PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

THE TECHNOLOGY

- Be prepared!
- Test your technology ahead of time
- Give yourself extra time to set up before your appointment
- Check your WiFi connection (you can test your speed at fast.com)
- Practice positioning your camera
- Have a charging cord available
- If you have a tablet, consider using it!
  - The screen is larger than a phone and it is more portable than a laptop
- Plan to have your camera on, if possible. It helps with communication with your clinician, as well as their ability to make physical observations
- If you have headphones, it's encouraged that you use them to maintain privacy

THE ENVIRONMENT

- Find a private, quiet place with minimal distractions and good lighting
  - Ideally, indoors on a chair with a table/surface in front of you
  - Avoid sitting in front of windows, as this may create problems with lighting
- Ask your therapist what materials you should have ready before the appointment
- Have a notepad handy to write thoughts, questions or general notes
- You can also ask your clinician to email you a summary of the appointment afterwards
- Have someone with you, if possible! This can be very helpful, especially for the initial assessment (see Caregiver box below)

YOU

- Treat it like an in-person session:
  - Designate the time and be prepared
  - Be set up and ready in advance
  - Let others in your household know you are busy
- Think about your priorities and goals for the session
- Prepare specific questions you would like to ask your clinician
- Understand that extra sessions may be needed to see progress without hands-on work
- Consider writing key points or questions you want to bring up during the meeting on a list
- Be on time! Choose an appointment time when you have good energy, less chance for distraction, and sufficient time to set up before your appointment
  - A 30 minute session where you are fully focused without distractions is better than an hour session session where you are not fully engaged!
- Eat and drink water prior to your appointment
VIRTUAL APPOINTMENTS

YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT

- Ask about consent, including the potential risks and benefits associated with virtual sessions.
- Discuss and establish expectations and boundaries for both you and the clinician.
- If you are not comfortable with the virtual session, speak up. It’s okay to ask for alternate ways of meeting (e.g. telephone).
- Let the therapist know what you want to work on.
- Understand that treatment may look different from in-person therapy, and we may not be able to work on the same goals in the same ways.
- Be patient and flexible!

- Provide feedback
  - Communicate with your healthcare provider regarding what is working well, what is not, and any suggestions you have for future sessions.
- Take a break from the screen if you need one.
  - Movement-based breaks are important - consider walking around, or something similar to get moving.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions, or to ask your clinician to repeat or demonstrate something!
- Feel free to take notes to help you remember what you worked on and/or ask your clinician to send you a session summary.
- Expect issues with technology, they happen!
- Be creative
  - Don’t feel restrained to use the specific item the clinician suggests - use what’s accessible to you.
- Remember, this is a learning curve for everyone, so don’t worry if you feel like you aren’t doing everything right.
  - Be patient with your clinicians, they’re learning too!
- Be open to trying new things and have fun!

TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

PREPARING FOR APPOINTMENTS

- Review the tips above (preparing the technology, the environment and the client).
- Ask any questions you have when consenting to virtual practice.
- Be extra present and ready to engage during the session.
- Don’t expect perfection - things may not run as planned and that is okay.
- Communication is key! Let the clinician know what you need before each session.

SELF CARE

- Remember to take care of yourself too.
- Ask for a break if you need it during the session.
- Ask the clinician for caregiver support resources.
- Join caregiver support groups in the virtual community (for example, on Facebook).
- Be aware of your own mental health. If you feel overwhelmed, share that with the clinician and seek support - you are not alone.

DURING THE APPOINTMENTS

- Be there to support, not take over.
- Ask questions, provide feedback and share ideas!
- Make sure you are comfortable with what is expected of you.
- Make sure you understand the reasoning behind what the clinician is doing. This will help you facilitate the activities for the client later, when the clinician is not present.
- Be open to new things, patient and flexible.

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