

Online Music Therapy

Policy and Practice (Vs1.0)

Suffolk Music Therapy Services

This Policy and Practice document has been compiled to outline key guidelines and support best practice for delivering Music Therapy using video conferencing applications and webcams.

Overview

We recommend that all Music therapists who wish to use an Online Music Therapy Approach carefully read this document and follow the guidelines. We also recommend that Music Therapists use the 'Zoom' application as this is a widely recognised, secure and approved tool for confidential video conferencing. Zoom is GDPR compliant and is a very versatile app for Online Music Therapy. Online Music Therapy has been developed by Suffolk Music Therapy Services in response to a growing number of clients self-isolating with schools and carehomes in lockdown as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. Due to limited access to individual and group Music Therapy sessions, we have developed an approach that will enable our Music Therapists to work remotely with a range of clients with different needs. The fundamental principles of Music Therapy remain the same and the aims and goals for each individual will continue to guide our therapeutic work. Online Music Therapy can only be delivered by a qualified and registered Music Therapist.

Set up Zoom App

The 'Zoom App' is a safe and secure way to deliver Online Music Therapy. In preparation, please download the Zoom app and test to see if it is all working correctly and that you know how to use it. Zoom can be downloaded onto a laptop, computer, phone or tablet. If any of you have any problems and need help, please contact Music Therapy Manager, Ray Travasso or a Senior Music Therapist in the team.

Getting Started: click on link below

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362033-Getting-Started-on-Windows-and-Mac>

Download App: click on link below

https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting

Setting Up

It is really important that you are aware of your surroundings when using the Zoom app, or any other webcam application. The space in which you are delivering the work becomes a therapy room. There should not be pictures of family or friends, phone numbers or other sensitive information in the background. Consider the lighting. Generally, keep the lighting levels high and try not to have a window or light behind you as you may 'silhouette'. Are you close to the camera or far away? It is best that you are close to the camera but not too close. What room are you in? The room that you are using needs to be private without children, distractions, pets and partners. Confirm that no-one is likely to open the door in the room, perhaps by putting a reminder note on the door.

As a rule, we recommend that you position yourself with your head and shoulders visible on the screen. In your settings, ensure that the client is the larger image where possible and the Music Therapist, is the smaller image. Make sure you keep the image of yourself on the screen as this allows you to see what the client is seeing.

Background noise. Is the dishwasher or washing machine on in the room next door? Are there other sounds that may distract or interfere with the work. Try and keep the background noise to a minimum. Are you using the microphone for speech or music? If you are using for music, then you may need a better quality microphone. Test to see if the levels are working well. The general rule is that you are close to the microphone so that it picks up your voice with clarity.

For best results and optimum Music Therapy experience, we highly recommend that there is a very good wi-fi signal present for both the therapist and client. If there is a poor signal, then the video may freeze and the audio may cut in and out, making the experience very frustrating and non-productive. Please check you have a very good wi-fi signal in the room of the Music Therapist and the client.

Remember, this is still Music Therapy but it is being delivered in a different way. This means that the main elements of Music Therapy, i.e therapeutic relationship, listening, musical responses, aims and goals continue as before. The difference is that you may need to slightly modify and adapt your approach to achieve the aims.

Role-Play and Test

We highly recommend that you test and role-play making music when using the Zoom App before you work with clients. It is crucial that you are familiar with the tool, so you can help the client set it up on their end and you can help to troubleshoot, should they need any assistance. As a guide, we recommend that you trial the Online Music Therapy Approach 2 – 3 times including once with a Supervisor or Senior Music therapist. For some Music Therapists, you may wish to trial more role-play sessions. Once you are both confident, you are then good to go.



Using Headphones

For best results and clarity of sound, we recommend that Music therapists use wired headphones. Bluetooth headphones may create some delay and this is undesirable. We also recommend that you think about the type of headphones that you are using as this could be potentially distracting or 'different' for your client and may impede your relationship. Try and use headphones which are more subtle and try not to use a pair that looks like you are wearing something that's more suitable on an airport runway!

Using Microphones

As you will be using voice and music in your sessions, think about the microphone set up very carefully. Most devices like iPads and laptops have mics and webcams built in. Think about how far the sound source will be to the microphone. If you are playing an instrument, think about where the microphone is positioned so that it can be heard clearly. It is important that during the session you can see the microphone levels so that the client doesn't just hear a very distorted sound or at the other extreme, nothing at all. The level monitor on the Zoom app will help you work this out.

Testing audio levels: click on link below

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-Testing-computer-or-device-audio>

Optimize the Audio

There is lots of technology behind the microphones and audio in Zoom. Therefore, we have found that it is best to keep quite still when you are making music or speaking as this disrupts the levels. Try to position the mic near the sound source and closer to your voice, so that there is a better balance between voice and guitar for example. When playing music, play simply and keep left hand (lower frequencies) simplified. Sometimes the software thinks that the left hand accompaniment is background noise and it will try to cancel it out! Generally, with the right hand, melody should be quite clear. Try recording and testing to see how it comes out so that you can hear back. Think about where you position the laptop (camera). Make sure that it is safe and not too far away.

Using in-ear headphones prevents audio-spill- i.e: your microphone picking up the sound coming from your own speakers. It also gives you the option to have just one headphone in, leaving the other ear free to clearly hear yourself playing.

Safeguarding, Confidentiality and Data Protection

It is essential that a parent is present if you are working remotely with a child. When you are communicating with parents about setting up Zoom, please request that 'it is important that a parent is present during the Online Music Therapy sessions'. This is a safeguarding requirement and with the support of the parent present, this will also help aid the Music Therapy session. If during a Music therapy session, there is a safeguarding concern observed by the Music therapist, then the Safeguarding Lead will be notified and normal safeguarding procedures will apply. When checking to set up Online Music Therapy with families and children, please request that there is consent given for this to be delivered. Ensure that the family and individual fully understand how their data will be used and stored. Please go through with the family and send them The Guide for Parents (Online Music Therapy) document. You should document that this has been completed by keeping a record. The Guide for Parents (Online Music Therapy) also includes The Suffolk Music Therapy Services Data Protection and Privacy Statement. Explain the risks to using Webcams (see section below) and gain their consent before proceeding with the therapeutic work. Document everything with date and time and signature as per BAMT documentation guidelines.

When discussing setting up Online Music Therapy, please remind families that children should be suitably dressed for safeguarding reasons and it goes without saying that the therapists should do the same.

How to Prevent Webcam Hacking

We know that cameras can give snoopers a look into your private life. Ways to reduce this are:

1. Cover your Webcam, or disable it if you don't use it – it has been reported that even Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and former FBI director James Comey put tape over theirs. Suffolk Music Therapy Services has a stock of Webcam covers for any Music Therapist in the team or client that wishes to use them. Please request directly to Music Therapy Manager, Ray Travasso for a webcam cover.
2. Always use up to date antivirus software and make sure that your 'firewall' is enabled. Only use your camera over a secure internet connection. Keep your operating system, browser and software up to date. Don't click on suspicious links and don't chat with strangers online.
3. Be wary of fake emails which appear to be sent from trusted sources and ask you to download attachments, click on a link or disclose any personal details.

General Rules for Several People Using Zoom

For a group Zoom call, it is best to 'schedule' a meeting. We also recommend that there is a 'chair'. Everyone should mute themselves when they are not speaking. If someone would like to say something, then they should raise their hand to indicate that they wish to speak. The reason for this is to maximize the audio quality for the meeting and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.



Movement when Using Webcams

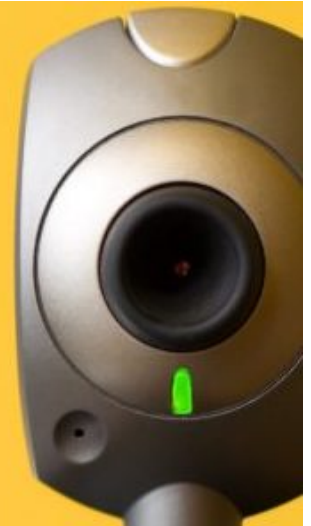
The software built into the webcam applications is very sophisticated. It also tries to find ways of efficiently sending the video information while maintaining quality. For best video results, we have found that it is important to stay still and move and gesture slowly as the camera will pick this up much better and it will create a better viewing experience for the client. If you move quickly, your image will appear jerky and may drop in and out at points. Try this when you are role playing the Music Therapy sessions as a test. While the Music therapist may not wish to inhibit or put any restrictions on the client, it may be appropriate at times to explain this to the client. The Music Therapist will need to use their clinical judgement on whether to explain this.

Overview of Online Music Therapy Session

When planning an Online Music Therapy session in advance, think about including the following:

- A 'check-in' with the individual on how they are. Please be aware that what is being discussed with a parent should be suitable for the child to hear also. If the parents wishes to have a separate conversation away from the child, this may be more appropriate.
- Request that the client's device is positioned at the right height for them (ask client or carers to assist with this). If they have an additional speaker you could suggest they use this so that you come across as clearly as possible.
- It may also be helpful to determine the delay through a simple test of asking the client or carers to clap after you count to three. Then swap around so they can experience the delay also.
- If the client has any musical instruments available at home, ask for them to be made ready at the start of the session.
- If possible, try to start the Music Therapy session in a similar way to how you usually would start e.g. 'hello song'.
- As the families/individuals speak about the situation, this may help to inform what type or form of music you are going to play. This may include pre-composed songs, improvisations, relaxation, breathing, etc. there are some great examples from the team in how they have used music in Online Music Therapy.
- A 'check-out' time is offered which enables the individual to talk about the session, review and think about the week ahead, etc.

Top Tips when Using Zoom



How to Adjust Audio and Video Settings on Zoom

To adjust audio or video settings, click on the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362623-Changing-settings-in-the-desktop-client-or-mobile-app>

Is the Microphone Connected?

Check your zoom app is connected to your external microphone (if you have one). When on a video call, bottom left corner, by 'mute' there is a little arrow... click on that arrow and then under 'select a microphone' click on your external microphone.

Headphones for Client

For best audio quality, headphones is the preferred option. However, this may not be possible for some of the clients whom you work with.

How to Invite People to Zoom Sessions

When inviting people by zoom, sending them the personal ID number is simplest. On the zoom home page they click 'JOIN' and then enter the ID number when prompted. Another way to invite someone is by email. Click 'Meetings' at the top of Zoom home page then 'copy invitation'. Paste this into an email to the person you want to invite. However, it is best to get rid of all the blurb that's been copied – and just write, 'please copy and paste this link into your browser', and include the web link.

Don't Forget to Make Eye Contact!

When improvising or reading chords/music, don't forget to look up to make eye contact with the client. You might also use eye contact and/or gesture to cue in your client. Remember, to look at the camera to create eye contact (they are not actually behind the computer screen!).

Check in Frequently with the Client/Parent Present in the Session

At the beginning of the session check to see if the sound and volume are ok for the client, can they hear your voice, can they hear the instrument, start with a 'soundcheck'. Mid session - How are they finding it (you might acknowledge it's different and maybe a bit weird!) You may need to lean in towards the microphone for speech/conversation.

Make Sure both Sides of your Headphones Work!

Especially if you are having one ear in and one ear out - make sure the side that works is in your ear!

Rhythm

Don't be afraid of using rhythm – this worked well in role play when the client was singing a familiar song. The rhythmic guitar playing was what carried more so than the harmony and the clear rhythmic drive felt supportive. (Obviously this is just one example and rhythmic drive may not be appropriate, but don't necessarily rule it out.)

Start on Time

You will need to start on time for these sessions, as you would in normal Music Therapy sessions. Waiting online for 1 minute may feel like a lifetime.

Familiarise Yourself with the Zoom App

We can't stress enough the importance of getting used to the app. Try testing it with friends. Waiting online for 1 minute may feel like a lifetime.

Technical Problems

There are a number of weblinks and online tutorials to help with any troubleshooting with Zoom.
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697>

Safeguarding Concerns

If there are any safeguarding concerns that arise during an Online Music Therapy session, we recommend that the usual processes will apply – contact Jenny Travasso jenny@suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk, Suffolk Music Therapy Services Safeguarding Lead, or social services.

For any other queries about using Webcam Music Therapy, please speak to the Music Therapy Manager, Ray Travasso ray@suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk