



April 29th, 2020 | Week 4

Welcome to the Weekly Well-Being Connection! Each week we will share advice from our clinical experts on ways to care for your mental health and well-being throughout COVID-19.

What is Telehealth and How Can it Help?

Right now the term **“telehealth” is everywhere**. What does it look like for behavioral health and what are some **reasons people might choose to engage in telehealth treatment?**

Telehealth is the delivery of healthcare aided by technology, with the provider and the client simply not physically in the same place, and it **can be provided by video conferencing, text messaging, or telephone**. While telehealth has been around for a long time, it has gained visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, and some rules around its application have been temporarily relaxed. The result? Telehealth is more accessible right now.

Are you ready for more good news? Most behavioral health can be delivered effectively and efficiently via telehealth. Whether someone has a long-standing relationship with a provider or is seeking additional support related to the current situation, providers can offer support.

If you are new to behavioral health, **here are a few topics our therapists have been hearing about lately. While all of these are natural reactions to our current abnormal situation, if they are causing distress, behavioral health providers can assist!**

- **Anxiety and Fear** – not knowing what to expect, being worried about yourself or loved ones getting sick, financial strain, and countless other stressors. Workers in essential sectors can face higher levels of fear by just going to work.

- **Relationship Strain** – being with people non-stop (even people we truly adore), can cause friction.
- **Isolation** – some people are at home alone and feel disconnected and isolated. Some are at home with others, yet still feel isolated or lonely. They may see others coping differently or feel others do not understand what they are going through.
- **Feelings of being Overwhelmed** – being pulled in multiple directions – supporting kids doing remote learning, working, helping neighbors, caring for loved ones.
- **Coping and Calming** – people are not able to access their regular coping and calming strategies. **With gyms, places of worship, restaurants, and other locations being closed or having different supports in place, most of us need different coping and calming tools.** As a result, **sometimes the things we turn to can create other challenges.** A behavioral health provider can help you examine if your alcohol use is worrisome, help you learn ways to relax aside from substances, or brainstorm other comforting tips to limit overeating.
- **Sleep difficulties** – our brains and bodies work differently when exposed to high levels of stress, and this means sleep may be disrupted.
- **Anger and Irritability** – given high stress levels, a lot of us are feeling less patient and might be struggling to find grace for ourselves and others. We might be snappy with others, feel pent up energy, or find ourselves lashing out physically.
- **Grief** – people are grieving many losses right now. Feelings of grief **are not limited to the loss of a loved one. We can grieve lost experiences and opportunities and have anticipatory grief about the uncertainty of the future.** For more about grief during the pandemic see this [Harvard Business Review article](#).

For all of these situations, talking about your experience with a trained professional can help.

We want to share some things we have learned about telehealth. Knowing what to expect can help.

- **Telehealth can be difficult at first!** From seeing yourself in video conferencing calls to awkward pauses or talking at the same time, sessions can feel more uncomfortable than an in-person session. Remember that providers are feeling the same discomfort and awkwardness.
- **Technology will not work perfectly all the time!** Give yourself and your provider some grace. Talk about the challenges. Providers have different options they can try. For example, the Zoom video feed keeps freezing up? Perhaps we switch to a phone call.
- Some of **the boundaries of treatment will be different.** As providers, it is part of our ethics to maintain a professional relationship with clear boundaries. We might see the inside of your house, while you might see our pets interrupt a session. Talking about these shifts and possible disruptions at the onset helps everyone.

- **Telehealth has lots of advantages** and can cut out some frustrations. There is **no commute time, no searching for parking, and no time in the waiting room. For many, telehealth feels more flexible and efficient.**
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If speaking to someone about ways to cope with all these life changes would help, please reach out. AllHealth Network, along with other community mental health centers, is continuing to provide services via telehealth and by phone. Our Crisis Walk-in Center remains open 24/7 and offers in-person care to those experiencing a mental health crisis. For more information and to get connected with our services, please call 303-730-8858. To learn more about what other community mental health centers are doing, please visit the [Colorado Behavioral Health Council COVID-19 website](#).

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and are in need of immediate assistance, please call the **Colorado Crisis Hotline at 1-844-493-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 38255.**

Resource links

- [FAQ's on Telehealth and HIPAA during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency](#)
- [How Behavioral Health Professionals are Navigating Telemental Health](#)
- [Psychology Today - 14 Benefits of Teletherapy for Clients](#)