



## **Telehealth Guidelines**

Due to the temporary change in restrictions to telehealth and Medicaid, Thrive is implementing the option for staff to provide telehealth services. By providing telehealth services, staff acknowledge the following policies and procedures and agree to abide by the items below:

### **Location of Staff Member**

Clinician must be in a private location, free of other noises. The location must provide privacy for the session. Clinician must be present in the state of Maryland at time of service.

### **Location of Client**

Clients should be in a location that has adequate data or wifi to conduct the telehealth session. They should be encouraged to be in a location that limits interruptions or distractions. Client must be located in the state of Maryland at time of service. Client **MUST** be present and visible during telehealth evaluations and services, except for Family without Client Present Services.

### **Documentation/Location of Service**

Telehealth services must be documented in Credible according to policies and procedures for each service type. The difference is the staff member must select the location indicating telehealth. Failure to select correct location may lead to retraction from the insurance provider at a later date.

### **Consent**

Thrive has a Telehealth Consent Form. Clients must acknowledge and provide verbal consent to all items on the form.

- Credible: Clients can complete the Telehealth Consent form as a service in Credible similar to other consents. If a client is not present in order to sign the consent it is appropriate for clinician to review the items on the telehealth and seek verbal consent from the client.
- Word version: Available on the Credible Home Page links under Forms and Documents folder> Telehealth. Can be printed and provided to the client to get signature.

### **Refusal to Consent**

Thrive shall not force or coerce a client/guardian to sign a consent. During a state of emergency, particularly if a client may have been exposed to a contagious illness, Thrive may elect to deny in person services. If telehealth services are denied, Thrive shall follow discharge procedures and provide client with referrals and final medication management services according to policy.

### **Platform/App**

Thrive is currently directing staff to use the platform Zoom for telehealth services. If unable to use Zoom for any reason, staff are permitted to use doxy.me.

### **Technology**



Staff are strongly encouraged to use their laptop or Thrive provided laptop. If there is a technical issue or service interruption and the only option is a mobile device, it is acceptable, but not encouraged.

### **Service Interruption**

If there is inadequate wifi/data connection, the therapist must end the service if the service can not be ethically and reasonably provided. Therapists should make efforts to have a secondary means of continuing the service.

If unable to utilize a back up platform, clinician shall follow up with a phone call. The phone call can not count as billable time. Lapses in the service can not be included in billable time.

Staff should use their Thrive email to start the account.

### **Troubleshooting Assistance**

To download platforms on Thrive devices, IT can remotely install the platforms.

### **Contraindication**

Telehealth services may be contraindicated for more serious symptoms, such as psychosis, suicidality, or homicidality. If a client presents with a more serious symptom, the clinician must consult with a supervisor regarding appropriateness for telehealth and other options.

Telehealth services may be contraindicated for young children.

Clinicians shall consult with a supervisor regarding contraindications for each client and develop an appropriate plan of care. The plan of care may include temporarily reducing individual sessions to brief services or providing family therapy instead of family therapy services.

### **Crisis**

If a client has a mental health emergency during a session, safety precautions must still be taken, which include:

- Contacting the local crisis response team
- Contacting emergency services
- Advising the client seek psychiatric evaluation at local hospital. If hospitals are closed for evaluations due to states of emergency, advise for the client to be assessed at a local walk in or crisis center.
- If due to a state of emergency, no emergency services are accepting clients with psychiatric emergencies, clinician must contact supervisor or Director to safety plan.

### **Insurance Coverage**

During the state of emergency of 2020 due to COVID-19, telehealth services are permitted for both Medicaid and Medicare clients, but must be in compliance with all other policies and procedures regarding services. For clinicians who are not Medicare paneled, a paneled prescriber must be on-site with the clinician to provide an incident to.

### **Ethics and Fraud, Waste and Abuse**



Clinicians are required to review Telehealth Ethics included on the Credible Home Page> Forms and Documents> Telehealth. Clinicians are reminded that services must be provided as clinically indicated and only in ways that provide appropriate and high quality care.