How to Access Psychology Telehealth in Australia



Psychology telehealth can make an appointment more accessible when travel, work, school, caring responsibilities or location make a clinic visit difficult. For people working out **how to access psychology telehealth**, the practical path usually starts with choosing the right service, checking whether telehealth suits the appointment type, and confirming referral and fee arrangements before booking.

Telehealth is not a separate kind of psychology. It is a way of attending an appointment, usually by secure video platform, with a registered psychologist. The clinical work may

include an initial consultation, psychological therapy, developmental history taking, structured questionnaires, feedback sessions and planning with other involved professionals. What can be completed by telehealth depends on the reason for the appointment and the assessment requirements.

How to access psychology telehealth step by step

The first step is to identify what support is being sought. A person may be looking for psychological therapy for anxiety, low mood, sleep difficulties or the practical impacts of attention and executive-function difficulties. Another person may be seeking an ADHD, autism or learning assessment pathway. These needs can involve different appointment lengths, information gathering and options for telehealth.

A clinic can explain whether the first appointment is suitable by video and whether later appointments need to be in person. It is useful to provide a short description of the reason for seeking care, the age of the person attending, and any referral already in place. This allows the clinic to advise on the service pathway rather than simply booking a general appointment that may not meet the person's needs.

A referral is not always required to make contact with a psychologist. People may self-refer, or be referred by a GP, paediatrician, psychiatrist, school professional or allied health practitioner. However, a referral and Mental Health Care Plan may be needed where a person is seeking a Medicare rebate and meets the relevant Medicare requirements. The clinic should confirm current fees, rebate eligibility and any out-of-pocket cost before the first appointment.

For children and adolescents, a parent or caregiver usually makes the initial contact and takes part in relevant discussions. For adults, telehealth can be a practical option for arranging an initial consultation around employment, family commitments or distance from the clinic.

Choosing a telehealth psychology service

The right service is determined by the clinical question, not only by whether appointments are available online. A psychologist should be registered with the Psychology Board of Australia. The clinic should also explain who will conduct the appointment, what information will be collected, how video sessions are delivered, and what happens if telehealth is not appropriate for part of the process.

For a neurodevelopmental assessment, it is reasonable to ask whether the service includes a developmental history, structured measures, information from school or other professionals where relevant, and a feedback appointment. An assessment is more than an online screening questionnaire. It considers the person's history, current functioning and information from appropriate sources, alongside the clinical presentation.

It is also helpful to clarify the role of each practitioner involved. Psychologists can provide assessment, diagnostic support, psychological therapy and planning. They do not prescribe medication. Where medical decisions are needed, these sit with a GP, paediatrician or psychiatrist. Clear communication between practitioners can help ensure that assessment findings and support planning are considered alongside medical care where relevant.

Telehealth for ADHD and autism assessment

Telehealth may be used for parts of an ADHD or autism assessment, particularly an initial consultation, detailed developmental history, interviews with parents or caregivers, collection of background information and feedback. Video appointments can also make it easier for separated parents, adult family members or other relevant people to contribute from different locations, when appropriate consent is in place.

Some components may need to occur in person. This can depend on the person's age, the reason for assessment, the information already available, the type of measures being used and the clinician's judgement about what is required. A clinic should explain this before the assessment begins, including whether the pathway will be fully online or use a combination of video and face-to-face appointments.

For school-aged children, reports, work samples and observations from school may form part of the background information. A parent or caregiver may be asked to complete questionnaires and provide early developmental details. For adults seeking assessment later in life, the process may include discussion of childhood history, education, work, relationships and day-to-day organisation. Historical information can be useful, but the specific records available vary considerably between people.

A diagnosis, where supported by the assessment, is not the end of the process. Feedback should set out the findings in plain language and identify next steps. These might include psychological therapy, practical supports, school or workplace adjustments, discussion with a GP or specialist, or further assessment in another area. Autism and ADHD are not conditions psychologists cure. The purpose of assessment and support is to understand the person's needs and develop a considered clinical pathway.

Preparing for a video appointment

A telehealth appointment works best when the person has a private, quiet space and a reliable internet connection. Headphones may help with privacy and sound quality, particularly in a shared home. A mobile phone can be used when necessary, although a computer or tablet often makes it easier to view forms and discuss documents.

Before the session, the clinic may send consent forms, questionnaires or instructions for joining the video platform. These should be completed as early as possible, especially when they are part of an assessment. Parents and caregivers may also be asked to gather previous reports from school, allied health practitioners or medical professionals. Providing existing information does not replace assessment, but it can help the psychologist understand the background.

At the beginning of a telehealth session, the psychologist will usually confirm the person's location and a contact number. This is a practical safety measure if a video connection drops or an urgent concern arises during the appointment. For a child or adolescent appointment, the psychologist may discuss when a caregiver should remain

in the room, when the young person may speak independently, and how confidentiality is handled within the limits of safety and the law.

Privacy, technology and when in-person care is preferable

Telehealth requires attention to privacy at both ends of the call. Clinics should use an appropriate platform and explain how personal information is handled. At home, privacy may mean choosing a room away from others, using headphones, turning off device notifications and avoiding public Wi-Fi where possible.

Video care is not suitable for every situation. A person may prefer face-to-face appointments because home is not private, technology is unreliable, communication is easier in the room, or the assessment includes tasks that need in-person observation. There are also times when a clinician may recommend local urgent support or an in-person appointment because of immediate safety concerns. This is a clinical decision based on the circumstances, not a failure of telehealth.

People living outside metropolitan areas may find telehealth particularly useful, while others may choose a blended arrangement. BNC is based in Doncaster and provides appointments by Zoom across Australia, with in-person appointments available in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs. Availability and suitability should be confirmed directly with the clinic when booking.

Medicare and referral arrangements

Medicare rebates are not automatic for every psychology appointment or assessment. Eligibility depends on the type of service, the referral documents held, the Mental Health Care Plan where required, and current Medicare rules. Some assessment components may have different fee and rebate arrangements from therapy appointments.

A GP can discuss whether a Mental Health Care Plan is appropriate and provide a referral where relevant. A person can still contact a psychology clinic before seeing their GP to understand the appointment process, likely documents and expected fees. Bringing that information to the GP appointment can make it easier to discuss the referral pathway.

Practical access starts with clear information. Asking about appointment format, assessment stages, referral requirements, fees and privacy before booking helps set expectations. Whether care happens by video, in person or through a combination of both, the aim is a pathway that fits the person's circumstances and gives the psychologist the information needed to provide considered support.

For more information

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