

## Basic Guidelines for Conducting Chairwork via Teletherapy

### The Physical Shift

Chairwork is not about chairs - although chairs are incredibly useful - it is about shifts. The most important thing to remember when doing Chairwork is to create some kind of physical shift.

This can be accomplished by moving a few inches, holding and switching an object between hands, or standing up and moving around between parts. Physical movement is a primal way of signalling and realizing that a shift has taken place.

### For Patients:

1. Choose a good work space. When possible, choose a room/area that is fairly spacious, quiet, and private.
2. Choose your chairs. Do you have any extra chairs/folding chairs/stools to use? If you do not, you can use post-its, paper, pillows, or other small objects. Sitting on a couch works, too.
3. Be ready to talk and to listen. Use wireless/wired headphones with a built-in microphone. If you do not have any to use, be sure that your device speakers and microphones can allow you to adequately hear and speak to your therapist. (Note: headphones can better help ensure confidentiality)
4. Create visual access. Have a space to prop up your device so that the therapist can see you while doing Chairwork.
5. Remove distractions and interruptions. Put notifications on Do Not Disturb. Have your device charger nearby.
6. Be open to many possibilities. While you may have grabbed some chairs/props for the session, be open to the fact that you might do work that may not require them. Preparations will help you get the most from your session.
7. Have a back-up plan. If you are unable to have a video session or experience sudden tech issues, be ready to transition to a phone call.

### For Therapists:

1. Direct the shift. Ask patients seated in a chair or on a couch to physically shift six inches to their left or right. Asking patients to stand up, move around, and sit back down is also a way to transition. If using post-its/object placeholders, simply have patients use these as stagemarkers. In cases where space or mobility is an issue, patients can hold an object and switch it from hand to hand.

2. Be flexible with your view. While you might prefer that patients give you a full field of vision while they do Chairwork, it might not always be possible. Instead, you may ask patients to hold their devices in their hand or lap so you can observe their faces while they work.
3. Have a pen and paper. These may be used for decisional balance exercises.
4. Have your patient's phone number. Let your patient know to expect a call from you in case there are tech issues.

Doing Chairwork during a phone session:

1. Get the layout. At the start of the session, ask the patient to describe the basic layout of the space they are in. This will give you an idea of how you might instruct them to use their physical space.
2. Be vocal. When doing Chairwork, verbally ask/instruct patients to shift/move.
3. Allow for silence. Despite not being able to see what is happening, trust that the process is happening, even when things sound quiet.

*Please note that these are merely guidelines, and do not encompass all the possibilities for conducting Chairwork Psychotherapy via teletherapy.*