



TIPS AND TOOLS FOR VIRTUAL GROUP VISITS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES


AT THE END OF THIS SESSION,
PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE
TO:

① Understand important considerations for virtual care

② Identify specific considerations essential for virtual groups

③ Consider key digital health equity considerations when planning sessions

BACKGROUND

- » COVID-19 has  Telemedicine adoption
- » Changes to provincial policies have enabled delivery of virtual visits
- » Typically 1:1 sessions, now seeing more group sessions
- » Lots of evidence on virtual care effectiveness and clinicians building therapeutic alliances virtually¹
- » Important considerations: clinical/health outcomes, safety, privacy, equity and legal

CONSIDERATIONS FOR VIRTUAL VISITS

- » Verify patient identity
- » Patient consents to participate
- » Confirm: phone number; geo-location of patient; emergency contact; and safety plan
- » Ensure patient knows how to contact you if they can't access care via video (e.g.- phone)
- » Ensure using a secure, encrypted platform that meets provincial standards
- » Have technology support information readily available

TIPS FOR GROUPS

- » Develop a process to obtain consent and identification privately
- » Ensure patients are aware that others will be joining
- » Suggest turning off recording function
- » Assess if others in the group are comfortable if some are not using cameras and establish group norms
- » Conduct orientation or test technology before first session

PATIENT REMINDERS

- » Consent not to record or share info
- » Confirm they are in a private space
- » Participants have to notify facilitator if they have to leave
- » Let participants know that if you are concerned, you may contact them separately
- » Let participants know how to contact you if they have technical issues

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

- » Consider limiting group size, and have 2+ facilitators for groups larger than 4
- » Have a way to communicate with other facilitators
- » Develop a plan for urgent situations
- » Explain how participants can contact you if they have issues or concerns
- » Document visits in patient chart

SCHEDULING + TECHNOLOGY TIPS

- » Send individual invitations with link, do not share email addresses (PI)
- » Inform participants not to share invitation with others
- » Review participant list at start and confirm you have identified all participants
- » Disable record function

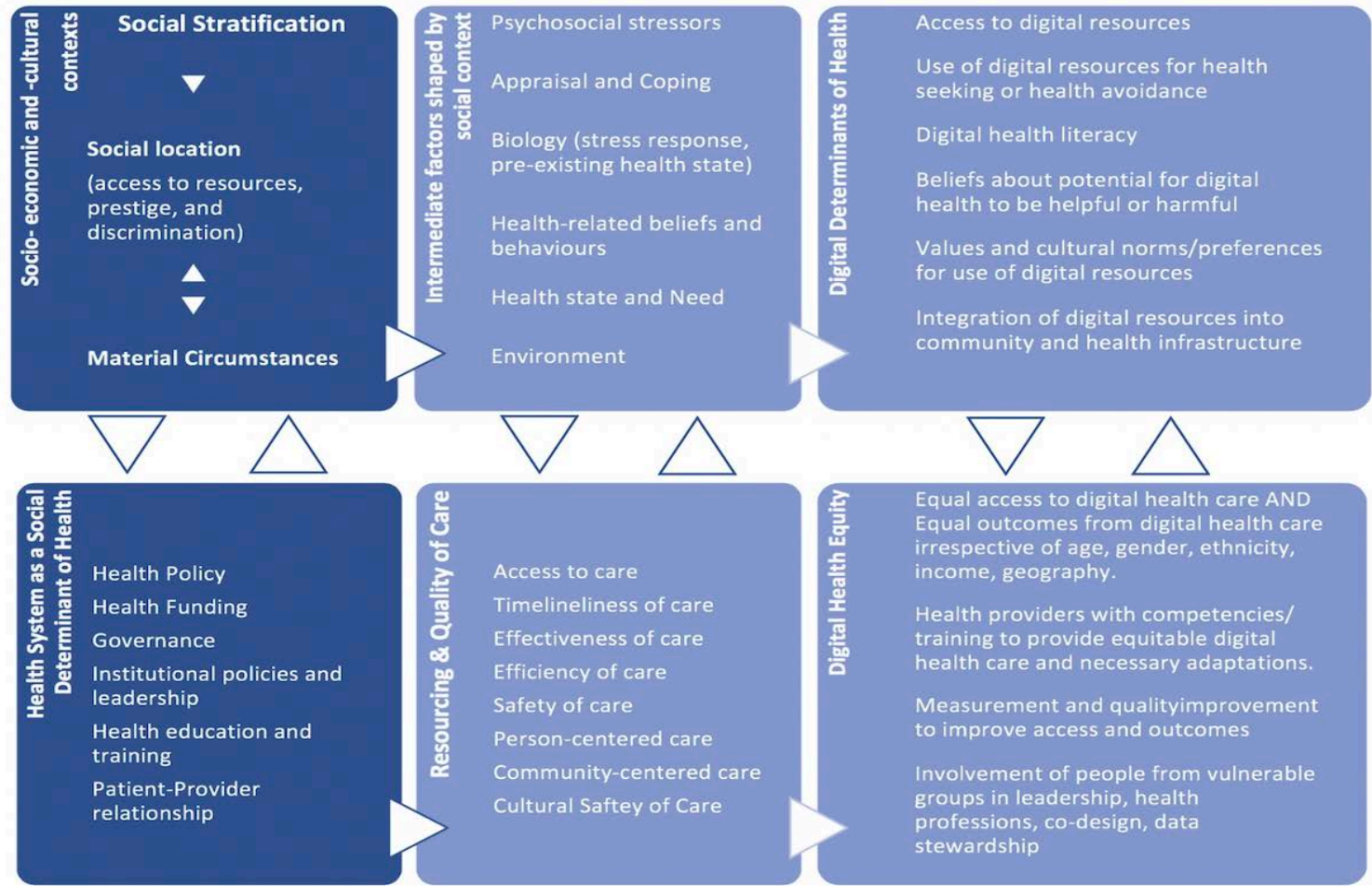
SCHEDULING + TECHNOLOGY TIPS

- » Consider whether to enable or disable chat function
- » Decide whether you prefer a webinar model, or an interactive session with video
- » Use virtual waiting room to let people in one at a time
- » Lock room when all participants have arrived
- » If using screen share, close all other documents

DIGITAL HEALTH EQUITY

- » Do all my patients have access to technology and wifi?
- » Do they have a private/secure place to participate in a session?
- » If they can only use phone, will others on the call feel comfortable?
- » Have I provided sufficient guidance and orientation on how to access the platform?
- » Is there another option if technology is not possible?

DIGITAL HEALTH EQUITY FRAMEWORK



Crawford A, Serhal E. Digital Health Equity and COVID-19: The Innovation Curve Cannot Reinforce the Social Gradient of Health. J Med Internet Res 2020;22(6):e19361. URL: <https://www.jmir.org/2020/6/e19361>

REFLECTIONS

- » Are you currently running virtual groups?
 - If yes, what tips/tricks can you share?
 - If no, what are your biggest barriers?

- » What are the top challenges you face in delivering care virtually (i.e. technology, engagement concerns)? What has been helpful in overcoming these challenges?

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THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?