

SMART LOVE[®]

FAMILY SERVICES



Benefits of Telehealth Therapy for Children



Parents understandably wonder if children are able to benefit from virtual therapy sessions due to their developmental level. While in person psychotherapy sessions are best for a client of any age, virtual sessions still offer many benefits including for children! **The most important factor is that children are able to connect with their therapist---a virtual connection is much better than no connection at all.** Therapists are trained on how to engage children during virtual sessions in a way that may be slightly different than in-person sessions. But the focus remains the same—child clients will still be able to use their therapy time to get help for their feelings in the way they want, including talking and/or playing. Therapists will continue to make observations about the child's feelings and provide helpful reflections to support the child and help them cope during this very difficult time. It is important to keep in mind that the current health crisis may last for a significant period of time in which virtual visits are the only option we have to provide care. Therefore, it is essential that children's therapy is able to continue.

Children benefit from having the following:

- Consistent structure during a period of immense change and uncertainty.
- Trusting relationship that is available for ongoing support /care during a very stressful time.
- Getting help with their unhappy and worried feelings about the big losses occurring in their lives:
 - Not attending school or having a familiar routine
 - Not seeing friends and teachers
 - Not being able to do fun activities outside the home
- Getting help with their anxiety, worries, and fear about themselves/loved ones getting sick or the family enduring financial strain.
- Support of their constructive, positive motives to take good care of themselves and still be able to feel good about themselves and enjoy constructive pleasure despite all the losses.
- Continuing to work on the treatment goals that were part of their in-person therapy.

The following are ways to enhance the virtual experience for children in their homes:

- Ideally, the child can be in a private space such as their bedroom.
- Sessions take place at their regular in person appointment time or a new time that remains consistent as much as possible.
- Child can have toys, games, and even snacks as they would in session.
- Child may want to show the therapist other rooms in the house, family members, and pets, and this is OK as it is part of their experience.
- Length of sessions may understandably vary—they may not be as long as in-person appointments. But therapists will help children stay connected as long as is workable for the child.

We are here to answer any questions parents have about telehealth therapy for children. Smart Love Therapists

