

INTERIM VIRTUAL CARE / TELEPRACTICE GUIDELINES

March 2020

To facilitate occupational therapy service transition to telepractice/virtual care during COVID-19, the College has provided some interim guidelines to assist you. These interim guidelines are intended to facilitate the use of professional judgement by occupational therapists. As with any service, or method of service delivery, occupational therapists are required to exercise their judgement on a case by case basis. The occupational therapist's fundamental responsibilities to clients remain the same whether service is provided face-to-face or by telepractice/virtual care.

- 1. Occupational therapists should know and apply the legislation, standards and guidelines (if applicable) for telepractice services within the client's jurisdiction;**
- 2. Occupational therapists should consider if telepractice is the most appropriate means of providing occupational therapy services, with consideration of risk management and liability;**
- 3. Occupational therapists must understand the capabilities and limitations of your communication platform and the implications for providing telepractice;**
- 4. Occupational therapists using telepractice services must take reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality and protect personal health information;**
- 5. Before initiating telepractice services, occupational therapists must obtain informed consent for occupational therapy services (assessment, treatment and consultation) and knowledgeable consent for the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information;**
- 6. Occupational therapists engaged in telepractice are required to maintain client records in accordance with the [Practice Standard for Record Keeping](#);**
- 7. Occupational therapists must continue to establish and maintain professional boundaries during telepractice;**
- 8. Occupational therapists should be aware of options for continuing care when providing telepractice service is discontinued;**
- 9. Occupational therapists are required to uphold our [Code of Ethics](#) and inform clients of their rights;**
- 10. Occupational therapists providing services by telepractice must understand and adhere to the [advertising regulations](#). (S. 52-56 – OT Regulations);**
- 11. Occupational therapists must transparently communicate all fees associated with telepractice.**

These guidelines are adapted and used with permission from the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario. COTNS is working towards a more comprehensive telepractice document shortly.