

What You Need to Know about Telemental Health at CaPS

What is telemental health?

Telemental health refers to CaPS services being provided remotely, through audio and/or video conferencing over the internet. At times, you and your therapist may choose to engage in telemental health over the phone.

What kinds of services can I access virtually?

CaPS has transitioned the vast majority of our services to a virtual platform. We offer initial assessments, individual therapy, urgent care appointments, single session therapy, psychiatry appointments, and therapy groups and workshops virtually. On rare occasions, we may require students to come for an in-person appointment if we believe that the student is at imminent risk of harm to themselves or others.

What equipment do I need?

To participate in a telemental health visit, you will need one of the following devices:

- Desktop computer with a webcam and speakers
- Laptop computer with a webcam and speakers
- Tablet device with webcam and speakers
- Smartphone

You will also need a high-speed internet connection and headphones, for privacy. Before your first telemental health appointment, please make sure you test your set-up to ensure a working connection.

How should I prepare my space for a telemental health appointment?

For your appointment, you will need to identify a private space that is quiet, free of distractions and in which you do not anticipate being interrupted. If you do not have a private space available, please contact CaPS (475-2261) as we have a limited number of rooms available for students who are in need of a private space.

What platform do you use for virtual meetings? Is it secure?

At CaPS, we use Zoom for Healthcare, which is a HIPAA-compliant platform designed for use in healthcare settings. This platform has multi-layer security with AES-256 encryption.

How does it all work?

When you schedule an appointment at CaPS, you will receive an appointment reminder 24 hours before your appointment time, which will remind you of the date/time of the appointment, and it will also provide you with

instructions needed to access your telemental health appointment. Thirty minutes prior to your appointment time, you will receive a Zoom invitation in your RIT Wellness Portal (<https://wellnessportal.rit.edu>), along with the other forms that we ask that students complete prior to an appointment. If you are meeting virtually for the first time, you will be asked to complete a Telemental Health Consent Form, and you will be asked to provide the following information in your appointment:

- Names and phone numbers for TWO emergency contacts, at least one of them in your current town/city. This will be required at the start of the session.
- Phone number at which you can be reached in the event of technology failure.

Is online therapy successful?

There has been a considerable amount of research that has shown that therapy delivered via a virtual platform can be just as effective as in-person therapy. However, therapy always has limitations in what it can accomplish, and there is no guarantee that therapy will be successful in helping you to achieve your goals. It is important for you and your therapist to discuss your short-term therapy goals to determine collaboratively whether or not telemental health is the right choice for you in helping you accomplish these goals.

When would online therapy not be a good choice for me?

Telemental health services may not be appropriate, or the best choice of service for reasons including, but not limited to: heightened risk of harm to oneself or others; lack of access to, or difficulty with, communications technology; significant communications service disruptions; or need for more intensive services. In these cases, your therapist will help you establish referrals to other appropriate services.

Zoom Session Information/Guidelines to Ensure a Smooth Experience

- About 10-15 minutes prior to your appointment time, please log in to the RIT Wellness Portal at <https://wellnessportal.rit.edu> and fill out the available forms, which may include the Informed Consent to Telemental Health, CCAPS, and/or Annual Information Forms, among others. You will be able to access the Zoom link for your appointment in the RIT Wellness Portal as well. It will appear 30 minutes prior to your appointment time.
- Come to your session with the names and phone numbers for TWO emergency contacts, at least one of them in your current town/city. This will be required at the start of the session.
- Restart your computer before your appointment. Other software might be using computer power or interfere with your video or microphone. Restarting your computer will assure your computer is ready for video.
- Use fast internet with an ethernet cable, when possible. Video quality adapts to internet speed, so the faster your internet connection, the better the video quality you will experience.
- Use a newer computer with plenty of speed, when possible. Sending and receiving video takes a lot of computer power. Old or slow computers will have a harder time processing the video, which can cause choppiness.
- Use low resolution. If you are experiencing poor quality, try lowering the resolution. By doing this, it requires less bandwidth and computer power, resulting in less choppiness during your call.
- Use headphones. Typically your computer will automatically eliminate echo or audio feedback, so you do not hear yourself talking. If it happens, use headphones.
- Find a private environment that is noise and distraction-free. Silence your phone and other electronic devices.
- Please be mindful of being on-time and dress as you would for an in-person appointment.