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Covid-19: Remote therapeutic intervention

During these days, of stress and a great deal of uncertainty, remote intervention allows us to maintain therapeutic continuum, to provide assistance to those in need, and overcome the limitations of social distancing currently required.

This option is also suitable for use in other emergencies, such as a security escalation that prohibits meetings.

Remote Intervention

Remote intervention can be implemented by phone or app such as Skype or Zoom, via camera or without, depending on the needs and preferences of the patient and caregiver.

Advantages

- ❖ It can be organized in almost any situation.
- ❖ Allows personal contact between patient and therapist.
- ❖ Creates high level of attention.
- ❖ Suitable for those with limited mobility.
- ❖ Allows discourse in a safe and familiar place for the patient.

How to prepare

- ❖ Organize a quiet place, with uninterrupted privacy
- ❖ Ensure your computer or phone is ready and charged.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with the software or app used by the caller.
- ❖ Ensure patients also know how to use the app and/or software.
- ❖ Establish in advance: place, time, meeting time frame, start time and end time.
- ❖ Arrange the setting of the session and ensure the background of the photo is solid, with no distracting elements.

Remote Intervention Protocol - Adults

- ❖ Discover with the patients what they would like to gain from the appointment.
- ❖ What do they consider a successful meeting?

Strengthening and connecting resources: personal / family / community

- ❖ What helps them relax?
- ❖ What has helped them in the past?
- ❖ What currently gives them enjoyment?



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- ❖ What is the thing they most like to do?
- ❖ Repeat and echo what has been said repeatedly.
- ❖ Mention the tools that help: breathing, movement, reducing media exposure, setting an agenda.
- ❖ Connect to tools that you have already learnt, such as exercises, meditation, insights.
- ❖ Emphasize that the situation is temporary.
- ❖ Ask what things they did during this period they considered to be successful.

For example: I managed to take an internet course, arranged a photo album, etc.

- ❖ What opportunity can this period present for you?

For example: I tidied drawers, had time for myself, read books, cleaned the house, etc.

- ❖ Repeat the words "When I finish reading one book, I'll know that I gained something during this time.
- ❖ "Understand that we are not alone:

Ask: Who are your support agencies? Who do you use as a source of support?

- ❖ What does the support you receive look like?

For example: I talk to my parents every day, we support each other.

Summary of the meeting

Summarize what was said at the meeting: repeat all resources that patients are connected with, repeat what helps them, mention their sources of support, indicate what is good for them, what tools they can use, and what signs will show them that they are successful.

Check to see if a follow-up meeting required and if so - set a date for the meeting.

If necessary, refer to health funds' information centers, the Ministry of Health or welfare services.

Remote intervention for families with children

Most of the intervention will be with parental guidance, providing reinforcement and legitimacy of the objective difficulty.

The whole family can "meet" on-screen or briefly, before continuing with the parents, in order to maintain the "presence" of the family therapist and the therapeutic continuum.

It is advisable to have a round with family members: each one can share what they have gained, what makes each of them happy, what new things they found out about each other, etc.

It is important to strengthen the powers, resources and tools that they already have.

If difficulties and hardships arise, the tools they have acquired can be mentioned, emphasize the circles of protection/support around the children, and most importantly - strengthen the parents' abilities to help their children.

It is important for parents to help each member of the family maintain a space for themselves, as sharing excess time may result in stress and quarrels. It is also important that parents divide quality time for each child individually.

Parental guidance in remote intervention

- ❖ Emphasize that this is a temporary situation.
- ❖ Strengthen and connect resources: personal, family, community resources.
- ❖ Make a connection to tools/resources they have already acquired in therapy: exercises, techniques, insights.
- ❖ Give an explanation of how you want to mediate the situation for children:

Protect them from over-exposure to overwhelming and confusing information, provide age-appropriate and developmental information and to be aware of the impact of parental response on the child's response.

- ❖ Protected: Explain that while there is a danger, we as adults know what to do, and there are those who protect us. If we follow the instructions - we are protected.
- ❖ Emphasize the importance of having an agenda and creating a customized routine that includes activities of all kinds.
- ❖ Sharing responsibilities and tasks with children.

Define the duration of the screen time (even if more than usual).

"Make lemonade from lemons" - think what we can gain from the situation.



Parent-child

When is a parent-child meeting required?

- ❖ When the parent does not feel confident enough to mediate the messages to his children - the joint session will serve as a demonstration.
- ❖ When there is need for intervention around conflicts between parents and children that have intensified in the given situation.
- ❖ When it is important to maintain the continuity of the therapeutic relationship with the therapist.

Emphasize the temporary nature of the situation, on connecting to the various resources as outlined in the "Parental Guidance" section and on conveying protective messages. You can do some exercise, a dyadic task, a technique from the therapy sessions (exercise in creativity, drama, movement) and work on it together.

Children /youth - remote intervention

The intervention will be implemented when it is important to maintain contact with the child /youth to allow him / her to express themselves without parental presence. The intervention will allow them to raise difficulties and questions that concern them, ventilate and process.

- ❖ Emphasis should be placed on the temporary nature of the situation, connecting to various resources as discussed in the "Parental Guidance" section, including resources familiar from their treatment, and communicating supportive/protective messages.
- ❖ During the session, it is possible to combine play, creative, movement or therapy techniques.

Summary

Remote intervention allows us to maintain a therapeutic continuum and to provide additional interventions in emergencies. The Covid-19 epidemic is an example of this.

The important thing is to create an environment that closely resembles a face-to-face meeting.

The conversation itself is based on the same principles of intervention that operate in various emergency situations where no face-to-face meeting is possible.