Are You Considering Online Therapy?

Advantages of Teletherapy

1. Convenience- No driving to find an office or sitting around in a waiting room.
2. Saves your time- Same as above.
3. No increased risk of infections.
4. May reduce anxiety- Meet in the comfort of home.
5. Private- Nobody sees you coming or going.
6. Accessibility- Open to people in remote regions lacking therapy options and those with limited mobility due to an illness, physical handicap, or lack of transportation.
7. Safety- You won’t have a wreck on the way, and sometimes people working in therapy can have unpredictable or even dangerous behavior.
8. Comfort- At home or in your office on your lunch break, you have access to items such as a favorite blanket, snacks, drinks, and bathroom.
9. People who travel- College students can continue appointments from home visits or from college, traveling for business or vacation won’t create a barrier.
10. Wait times reduced- You are more likely to find a time that both fits your busy schedule and is more immediately available- booking online also means you don’t have to leave a message and wait for a call back which you would have to be available to take.

Disadvantages of Online Therapy

1. Some insurance companies may not cover online therapy, though recently this problem has been greatly reduced. I don’t take insurance anyway, but can provide a superbill used to collect out-of-network benefits or deductibles.
2. Ethical and legal concerns- If your therapist is across state or national boundaries, it may be difficult to meet or enforce legal and ethical requirements in place at your regional location.
3. May lack important information- An in-person meeting allows for better quality and range of voice tone, facial expressions, and nonverbal body language that may be an important part of the interaction.
4. Poor internet or technology performance- Could create glitches or delays in verbal and/or visual signals which might get so disruptive that a switch to a telephone call is needed.
5. May not be appropriate- For people with severe or complex psychiatric problems, and for children who are very active or with short attention spans. For children, consider requesting shorter sessions, offering movement breaks, and sharing drawings or favorite objects with the therapist. The therapist can respond in kind to maintain interest and attention.
6. Privacy- This is important for in-person or online interactions. Digital interactions can be provided in Hippa-compliant encrypted transactions, but there are people out there attempting to breach digital privacy all the time.
7. Lacking knowledge of local resources- If your therapist is far away, they likely will be less aware of supports and alternatives native to your location.

This address will take you to my practice site where you can see how to book an online session:

<https://www.bradmasoncounselor.com/>

Research in Online Therapy

<https://positivepsychology.com/teletherapy/>

 Wagner, Horn, and Maercker (2013) explored the benefits of teletherapy for supporting patients diagnosed with depression. Sixty-two patients were randomly assigned to two groups – one receiving teletherapy and the other receiving more traditional face to face therapy. The patients received eight sessions each, and at the end of their sessions, the group who received teletherapy showed a slightly higher percentage of reporting fewer depressive thoughts and feelings. After three months, the teletherapy group continued to report a decrease in depressive thoughts and feelings, compared to those treated traditionally who reported a minimal decrease.

 Acierno et al. (2014) studied the benefits of teletherapy for use in therapy with veterans experiencing PTSD. They worked with 132 veterans, asking them to complete a scale to measure PTSD and then randomly assigned them to one of two groups to receive 10-12 sessions of either face to face therapy or teletherapy. After three months and six months, respectively, the participants were asked to complete the PTSD scales again. At both points, the researchers found that those who were treated via teletherapy showed similar improvement to those treated face-to-face.

The following link will take you to a bibliography of over 1000 studies on the topic of teletherapy:

<https://telehealth.org/bibliography/>

If you are uncertain, I would suggest calling the therapist you are considering to talk about it.

Additional online articles about teletherapy:

<https://www.lighthouse-therapy.com/benefits-of-teletherapy-services/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/millennial-media/201901/14-benefits-teletherapy-clients>