

## Does online speech-language therapy really work?

'Telepractice' or 'telehealth' is the official term for Allied Health services (including speech-language therapy) being delivered virtually online via the internet. Telepractice has been around for many years, and there is much research evidencing that telepractice speech language therapy is equally effective as, and sometimes even more effective than, traditional (in-person) speech-language therapy.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) have been the first professional speech-language therapy associations in the world to officially approve telepractice as a valid delivery model of speech-language therapy, with the New Zealand Speech-Language Therapists' Association (NZSTA) following suit.

## What can I expect from telepractice speech-language therapy?

Speech-language therapy is generally provided in 2 different ways, and both ways can be delivered via telepractice:

### **Direct Therapy**

This is where the Speech-Language Therapist works directly with the child. Children need a certain level of communication, attention, behaviour, vision, hearing and mouse skills in order to be able to participate in direct telepractice speech-language therapy successfully. A parent or other adult needs to be present to support with managing the child's behaviour for engagement and best performance, with providing positive reinforcement, etc.

### **Indirect Therapy**

This is where the Speech-Language Therapist works indirectly with the child by working with the child's parents or carers instead. The Speech-Language Therapist works with the child's parents or carers to determine speech, language and communication strengths and weaknesses, to establish activity-based communication goals, to teach and support them to use strategies for setting up a language rich environment, to teach and support them to strategies for supporting the child's speech, language and communication development, and to teach and support them to identify clear and consistent communication expectations of the child, etc. (Research has shown that the effectiveness of indirect therapy delivered by a well-trained parent or carer is comparable to direct therapy delivered by a Speech-Language Therapist. Research has also shown that indirect therapy is most effective when combined with direct therapy.)

## What happens during online appointments?

Online appointments are very much the same as in-person appointments, the only difference being that children will be practicing their speech or language or literacy skills through interactive games and activities instead of table top games and activities. The guidance provided to your child by the Speech-Language Therapist will be the same as the guidance you are used to from your in-person appointments. The Speech-Language Therapist's expectations for parent / carer involvement will also be the same:

- Discuss participation expectations with your child beforehand
- Set up a reward system
- Support the child's positive behaviour and engagement during activities
- Carry out home practice during the week

## Technical Requirements

Here are the technical requirements to ensure success in our online sessions:

1. A computer, laptop, iPad, iPhone or other android device
2. Power  
(Make sure your device is plugged into a power source during the session or is fully charged before your online appointment)
3. Internet connection with a minimum speed of 150kbps  
(You can check your internet speed at: <https://www.speedtest.net/>. You can increase the stability of your internet connection and connection speed by connecting your computer directly to your modem using an ethernet cable instead of using Wi-Fi.)
4. Camera  
(Most devices have a built-in camera that will work just fine.)
5. Audio  
(Most devices have built-in microphones and speakers that will work just fine.)
6. OPTIONAL - if you have it  
Earphones or headphones with a microphone attached.
7. ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT  
Set up in a quiet, bright space and make sure there is minimal movement and noise from others in the background.

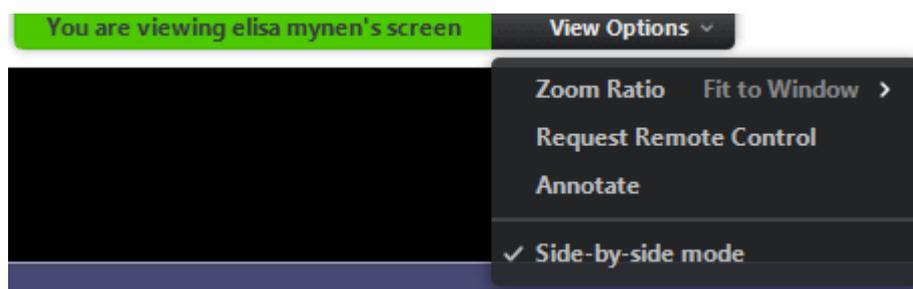
## Getting Started

1. Download the free 'Client for Meetings' on your selected device here: <https://zoom.us/download>. (We use the Zoom video conferencing platform to ensure your online privacy, because Zoom meets the strict conditions of the American Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and has 128 bit end-to-end SSL encryption.)
2. We will send your meeting ID and password to you by email before your appointment.
3. Five or ten minutes or so before your meeting starts:
  - If you are using a computer or laptop you need to go to <https://zoom.us/join> and enter your meeting ID and password to enter your appointment.
  - If you are using an iPad or iPhone or android device just click on the Zoom icon.

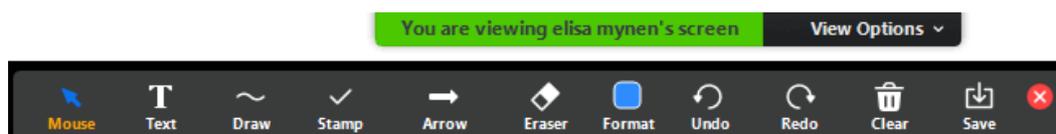
## Using Zoom features

The Speech-Language Therapist will be sharing activities on their screen for you to see and interact with on your screen. This is called screen sharing. You will have the option to *annotate* (select, write or draw on) these interactive activities.

Use the 'view options' down arrow to select 'annotate.'



You will see these annotation options:

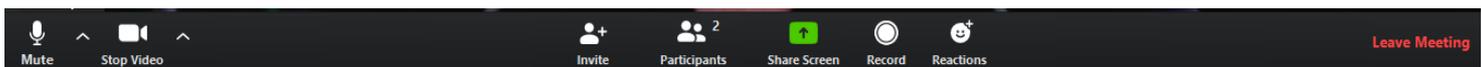


## Troubleshooting

If you have trouble logging in for your appointment, ring your Speech-Language Therapist for help straight away:

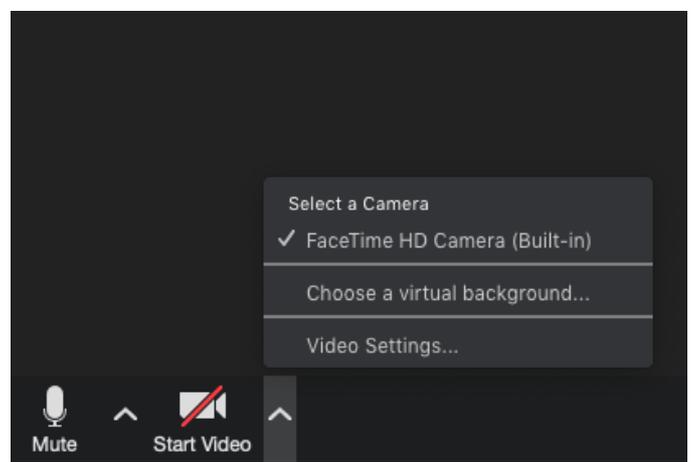
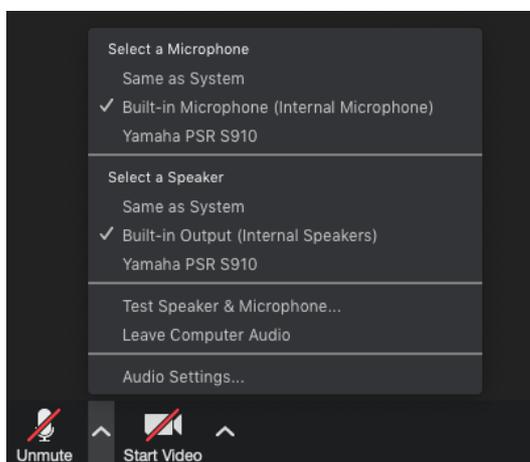
- ★ Elisa 021 0279 1415
- ★ Bernice 027 519 8639

Here is what the toolbar along the bottom of the Zoom window looks like. If it is not showing, you can make it show by moving your cursor down to the bottom edge of the window.



If you cannot hear your Speech-Language Therapist or they cannot hear you:

- Click on the 'unmute' icon at the bottom left of the Zoom window so it does not have a red line through it
- Use the up arrow beside the microphone icon to select built-in microphone and built-in speakers / output
- Check that the volume on your device and earphones or headset is turned up
- Check that your earphones / headset are connected to your device
- Go into device settings and check that the microphone and speakers are working



If you cannot see your Speech-Language Therapist or they cannot see you:

- Click on the 'start video' icon at the bottom left of the Zoom window so it does not have a red line through it
- Use the up arrow beside the video icon to select the built-in camera
- Go into device settings and check that the camera is working