

Guidelines for Chairwork Teletherapy

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The Physical Shift

The most important thing to remember when doing Chairwork Teletherapy is to create a physical repositioning. Physical movement is a primal way of signalling and realizing that a shift has taken place.

This can be accomplished by moving a few inches, holding and switching an object between hands, or standing up and moving around (e.g. spinning, taking a few steps) between parts.

Chairwork is not about chairs - although chairs are useful - it is about shifts.

Therapist Guidelines for Video Sessions

1. Direct the shift. Ask patients seated in a chair or on a couch to physically shift at least 4 inches to their left or right. Asking patients to stand up, move around, and sit back down is also a way to transition. If patients are standing, simply ask them to take a couple of steps. In cases where space or mobility is an issue, patients can hold an object and switch it from hand to hand. Remember, a physical shift must take place *before and after* the dialogue.
2. Join the action. Stand when patients stand and sit back down when patients sit.
3. Be aware of your placement. Ask patients to move their laptop or phone so that you are always appropriately located in relation to the patient and with consideration to the dialogue taking place.
4. Protect the patient's space. Be mindful and intentional about where dialogue work takes place. If patients are working with negative energies or difficult feelings, you may not want them to do dialogue work while sitting on their bed or favorite chair. In addition, be sure to ask patients to "neutralize" their space by dramatically repositioning whatever furniture or objects were used for the dialogue work.
5. Be flexible with your view. While you might prefer a full field of vision while guiding patients through 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.

Therapist Guidelines for Phone Sessions

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 to set up the dialogue work.
2. Be vocal. When doing Chairwork, verbally ask/instruct patients to shift/move. If you are not sure that they have correctly repositioned themselves, ask them.
3. Allow for silence. Despite not being able to see what is happening, trust that the process is happening, even when things sound quiet.
4. Protect the patient's space. Refer to #4 of *Therapist Guidelines for Video Sessions*.

Patient Guidelines:

1. Choose a good work space. When possible, patients should choose a room that is fairly spacious, quiet, and private.
2. Choose your chairs. Patients may have extra chairs/folding chairs/stools nearby to use when they begin Chairwork. Object like post-its, paper, pillows, or other small objects can work, too.
3. Create visual access. Patients should be prepared to prop up their device so that the therapist may see them during the dialogue work.

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