

### What to Expect from Telehealth Counseling

*By Adam Frei, MS, LPC, CEAP*

Technology is quickly becoming the thing that keeps us connected when in-person interactions are not possible due to physical distance or health-related social distancing. While utilizing technology has become very familiar when maintaining social connections with family, friends and coworkers, many of us have much less experience or comfortability with virtual interactions with it comes to addressing our physical and mental health.



### What is Telehealth Counseling?

Telehealth counseling offers you the flexibility to meet with a counselor from a location where you feel most comfortable either by phone or video. But this flexibility also comes with some challenges. If you're thinking about engaging in telehealth counseling or already have your first session scheduled, here are some things to keep in mind:

#### Technology issues are inevitable

Be prepared for glitches, drops and connection issues. Do not hesitate to interrupt your counselor if you cannot hear what they are saying. If you're planning on using video, make sure you have a strong internet connection either through Wi-Fi or mobile data. If you are planning to use mobile data keep in mind that video chats use large amounts of data so be aware of limits and overages. Although technology can be frustrating, be flexible and have a back up plan if you or your counselor's device is not working properly.

#### Make your space your counseling office

Find a space that feels soothing and peaceful. Having a dedicated space for your sessions may help you to reconnect with your conversations and experiences in previous sessions. Remove any possible distractions. Constant eye contact with your counselor can be draining so surround yourself with other relaxing things to look at such as pictures, plants and flowers. For many of us silence during a phone conversation means that there is nothing else to talk about. Remember that in counseling, silence is often utilized by the counselor to provide space to explore thoughts and feelings that may arise.

#### Allow time to transition into and out of your session

Telehealth counseling can happen anywhere, and this can lead to us associating those spaces with the counseling session. In counseling, difficult topics can arise and by allowing ourselves time to transition into and out of the counseling session we can more effectively leave those difficult conversations in the counseling session and focus on the positive impacts. Keep in mind that normally you would have time in the waiting room and when traveling back to your home or work to prepare and decompress from your session before moving on to the next task.

### We Can Help

If you're ready to utilize your telehealth counseling, contact VITAL WorkLife at **800.383.1908** (EAP members) or **877.731.3949** (Well Being Resources members), or through the **VITAL WorkLife App**.