

Practice Guideline: Virtual Care

To facilitate occupational therapy service transition to 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 virtual care.

Virtual care is any care provided remotely. This includes rehabilitation services that use any form of technology (including but not restricted to video conferencing, internet and telephone) as an alternative to face to face interventions. It may also be referred to as Telehealth, Telepractice or Telerehabilitation.

- 1. Occupational therapists should know and apply the legislation, standards and guidelines (if applicable) for virtual care services within the client's jurisdiction;**
- 2. Occupational therapists should consider if virtual care 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 virtual care;**
- 4. Occupational therapists using virtual care services must take reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality and protect personal health information;**
- 5. Before initiating virtual care 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, and possible additional costs associated with the personal use of their device;**
- 6. Occupational therapists engaged in virtual care 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 virtual care;**
- 8. Occupational therapists should be aware of options for continuing care when providing virtual care 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 virtual care must understand and adhere to the [advertising regulations](#). (S. 52-56 – OT Regulations);

11. Occupational therapists must transparently communicate all fees associated with virtual care.

Please contact the College with any questions regarding this guideline. This guideline was adapted with permission from the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.