How to ensure a great telepsychiatry virtual visit appointment with Evergreen Psychiatric Care

If you haven't had a virtual visit before, your first telehealth visit might feel intimidating, but it shouldn't worry you one bit. With some preparation, you can be sure to have a great visit and finish the session satisfied, and not feeling like the technology was at all a hindrance to connecting with Dr. Schwarz.

1. Choosing an Appropriate Setting & Technology

What you will need:

- either a computer with a camera and microphone or a smartphone with a camera
- you may want to use headphones to reduce echo and mic cutout when the other individual speaks
- a stable internet connection
- a private setting

Please plan ahead to make sure that you have a private setting for the entire duration of the appointment. Most individuals have the appointment in their home, but on occasion, some individuals need to leave their home, go out to their vehicle or to a nearby park. Please do not attempt to drive during the appointment. If you are going to be at work, you might want to schedule the appointment during your lunch break so that you can step away easily.

2. Installing Zoom on your device

You must have Zoom downloaded on your device, but you **do not need to create a Zoom account.** Zoom usually downloads automatically when you click the meeting link (sent to you via email or patient portal) but you can install Zoom before the appointment on your device here: https://zoom.us/support/download. Zoom is available to be installed on a computer and most smartphones. As long as your device has a front-facing camera and microphone, you can use it. Of course, newer/faster devices are

preferred as they will have better quality camera and will transfer data more efficiently.

3. Checking Your Internet Speed

Having fast, reliable internet is integral to the visit. If your bandwidth/speed is slow, the video will lag and cut out causing a frustrating experience. For some people in poor cellular coverage areas, this means connecting to a wifi network.

To help you decide which network to use, go here to check your wifi speed. **Greater than 10 mb/s on download and upload is recommended.** If you are getting less than 10 mb/s, consider changing your network. If you are not getting internet speed greater than 1 mb/sec, you will not have a good experience and we recommend postponing the appointment until you can find faster internet.

4. Testing Zoom

Now that you have made sure you have a reliable internet connection and download/upload speed, you should test your device to make sure the settings are correct to work properly with Zoom. The easiest way to do this is to **join a test meeting**: https://zoom.us/test

You will want to make sure you:

- Give your computer/device permission to use the camera and audio.
- Can see yourself in the app. If you see your name, or an icon, then your camera is not on or is not working properly.
- Do not have an external speaker or headphones that will automatically connect unexpectedly.
- Consider using the 'Test my Audio' feature within Zoom: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-Testing-Computer-or-Device-Audio?mobile_site=true It will have you speak into the microphone, and then it will replay the sound back to you to make sure you can hear it.

5. Video Tips

If Dr. Schwarz cannot see you well, it will make it more difficult for her to pick up on certain non-verbal cues. We all depend on these visual cues to

communicate and to help us understand emotions. By ensuring Dr. Schwarz can see you, she will be able to understand you better. In addition, most insurance companies *require* that Dr. Schwarz can see you, otherwise it is not considered a telepsychiatry session and the visit will likely not be covered if you decide to submit a superbill.

- Try to _maximize_ front-facing lighting, and _minimize_ lighting behind you.
- Try to have most of your upper torso visible, from about your abdomen and up including your arms.
- If using a phone, prop it up on a stable surface to make it steadier. Please refrain from holding your phone as this results in a shaky image.

6. Audio Tips

A common issue is that when you join the meeting, your microphone might be muted. If that is the case, you'll see an icon on the Zoom app with a microphone and a red line through it — click that to unmute it.

- Headphones reduce echo and mic cutout when the other individual speaks. If you are experiencing audio issues, please try using headphones.
- After you join the test meeting you can check your audio settings: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362623-Changing-Settings-in-the-Desktop-Client-or-Mobile-App

Troubleshooting

- If you are concerned about privacy and security, rest assured the virtual session is secure.
- If you have difficulty joining the session or have questions, **please call the clinic at (207)200-7738**