



ONLINE THERAPY IN SPEECH & LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY

PLEASE FIND BELOW A LIST OF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND OUR RESPONSES. IF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS AFTER REVIEWING THIS, OR FOR SCHEDULING YOUR CHILD'S SESSION ONLINE, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH ME. I AM ALSO AVAILABLE FOR 30-MINUTE PARENT TRAINING & BEHAVIORAL CONSULTATION SESSIONS.

1. What is online therapy?

Online Therapy, also known as teletherapy, web-based therapy, e-therapy or e-counselling is therapy delivered by a licensed therapist through a virtual platform.

2. How does it work?

Online therapy sessions work the same way as traditional therapy sessions with only one difference – the therapist and the client are not in the same room and are meeting in an online room. At confirmation of your appointment, you will receive an e-mail from your therapist with their Zoom username credentials. You can also add any Zoom user as a contact by specifying their email address. After they approve your contact request, you will be able to meet instantly.

3. Why should I consider online therapy for my child?

Health & safety: Online therapy allows us to limit social interaction as we collectively work towards keeping clients, their families, our team, and the community safe during the COVID 19 pandemic. This is in alignment with safety measures issued by the Dubai Health Authority, Ministry of Health, and the World Health Organization.

Comfort & convenience: You can have sessions from the comfort and safety of your home.

4. Are there benefits to online therapy?

Yes, there are many benefits to online therapy. Clients have reported that they enjoy the ease of access of online therapy. It saves on travel time and it's less disruptive to schedules. Specifically, parents have also found it helpful for themselves or their children, as it does not require them to leave the home to receive support.

5. How can Speech and Language Therapy be conducted online?

Therapists use a hybrid approach that combines synchronous (i.e. client-interactive) & asynchronous (i.e. document and share) methods that make the sessions both effective and fun. The therapist plans and prepares materials and documents that can be shared ahead of the session or can be used simultaneously in the session using the 'share content' tab on the Zoom meeting platform. These materials target the child's treatment goals and the therapist uses these materials to teach, practice, and collect progress data. Online therapy sessions also incorporate reinforcers, movement breaks, and back-up activities to maintain attention and motivation.

- 6. What is the recommended frequency and duration of my child's sessions?**
This is individualized and is best determined by the therapist. However, sessions are usually 40-45 minutes in length with the child and 5-10 minutes for feedback with parents. It is recommended that your child receive the same number of hours online as they receive in the clinic. Given the current circumstances of school closures and online learning, it may be beneficial to increase the frequency of speech and language therapy for some children. For some children, online therapy may not be recommended. The alternative would be Parent Training sessions.
- 7. I am concerned that online sessions may not be very beneficial and useful for my child. What do you advise?**
Although speech and language online therapy has been researched, tested, and proven effective for more than a decade, I completely hear you and understand that you may have this concern. This is all very new for many. Rest assured, that if your child is not responding to therapy as hoped or I believe that there is little benefit through the online medium within a few sessions, I will recommend we have a discussion to determine next steps. It may be best to discontinue and maintain a 30-minute check-in with sharing of resources or pause therapy until the situation changes and therapy resumes in the clinic. I am committed to positive outcomes and my ethical compass and will not compromise on this commitment.
- 8. Are parents expected to attend therapy sessions with their child?**
This is the best time for parent involvement. I have always encouraged parents to attend and be present in therapy; as they generally play a crucial role in the therapeutic process. You can help facilitate during sessions and elicit, practice, and encourage target goals in everyday environments and across contexts. This will ultimately maximize your child's progress and success – especially the younger ones.
- 9. Is online therapy as effective as face-to-face therapy?**
Research shows that online therapy is just as effective as traditional face-to-face therapy when working with a range of difficulties.
- 10. Is online therapy effective for children and teens?**
Research shows that online therapy is effective for children and teens addressing many issues, such as anxiety, depression, as well as speech and language difficulties.
- 11. Is it confidential?**
Yes. The video software we use (Zoom) is encrypted and confidential. It is as secure as can be in terms of anything that exists online. In addition, therapists are ethically bound by the same confidentiality laws as in-person sessions. Online sessions are not recorded or shared.
- 12. Will it feel strange?**
For children, it may be an adjustment, but what we are finding (especially now with e-learning taking place for all school-aged children across the UAE), is that children to transitioning incredibly well (often seamlessly), and they feel it's a fun and enjoyable experience.
- 13. What are the technical requirements for online therapy?**
You will need a camera enabled device such as a laptop, computer, smartphone, iPad, or tablet with Wi-Fi/data and audio connection. For best connectivity, you will need Wi-Fi. It is also helpful to have headphones so that you can hear clearly, while maintaining as much confidentiality as possible. You will need to download the free Zoom application from the App store or online at <http://www.zoom.us>. It is very easy to download and use, and we will share set up instructions with you. If you have any problems, please call The LightHouse Arabia and someone will be happy to help.

14. Can I pay online?

Yes, you will get a payment link which you can use every time to make the payment. Our system does not allow for appointments to be confirmed unless payments are made so we advise you to make the payment by 12pm one day before to the appointment, in order for your appointment to be secured.

15. What if the session gets disconnected?

If for some reason your video connectivity is poor, or you get disconnected, we will have a back-up plan that is agreed upfront (we will use a different platform, or I will call you/your child).

16. How do I help to make sure my child gets the most out of our online session?

- Download the Zoom App the day before and get familiar with it so you are not rushed at the last minute.
- Treat your online session the way you would treat an in-person session. Please have your child wear day clothes for the session. Kindly refrain from wearing pyjamas, as this takes the seriousness out of the therapy.
- Confidentiality: Sit in a space where you/your child can focus, engage, and express themselves.
- Limit distractions: Turn off or mute all other apps or notifications on your device that may be a distraction. You can make the environment soothing and calming to help facilitate the therapeutic process.
- Clean your webcam: This helps us to see each other clearly.
- Check connectivity: Make sure your Wi-Fi is working, device is charged, and audio and video are working prior to the session.
- Eye contact: Position yourself and the camera in a way where we can make good eye contact. This will help the child to feel more connected.
- Sit close to the camera: This helps us to remain engaged and communicate clearly with each other.