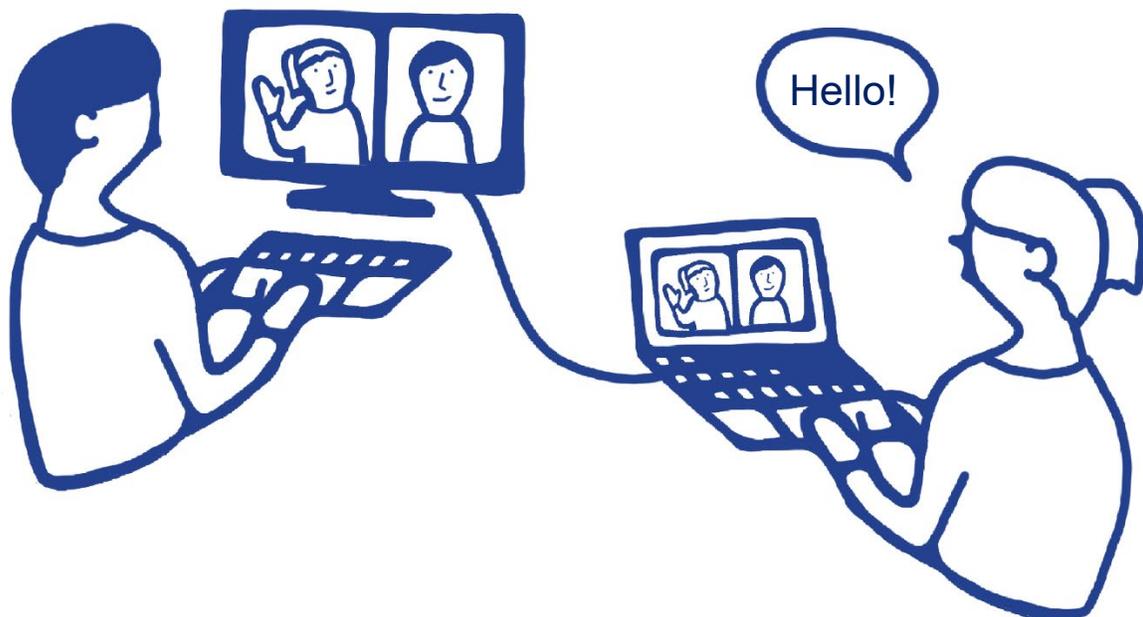


Virtual Care for Adults with Communication Disorders or Impairments



This primer introduces basic considerations for providing virtual activities for adults with communication disorders or impairments.

Before you Start

If you are interested in providing virtual activities for adults with communication disorders or impairments, consider the following:

Privacy and Cyber Security

Consider how you will protect your privacy and cyber security, as well as your client's.

- Purchase and install a webcam cover.
- Ensure that you and your virtual partner are in a private space.

Accessibility

Consider the needs of the person you are working with



Do they need a facilitator to support them in the room?



Do they need audio support?



Do they need visual aids?



Do they have a cognitive communication deficit?



Do they need a translator?

Technical Requirements for Virtual Care

In addition to a computer or laptop, you will need the following equipment to conduct virtual sessions



Microphone or Headset and Speakers

You will need speakers to hear your virtual partner and a microphone so they can hear you. If your built-in computer microphone doesn't produce good quality sound, get a headset or a desktop microphone. A good audio signal is more important than a good visual signal. If your audio is delayed, consider connecting by phone for audio and by computer for visual.



Internet connection

A good internet connection is essential for hosting virtual sessions. An unstable connection can cause lags in video and audio, freezing, and even dropped calls.

Webcam

Your virtual partner will need to be able to see you in order to complete some of the activities. You may be able to use the webcam that is built in to your computer, or you can buy one separately.

Up-to-date Software and Antivirus Scan

Log into your platform in advance to make sure that your operating system and software are up to date. Run an antivirus scan regularly.

Being the Best Virtual You

If you decide to proceed with virtual care, try to see things from the virtual partner's point of view, and consider how you can optimize your communication in the virtual setting:

Audio

Test your microphone with a friend before using it with a virtual partner to ensure that your audio is loud and clear. Eliminate background noise if you can, or find a quiet place to hold your session. Be familiar with adjustments and settings for sharing music and group participation.

Non-Verbal Communication

Spend some time looking at your face as it is seen by others. Your face is communicating more information than you know. Avoid obscuring your face (e.g. with a coffee mug) and avoid eating on camera. It's important to communicate warmth and a friendly attitude with our facial expression. Before your session, practice smiling on camera until it feels natural. Practise keeping your body quiet, so it does not distract.

Have all necessary materials on hand so you don't have to leave the camera (e.g. activity materials, water, Kleenex)

Improving Access to Information on Screen

Put your screen name in block letters. When you share your screen, make sure the font is large enough for people to read. It is possible to remain as the featured speaker if you PIN yourself.

Lighting and Background

Set up your computer in a place where the lighting is bright enough for your virtual partner to see you well, but not so bright that it obscures your features. Consider what is behind you, including people, pets, and objects and whether it will be distracting or embarrassing.

Session Guidelines

Know and establish your session rules. For example, no eating while talking, both parties in a quiet and private space, cameras on, dress as if you were meeting someone in person.

Supporting Your Client to Use Your Meeting Platform

Use cards with images of the controls to help the virtual partner to download and navigate the platform. For example, hold up a card with an image of a microphone facing the virtual partner, and then have them find it in their controls. Writing notes for yourself on the back of the card can be helpful when you are instructing.

Practice muting and unmuting with the virtual partner.

Special Settings for Therapy Activities



Click “share sound” on the share screen options while singing along to music or watching videos.



Pin your image and instruct your virtual partner to select the speaker view during activities so that your face remains on their screen.



Choose breakout rooms to create conversational dyads.



Select recording to record your session. When the virtual partner joins it will notify them. Make sure this is enabled in your account settings.



[Using our zoom support documents](#)

Platform

Be familiar with your virtual meeting platform so that you can optimize your presentation and teach your virtual partner how to use it.

Most virtual meeting platforms have help pages or learning resources.

[Zoom Learning Centre](#)

[Google Meet Training and Help](#)

[Skype Help Page](#)

Troubleshooting

Be prepared to troubleshoot technical issues. One of the easiest strategies for problem-solving is to connect via the zoom app on a smart phone instead of using a computer or tablet. Note that the screen layout your virtual client sees will differ depending on the device they are using (e.g. tablet, desktop, phone).

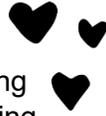
If you are both on your computers and trying to problem-solve, ask your virtual partner to describe what they see on their screen and work your problem-solving from that point.

Learn More About Virtual Activities for Adults with Communication Disorders or Impairments

We can help you translate your activities into a virtual, aphasia friendly experience which is rewarding for you and your partner. We have accessible, interactive tools for educating about aphasia, collecting relevant therapy material, and providing stimulation which meets requirements of the neuroplasticity treatment paradigm. We would be happy to demonstrate these strategies with real people. Contact us at allison@hellospeechworks.ca

Example of one of our treatment tools:

Do you Have Aphasia?

<p>Maybe you had a stroke, head injury, or brain illness that caused aphasia.</p> 	<p>Aphasia makes talking difficult. Aphasia is different for everyone.</p> 	<p>Many people have trouble finding words.</p> 	<p>"I know it but I can't say it."</p> 	<p>Some people have trouble understanding words.</p> 
<p>Some have a hard time reading.</p> 	<p>Others have trouble writing.</p> 	<p>Sometimes there are problems with vision or movement.</p> 	<p>Aphasia affects the whole family. Everyone learns new ways to communicate.</p> 	<p>They know you know.</p> 
<p>Speech therapy can help a lot. "I get it!"</p> 	<p>Joining a group helps too.</p> 	<p>If you keep participating in life, you will keep getting better.</p>	<p>Keep:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living • Loving • Learning 	<p>It takes a lot of courage to live with aphasia.</p> 

This is also available on PowerPoint, one cell per slide.

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