidelines for urgent/essential action to prevent a risk of serious harm or hospitalisation or support a person's discharge from hospital. The focus is keeping people safe at home.

Telehealth can occur with the EMS Assessor out in the community in the client's home, or as a three-way appointment with the EMS Assessor, client and EMS Advisor based at different locations.

While participating in any Telehealth session ensure you adhere to the COVID-19 requirements around health and safety and social distancing.

Telehealth outreach appointment for housing outreach services

- An EMS request for advice is completed in Pro Work-Flow – underneath the section 'Background Information' the following is written in capital letters. THIS A HOUSING OUTREACH REQUEST.
- An EMS Advisor will then contact the EMS Assessor and set up the Telehealth appointment.
- The EMS Assessor is responsible for ensuring you have the technology and capability for Telehealth for both the EMS Assessor and the client. Your EMS Advisor will discuss this with you.

Telehealth outreach appointment for wheelchair and seating outreach services

- Fill in the wheelchair and seating outreach referral form found on the DFI website at <https://www.disabilityfunding.co.nz/equipment/wheelchair-and-seating-outreach>
- Email this along with any required wheelchair scripts to outreach@enable.co.nz
- Your EMS Advisor will then contact the EMS Assessor and set up the appointment.
- The EMS Assessor is responsible for ensuring you have the technology and capability for Telehealth for both the EMS Assessor and the client. Your EMS Advisor will discuss this with you.

Telehealth technology options for wheelchair, seating, and housing outreach clinics.

Enable New Zealand Outreach Advisors can use the following platforms:

- Zoom
- FaceTime
- Other options may be available following discussion such as (Google Duo, Cisco Jabber)

Telehealth categories

Telehealth falls into two categories:

Data collection

- Photos
- Videos
- Emails

Real-time options

- Speaker phone
- Skype
- FaceTime or other social media platforms
- Video conferencing
- Zoom
- Google duo
- Many other options available

It is important to understand what technology your client currently uses now and is familiar and confident with.

Technology Options

EMS Assessors need to confirm with their clients what current technology they use for communication. Many clients can operate FaceTime, Messenger video and Facebook as they currently use this to stay in touch with their friends and family.

Some clients may not be familiar with this technology for communication and it can be stressful to learn new technology (if you as an EMS Assessor are not in the client's home). It may be helpful to find out if there is an essential health worker or key family member entering the client's home

during COVID-19 Lockdown, who may be able to assist with any Telehealth method of communication. Your EMS Advisor may be able to time the appointments accordingly.

Some clients may be familiar with taking photos and emailing or texting these to families; if this is the case, you can request photos related to the assessment from them with their consent. Have those with you before you undertake your Telehealth appointment.

Telehealth technology requirements

Both EMS Assessor and client require one of the following to participate in Telehealth:

- Tablet or smartphone or laptop or computer or home phone
- Connectivity either via data or Wi-Fi or telephone landline
- An ability to have your device charged
- An appropriate space to have the meeting/session

Considerations for Telehealth

Confidentiality and privacy

- All standard confidentiality and privacy policies apply from both your DHB, business policies and your Professional body. DHBs may have guidelines for social media and electronic communication. Please ensure you are familiar with these.
- Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Code of Ethics includes protecting the confidential nature of consumer information, demonstrating privacy and respect for the client and ensuring all care is taken to maintain the confidentiality of records including electronic communication. Please ensure you are familiar with these. There is a link to this Code in the Useful Resources section.
- The 'Guidelines for Social Media and other Electronic Communication for Occupational Therapists' was created by the Occupational Therapy Board. This document sits alongside the Occupational Therapy Code of Conduct and both can be found on the OT board of New Zealand's website. (Link to this is available in the Useful Resources section.)

Consent

- Ensure you obtain informed consent from all parties before commencing with Telehealth as an option.
- Explain how Telehealth works and the process for this, note your copy of informed consent in clients notes/file
- If you are recording and keeping any information, this also needs a separate informed consent, which needs to be located in the client notes/files. Check your local DHB policy on this.

General tips for Telehealth sessions

Please note that the most ideal Telehealth tool for housing or wheelchair and seating outreach clinic appointments is a portable device i.e. smartphone or tablet. This is so the EMS Assessor or whomever is holding the portable device can move around the home and/or wheelchair. This enables the EMS Assessor to show the EMS Advisor the home environment, inside and outside and/or the client's posture in the wheelchair from different angles.

- Prepare – summarise the key items to cover in your Telehealth session
- Define roles: who will do the measuring, recording and taking notes
- Telehealth will work only as well as your connection. If you have a good Wi-Fi or data connection, the apps/programmes will work smoothly. You may experience some lag from time to time, but it usually lasts just a few seconds.
- Clean the camera lens on the front of your device to remove any fingerprints or smudges, preferably with a microfiber cloth.
- You can switch on airplane mode to prevent any calls or interruptions while filming. You can still access Wi-Fi while on airplane mode.
- Check your battery level before starting and have a charger ready if required.
- Avoid too much background noise, bright lights or the sun facing the camera, overly active or "busy" shots.
- Be aware how big your screen is and therefore how much or how little the recipient can see.

COVID-19 and Telehealth

Please note the Telehealth assessment alone is only one part of the assessment outcome.

Telehealth will aid you and your EMS Advisor to establish a solution that will meet the EMS Ministry of Health eligibility and access criteria, your client's disability related needs and is considered 'essential' as defined by the Ministry of Health.

It is essential that your outreach EMS Advisor is provided with all the relevant information from the EMS Assessor's equipment suppliers or subcontractor to enable a successful Telehealth session.

Useful resources

Occupational Therapy code of ethics

https://www.otboard.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CodeofEthics_April2015-1.pdf

Physiotherapy code of ethics

https://www.physioboard.org.nz/sites/default/files/NZ_Physiotherapy_Code_of_Ethics_with_commentary_FINAL_0.pdf

OTBNZ guidance on the use of telehealth

<https://www.otboard.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Telehealth-guidelines-Final.pdf>

Guidelines for social media and other electronic communication for Occupational Therapist

<https://www.otboard.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Guidelines-for-Social-Media-and-Electronic-Communication.pdf>

Resources

www.telehealth.org.nz with information on privacy and confidentiality

<https://www.telehealth.org.nz/regulations-and-policies/privacy-and-confidentiality/>

<https://www.telehealth.org.nz/assets/tech/170821-NZTRC-risk-management-when-using-skype.pdf>

www.healthnavigator.org.nz , <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/t/telehealth-what-is-it/#video>

www.hinz.org.nz

<https://zoom.us/docs/en-us/COVID-19.html>

New Zealand Telehealth Forum and Resource Centre has provided guidance on telehealth provision for health providers, this information can be found on the below link.

[NZ telehealth resource centre](#)

Fiona Graham, Pauline Boland, Rebecca Grainger & Sally Wallace (2019): Telehealth delivery of remote assessment of wheelchair and seating needs for adults and children: a scoping review, Disability and Rehabilitation, DOI: 10.1080/09638288.2019.1595180

Video clip on how to make a good video

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEA_enNZ890NZ890&q=how+to+make+a+video+on+my+phone&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjd3IH9bHoAhVLzDgGHZU6AVAQ1QIoAXoECAsQAq&biw=1920&bih=937#kpvalbx=7V15Xq_OOpWd4-EPqYOj-A448

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