



**innovaTel**  
telepsychiatry  
re-imagining psychiatric care

**Best Practices with Telehealth**

# **Provider-to-Provider Advice from the Experts**



**April 2020**

**At innovaTel, all of our providers work remotely and we have been providing behavioral health services exclusively via telehealth for the last six years. With our experience, we want to share our best advice on how to have the most optimal patient and provider experience through telehealth technology.**

## 1. Prepare for Your Day & Test

Prior to starting any patient visits, we highly recommend performing test visits with colleagues, friends or family to ensure quality and an optimal setup. In addition to high quality video, make sure your volume is on and that the audio is clear. We would recommend doing a quick check each day before you get started.

If you are connecting on a computer, it is recommended to close down any other unnecessary programs that are running. Streaming live

video does require bandwidth for optimal quality, and each system has different requirements. Having only the necessary programs running on your computer will help produce the strongest quality connection.

If you are using a laptop or a mobile device, ensure that you have a charger nearby, you wouldn't want to lose power in the middle of a visit with a patient.

There are four important areas to pay attention to.

1. Prepare for your day and test
2. Your remote office
3. Lighting
4. Technology
5. Maintaining eye contact





## 2. Your Remote Office

When setting up your remote office, be sure it has pleasant lighting and a desirable background. You don't have to obtain "Pinterest" level worthy office decorations to be deemed therapeutically effective, however, your intent should be to create a similar environment as though it were a face-to-face session. Your space should be tidy to not cause any distractions during your appointment.

At innovaTel we say, "what's behind you is what you wear to work"

Confidentiality is critical, so please also account for making sure you have a quiet space to connect with your patients, just like you would in an office setting.

## 3. Lighting

Lighting can fluctuate throughout the day depending on your office setup. Bright lights behind you can make it difficult for the patient to see you clearly and not enough light in the room can also be challenging. Overhead lighting is preferred over lamps if available.

## 4. Technology

### **Platform:**

Invest in a HIPAA-compliant platform to ensure safety. There are a number of HIPAA-compliant platforms available on the market and innoVaTel is platform agnostic.

We recommend investing in a platform that is available on all devices (smartphone, tablets and computers) and provides IT support to both providers and patients.

### **Internet:**

Now is the time to make sure you have a strong internet connection. Different telehealth platforms have different bandwidth requirements, so ensure that you have a strong quality connection.

It is recommended to be on WI-FI and not rely on cellular data. High-definition video streaming requires connection of at least 3 Mbps. Bandwidth tests can be run by visiting [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net).

### **Camera:**

There are a number of cost-effective, high quality webcams available on the market. Many platforms are also mobile friendly that will utilize the camera on your smartphone or tablet, not requiring any additional equipment. Set up your camera at eye-level, this way it is the easiest to maintain eye contact with the patient.

### **Headset:**

While a headset is not required to facilitate telehealth, we do recommend investing in a noise cancelling speakerphone or noise cancelling headphones.

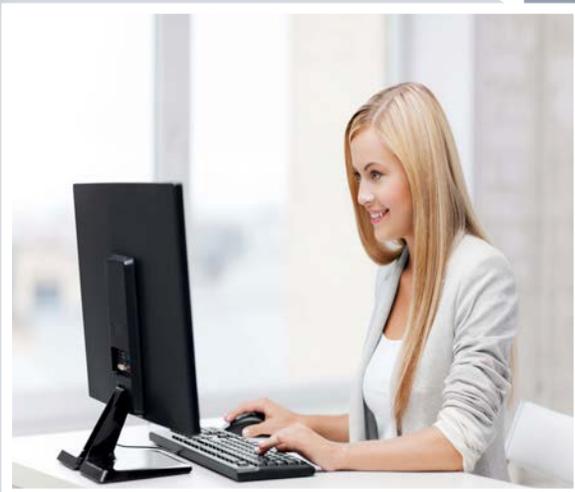
### **Keyboards:**

This may sound minor, but the clicking of typing on a keyboard can be distracting during a patient encounter. Our providers do concurrent documentation and we recommend silent keyboards to minimize any distracting noise during the appointment.

## 4. Maintain Eye Contact

It's very important to maintain eye contact with your patients during a telehealth appointment, just like you would in-person.

Camera positioning is critically important to maintaining eye contact, so make sure to do some test visits before you get started.



All innoVaTel providers do concurrent documentation, so they are documenting in the EMR while seeing a patient virtually.

Various EMRs and video platforms have different capabilities with the

ability to run programs together within the same screen. If possible, we recommend a setup that will allow you to maintain eye contact with your patients while documenting, putting your EMR and video platform stacked on top of one another in the same monitor allows you to maintain eye contact with your patients.

## Additional Tips & Tricks

1. Be punctual. Just because the visit is virtual, it's still important to be on time.
2. Dress as you would for an in-person appointment, the level of professionalism should not be any different in a virtual environment.
3. If the patient is no longer coming into a clinical setting, be clear with any post-appointment instructions on what they should expect next.
4. If you are a pet owner, involve your pets! It's an easy way to build rapport and a sense of connection with the patient without divulging any personal information.
5. Switch up your background! One of our child psychiatrists uses his background for teaching moments, he switches out historical figures every few months and it's a great conversation starter. Currently, he is displaying Mae Jemison, the first female African-American astronaut to travel into space!

### Interested in implementing telepsychiatry?

Learn how innovaTel Telepsychiatry can help your clinic meet it's telepsychiatry goals at [innovatel.com](https://www.innovatel.com)

## About innovaTel Telepsychiatry

innovaTel Telepsychiatry is a clinician owned and operated telepsychiatry company. innovaTel has been providing telepsychiatry services in partnership with community-based clinics for the last six years with our remote clinical team made up of psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners and licensed clinical social workers.

