

HERTFORDSHIRE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Working directly with children and families through virtual/online platforms

Principles:

- Safeguarding both the CYP and EP is paramount
- Best quality of interaction that we can achieve remotely
- As near as possible to 'normality'
- Set up a framework in which an online relationship is comfortable with everyone in it. Some CYP are very comfortable with video and others may prefer email/text
- Clarify rules and boundaries that establish an online relationship with the family, make no assumptions, even if you have known the person for some time. This provides safety for both you and them.

Guidance:

1. Use work equipment (laptop, or work phone and ideally a headset) – do NOT use personal phone or other equipment under any circumstances. Currently HCC allows Microsoft Teams in addition to the telephone, but email, text, digital questionnaire or HCC' survey tool may be preferred by individual CYP.
2. Consider what barriers (physical, language or otherwise) might you encounter, and how can you plan for these in advance for example sharing questions or visual supports before the discussion.
3. If you make a video call, please ensure you are dressed in your normal working clothes and wearing a HCC badge. Introduce yourself and show your badge to the camera.
4. Lighting is important. If there is a window near you, make sure it's not directly in front or behind you – aim to sit with the window to one side. Also make use of curtains/blind and lamps to adjust the lighting – it's important you can be seen clearly. Adjust the tilt and position of your laptop so your full face is showing
5. Be aware of what is in your room in a video call – nothing that identifies your family, your location, etc. Ensure the background environment is not overly intrusive, inappropriate or distracting. Make sure your camera does not have view of confidential documents
6. If speaking directly to a CYP, make arrangements in advance with parent/carer and discuss requirements for work space etc. Check out what technology the CYP / parent/carer has available. If working directly with YP 16+, confirm with adult in the household.
7. For safeguarding reasons, arrange with the family that a parent/carer will be in the house. They may be just outside the room, door ajar, or in view. Ensure the parent/family member understands this, and understands you will have to terminate the session if they leave the child alone in the house. Make sure a plan is in place for other siblings.
8. If, in very exceptional circumstances, you do need to talk to a CYP under 16 on their own, please put boundaries around it, eg that the carer leaves the room for a limited set period of time and then comes back.

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9. Ensure the YP is in a shared space such as living room or kitchen. Ensure you are in a similar space. Avoid either of you being in a bedroom, for example, which is more of an invasion of privacy.
10. Sometimes interruptions are unavoidable, particularly if children are being looked after in the household. Have a plan ready for what you will do if this happens and prepare whoever you are meeting with for the possibility that you might be interrupted. If you are interrupted, pause the meeting until the interruption is over
11. Check in with the YP more than you might normally do face to face eg what do you think is the most important thing for you out of all the ideas we have discussed? Always approach with respectful professional curiosity and be aware that conversations are entirely voluntary; the person can simply close the call at any time.
12. Write down what you say / what they say in any questioning so that if there is a query later you can identify how a misunderstanding or ambiguity might have occurred.
13. At the end, add a case note to IES with a brief summary of the discussion.
14. Send a brief email within a day asking for agreement that this is what was said (in an informal way is ok), so you have YP / family confirmation that the session went well. It could be, for example, a rating re how well the session went, what the YP most enjoyed or got out of it, something that they would like to have gone better). If there is anything that needs to be actioned at this point seek written confirmation ie email back that you have their consent to do so.
15. When writing up discussion in a report please state the circumstances in which information was gained for the purposes of assessment e.g. telephone or video meeting.
16. If anything feels really difficult, or a tricky situation arises, name it, say it would be better to call another time, hang up, and write it down and discuss it straight away with your supervisor/line-manager. Also social worker if necessary.
17. Please avoid video recording/Video interaction guidance
18. Avoid unexpected, repeated or out of working hours contact
19. Bear in mind your families' Wifi may be 'glitchy'. Similarly, if someone else is watching Netflix/working online this will be taxing on your signal. Consider which room in the house has strongest WiFi signal.
20. If the technology should fail during the session, agree with the CYP what you will do i.e. attempt to reconnect or continue by telephone.
21. Consider what you would do if the CYP suddenly ends the call or ends the call abruptly. Try to reconnect the call if possible, then make contact with the parents/carers by phone to check on the CYP. If we have safeguarding concerns (e.g. they disclose something then hang up), we should follow safeguarding procedures and contact social care in this scenario / police.

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22. It may be helpful to consider what the CYP may do after the call e.g. can they do something relaxing before they go back to their day-to- day activities.

Use of video data for assessment using online platforms

- In order to collect video data EPs can use Microsoft Teams to view footage of a CYP live with the parents'/child's consent. If the parent using a phone/ I pad they will be able to turn the screen so that they can follow the child. On a PC the parent would need to position the screen so that the child can be viewed. A privacy notice is not required as no record of the video would be made, and the footage would be viewed by the EP live.
- Where it is not possible to use Microsoft Teams then the parent send in a video through HertsFX ONLY after ensuring that the parent understands the process of HertsFX (as a secure document exchange) The Privacy notice and consent form attached should be sent to parents to make it clear what you are going to do with the footage, how long we will keep it for etc. It is important that the parent is not coerced into providing information in either way and that it is presented as a possible option for parents to support EP assessment.

17.04.2020 This guidance will be reviewed in the light of experience over the next few weeks. *With thanks to colleagues in Camden Oxfordshire and York EP Services*

British Psychological Society Division of Clinical Psychology: Effective therapy via video: Top tips