



SETTING UP YOUR WORKSPACE.

In order to provide best-practice psychological services via telehealth there are a few practical considerations when choosing and setting up your workspace. Many of the attributes that are important for clients when engaging with a psychologist in their offices face-to-face also need to be considered. The My Mirror team has provided several points to consider before running your first session with clients, to help clients feel comfortable when engaging in their session:

- **Ensure you have a space to run your sessions that is private, quiet and free from interruptions.** Consider a home office or another space you can gain privacy and are out of the earshot of others. If working from home with other people around, consider informing them of this and requesting they do not interrupt during times you are meeting with your clients. It is a good idea to put a sign on your door.
- **Check your set-up before sessions.** Make sure your background setting for the video is professional and free from clutter. You might want to remove anything distracting or personal photos, but consider leaving neutral artworks or a plant in the background of your space.
- **Avoid poor lighting and backlighting.** As in face-to-face sessions, it is important to make sure your client can see you. Avoiding distractions is important during telehealth sessions. Check and experiment with your lighting and make necessary adjustments.
- **Considering your camera angle and framing of your screen.**
 - **Your camera should be in line with or slightly above your eyes to promote a natural feeling of "eye-contact"**. This angle also reduces the likelihood the client is looking straight up your nose! Try to switch between looking at your client and maintaining some eye-contact through the camera in order to help facilitate engagement in the session.
 - **Set your face at a comfortable distance from the camera.** It is recommended that you are seated at about half a meter from the camera, which allows you to be the focus of the screen. This also allows you some space to use some body language, such as leaning forward to demonstrate engagement and that you are listening.
- **Consider how you like to work with clients and organise resources you might like to share.** You might do this during the session with clients, through My Mirror's screen share function. If you are using this function, make sure you have other windows on your computer closed, particularly those that might have sensitive or private information. Alternatively, you might choose to share resources with your client after the session (such as handouts and worksheets).
- **Silence notifications and alerts.** Distractions come in many forms and we need to consider those likely to pop up on our screens. Just like you would switch your phone to silent in a face-to-face session, we recommend you close down your email and silence other notifications and alerts, so you are able to give your client your full attention.
- **Make sure you have adequate internet connection.** Further details on required internet connection speeds can be found in the My Mirror Psychologist Services Policy.
- **A note on attire.** When considering your attire for video conferencing sessions, your priority should be to appear professional. Avoid items of clothing that have intense patterns as these can appear distracting or distorted on cameras. Consider this before sessions and select your outfit accordingly.

ORIENTING AND PREPARING THE CLIENT.

Just like you need to consider the setup of your own telehealth space as a professional, so too will you need to prompt your clients to do the same. While we know psychologists and clients are both becoming more familiar and comfortable with engaging with each other online and via video conference, it is still important to check-in and gain their feedback. In a short webinar that will be sent to you in the coming days, we will be providing further information on addressing these concerns and in adjusting therapy to telehealth. This webinar will be accompanied by an information sheet about orienting clients 'Getting Started with Online Therapy'.

- **Check in with the client about call quality.**
At the start of the call, check how they are finding the quality of the call and that they can hear and see you.
- **When you start your first session with your clients, it is recommended that you orient them to the session and speak to them about their experience with telehealth.**
Ask them how they are feeling about engaging via a digital platform. Provide them with the opportunity to answer any questions they might have about this. Some clients may be wary of trusting others and they may find this transition difficult. We recommend you discuss their experience with online psychology regularly and re-address as necessary.
- **Check in with your clients about the space they are using to engage in the session**
and recommend they also attempt to find a private space they feel comfortable and relaxed in, and a space free from interruptions. You might also suggest to your clients that they try to find a space which they can use for each of their sessions with you.

Acknowledgements and further information

This document has been written by the My Mirror team with reference to:
Seabrook, E., Little, G., Foley, F., Nedeljkovic, M., & Thomas, N. (2020). *A Practical Guide to Video Mental Health Consultation*. Melbourne, Australia: Swinburne University of Technology. <http://videomentalhealth.org>

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