



# E-MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**April 2020**



Ontario Centre of Excellence  
for Child & Youth Mental Health

Centre d'excellence de l'Ontario en santé  
mentale des enfants et des adolescents



The emergence of COVID-19 in populations across the globe has had a significant impact on the delivery of face-to-face child and youth mental health services in Ontario. In order to continue to meet the needs of children, youth and families, many service-providing agencies are rapidly moving to deliver care through telecommunication technologies. To support our community partners during this challenging time, the Centre and [Children's Mental Health Ontario \(CMHO\)](#) have compiled:

- information about ongoing work our organizations are leading to support the delivery of high-quality e-mental health services for Ontario's children and youth; and
- links to practice guidelines, toolkits and other resources published by professional colleges, associations and institutions relevant to the delivery of e-mental health services in Ontario.

The resources shared were gathered through a rapid, non-systematic scan of practice guidelines with an intent to support you in a timely fashion, as you explore alternatives to face-to-face mental health care for children, youth and families. The guidelines and resources shared were not collected through an exhaustive search or systematic review, but reflect information available at the time of writing. As new practice evidence emerges, recommendations may evolve.

Within this resource, the following terms are used interchangeably to refer to the provision of client care using telecommunication technologies as alternatives to face-to-face services: e-mental health, telehealth, telepsychology, e-services, telepractice, online treatment, video counselling, tele-rehabilitation.



## Policies, procedures and guidance: examples from Ontario agencies

We are sharing examples of policies and procedures for e-mental health services developed by Ontario child and youth mental health agencies, with permission of the authors. These resources are meant for guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic and are shared as examples only.

The Centre has not evaluated these documents and does not formally recommend or endorse the guidance provided within them.

### Phoenix Centre for Children and Families

[The Phoenix Centre for Children and Families](#) is currently building a virtual walk-in mental health service for the families they serve across Renfrew County. As part of this work, staff have engaged in training and consultation to design a) a draft policy and procedure on video conferencing as a means of client communication; and b) draft guidance and considerations for providing therapy over the phone or through videoconferencing software. If you have questions about these documents, please contact Debra Woodfine, clinical director at [dwoodfine@phoenixctr.com](mailto:dwoodfine@phoenixctr.com).

- [Policy and procedure for video conferencing \(DRAFT\)](#)
- [Guidance and considerations for providing therapy over the phone or through videoconferencing software \(DRAFT\)](#)

### Compass Child & Youth Mental Health Services

- [Personal Computer Video Conferencing Guidelines](#)

### Pathstone Mental Health

- [SWOT analysis of digital platforms](#)

### Algoma Family Services

- [Virtual counselling operational guidelines](#)
- [Working from home operational guidelines](#)
- [Privacy guidelines working from home](#)



## English resources

### Professional guidelines or requirements

#### *Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca*

As many service providers are shifting to virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations are developing or enhancing policies, procedures and guidance documents intended to support this form of service delivery. In many instances, professional associations and colleges have guidelines or requirements that must be followed. [Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca](#) has developed this resource to provide guidance and support to psychotherapists working in the agency, as they support clients virtually.

We are sharing this resource with permission from Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca. This document is intended for guidance only.

- [Guidance for virtual care: Registered psychotherapists](#)

### Guidelines, toolkits and resources

#### *YouthREX*

- [Evidence brief: Six promising practices in providing online counselling to youth](#)

#### *Ontario Health*

- [Adopting and integrating virtual visits into care: Draft clinical guidance](#)

#### *Mental Health Commission of Canada*

- [Toolkit for e-mental health implementation](#)

### Virtual care platforms

#### *Ontario Telemedicine Network*

- [Direct-to-patient video visits toolkit](#)
  - Direct-to-patient video visit workflow — mental health
  - Using direct-to-patient video visits to enhance your practice
  - Patient technical eligibility checklist
  - Videoconferencing best practices
  - Privacy and security tips
- [OTN training reference manual — Clinical consultations \(sector agnostic\)](#)
- [Privacy centre](#)



## **Think Research**

To support service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, Think Research is dropping its rates to \$10 per month to help psychologists move to a virtual care platform. Think Research is a Canadian company, with Canadian servers and complies with Canadian privacy laws. They are currently one of the vendors working with the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN).

Think Research offered to provide a number of free licenses to Ontario Psychological Association members who have offered pro bono services as part of the Disaster Response Network led by Dr. Liliana Tarba.

- [VirtualCare platform](#)
- [VirtualCare brochure](#)

## **Psychological associations and colleges**

### ***Canadian Psychological Association***

- [Ethical guidelines for psychologists providing psychological services via electronic media](#)

### ***Ontario Psychological Association***

- [Guidelines for best practices in the provision of telepsychology](#)

### ***College of Psychologists of Ontario***

The College of Psychologists of Ontario (the College) recently shared the following links with its membership, which include video presentations and tutorials by Dr. Christine Korol, R.Psych., to help members move to online services. These presentations by Dr. Korol were part of [the Barbara Wand seminar in professional ethics, standards and conduct](#).

- [Using technology safely and ethically in clinical practice](#)
- [Best practice and methods in online treatment](#)

The College also shared a link to Dr. Korol's three-part introduction to online services, which covers topics related to ethics and online practice.

- [Online therapy: intro to ethics and best practice C19 edition](#)

## **Counselling and psychotherapy associations and colleges**

### ***Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association***

- [Guidelines for uses of technology in counselling and psychotherapy](#)
- [Additional resources regarding these guidelines](#) can be found on their website

### ***College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario***

- [Standard 3.4 Electronic practice](#)
- [Electronic practice — Professional practice guideline](#)
- [Security practices checklist — Electronic practice](#)



## Social work

### *Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers*

- [Professional and ethical: Communication technology practices and policies for a digital world](#)
- [Communication technology & ethical practice: Evolving issues in a changing landscape](#)
- [Social media and practice: Protecting privacy and professionalism in a virtual world](#)
- [Top 10 considerations for using communication technology in practice](#)

## Rehabilitation services

### *College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario*

- [Use of telepractice approaches in providing services to patients/clients](#)

### *Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators*

- [Tele-rehabilitation — Guidelines for physiotherapists](#)

### *College of Physiotherapists of Ontario*

- [Tele-rehabilitation resources](#)

### *College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario*

- [Guidelines for telepractice in occupational therapy](#)



## French resources

### Lignes directrices et exigences professionnelles

#### *Mains LeReseaudaideauxfamilles.ca*

La pandémie de la COVID-19 a poussé plusieurs fournisseurs de services à faire une transition vers des soins virtuels. Ces organismes ont dû mettre en place ou étoffer leurs politiques, procédures et documents d'orientation afin de soutenir cette forme de prestation de services. Dans plusieurs cas, les associations et les corps professionnels ont également des lignes directrices ou des exigences qui doivent être respectées. [Mains LeReseaudaideauxfamilles.ca](https://mainslereseaudaideauxfamilles.ca) a créé la présente ressource pour orienter et appuyer les psychothérapeutes travaillant au sein de l'agence dans leur suivi virtuel de clients.

Nous rendons cette ressource disponible avec la permission de Mains LeReseaudaideauxfamilles.ca. Ceci est uniquement un document d'orientation.

- [Conseils pour les soins virtuels : psychothérapeutes autorisés](#)

### Lignes directrices, trousse d'outils et ressources

#### *Commission de la santé mentale du Canada*

- [La trousse d'outils pour la mise en œuvre de la cybersanté mentale](#)

### Plateformes de soins virtuels

#### *Réseau Télémédecine Ontario*

- [Centre de protection des renseignements personnels](#)

### Associations et ordres de counseling et de psychothérapie

#### *Association canadienne de counseling et de psychothérapie*

- [Ressources pour mettre en application les lignes directrices](#) sur leur site Web

### Services de réadaptation

#### *Ordre des audiologistes et des orthophonistes de l'Ontario*

- [Utilisation d'approches de télépratique pour la prestation de services aux patients ou clients](#)

#### *Ordre des ergothérapeutes de l'Ontario*

- [Lignes directrices sur les services d'ergothérapie à distance](#)