

TELEHEALTH CRANNY

Top Tips

Get Accustomed to Latency:

Latency is the delay before a transfer of data begins following an instruction for its transfer. Meaning the delay it takes for something you say, sing, or play to actually be sent to the people on the other end of the video and vice versa. This happens due to varying internet speeds, bandwidth, location, etc. A lot of these elements are out of our control, so getting used to the latency will make it less distracting.

Utilize Sound from Device:

Most video conferencing platforms allow you to “share sound from device.” This allows the people on the other end of your video call can hear music or other sound that you’re playing on your own device clearly through their speakers. This means you can share songs, sounds, and experiences from music streaming platforms, YouTube, online music websites, your DAW, and more! Although latency makes it difficult to play live instruments or sing together synchronously, you can definitely still listen and create digitally together with less latency.

Cables:

Consider using wire connections instead of Bluetooth or wireless. This means headphones, microphones, and even secondary monitors. Although Bluetooth makes it easier to move around, it can cause even more latency issues. Further, Wi-Fi connection itself can cause latency issues as well. You can mitigate this by connecting your device to your router with a physical ethernet cable. If your device doesn’t have an ethernet port, you can purchase an adapter that will adapt your USB, USB-C, or lightning port into a ethernet port.

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Get Your Virtual Space Ready:

Before session begins, check what your background looks like in your video preview or camera app. Do you need to move a lamp so there's more light for people to see you instead of making a halo around your head? If working from home, make sure there aren't any clothes or too big of messes in view. If you're planning on sharing your screen at any point, close any extra unrelated tabs and hide your bookmarks bar in your browser. As well as saving and closing any unrelated files, projects, or documentation you may have been working on.

Use to Your Virtual Space to Your Advantage:

Although it may seem like you're limited by your rectangle space on a video call, it can afford unique visual opportunities. As plays or musicals convey entire stories with different scenes and characters by manipulating backdrops and positioning on a single stage, you can facilitate engaging sessions by exploring camera angles and virtual backgrounds. An example could be a song story where you're holding and moving a puppet of a bird that flies from the top of the screen and a paper cut-out of the sun rises from the bottom, while the client is singing or playing along.

Make Templates:

When developing content for music experiences in sessions (i.e. documents, slides, videos), copy the original file you made and save it as a template. That way, you have the "skeleton" of your experience, but can change what it holds. This allows you to facilitate similar experiences with different themes or foci in future sessions without having to build the content from scratch.

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Test Everything Before Session:

Especially if you're using content or software you've never used in clinical practice before. Find a loved one or peer that's willing to get on their device to do run-through and see if your audio and visual is coming through clear on their end. As in-person sessions, there will be times where things just don't go as planned and you'll have to adapt.

Do Your Research and Keep Receipts for Hardware:

When you purchase hardware (microphones, interfaces, etc), make sure its compatible with your device and software or platform you plan on using it with. PCs are notorious for being incompatible with things that are usually compatible with Macs, and vice versa. Even if you've done your research and think you've bought the right things, it still sometimes doesn't even work. Keep your receipts so you can return the gear if needed.

Ground Yourself:

Interacting through a screen can be both draining and distracting. Find something small to ground yourself during session, like a glass of water or a stress ball. In between sessions, find something to ground you even deeper and away from the screen, like a stretch routine or making a cup of coffee.

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