

Patient experiences in receiving virtual psychotherapy: a qualitative study

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Guide for interviewing patients about receiving virtually delivered psychotherapy

Introduction

- Personal introduction of the interviewer and interviewee
- *We want to learn about your experience with online therapy.*
- *Our meeting should take between 30 to 60 minutes.*
- *This discussion will be confidential, so please feel comfortable sharing your ideas. In reporting our findings, we may use some quotes from our discussions with participants, but we will not identify the source of the quote.*
- *With your permission, I will begin recording our interview for transcription and data analysis.*
- Begin RECORDING on Zoom

Consent (record verbal consent)

- Name of interviewer, participant number (or first name), date and time of interview.
- *Have you read the consent form, and do you consent to participating in this interview and it being recorded?*
- *Do you have any questions about the consent documents or information we provided?*

Interview Questions and Prompts

Ok. Let's get started. I am going to ask you some questions about your experiences of receiving psychotherapy online (that is, virtually with your therapist on a platform like Zoom).

1. *When you learned that your therapy would be delivered online, what expectations did you have about online therapy?*

- *Were these expectations about the therapy itself or therapy being offered online?*
- *Have you ever had in-person therapy? How did this impact your expectations of online therapy?*
- *Did you have any concerns before you started therapy online? About what?*
 - *Follow up if necessary: Were the concerns about therapy in general, or online therapy specifically?*
 - *If necessary, prompt for convenience, outcomes, and therapeutic relationship.*

2. *Generally, how has your experience been with online therapy? Has it been mostly positive, negative, or a bit of both?*

a. *Tell me more about things that are/were not going so well for you in online therapy.*

- *Is there anything about doing therapy online that was challenging for you?*
- *Is there anything about yourself, or what you were hoping to get out of therapy, or anything else that contributed to these challenges?*
 - *Examples: Reason why you sought treatment? Discomfort with technology? Housing situation/having appropriate space?*
- *Is there anything about your therapist that contributed to these challenges?*
Examples: Therapist's use of technology? Where the therapist is located, who is offering the therapy?

b. *Tell me more about the positive aspects of receiving therapy online.*

- *Is there anything about yourself, what you were hoping to get out of therapy, that contributed to what you liked about online therapy?*
 - *Examples: Reason why you sought treatment? Comfort with technology?*
- *Is there anything about your therapist that contributed to what you liked about online therapy?*
 - *Example: Comfort with technology?*

Interviewer makes a statement about how the working relationship with the therapist is sometimes important in helping people get the most out of therapy, and how we will now explore how doing therapy online may impact different aspects of this working relationship.

3. *How was your relationship with your therapist during the online therapy sessions? By relationship, I mean how comfortable you were with your therapist (liking them, sharing things with them).*

- *Prompt: Feeling of closeness with them. Feeling of comfort with them. Feeling of*

liking or disliking them.

- *Do you think that having your therapy online impacted your working relationship with your therapist? How so?*

4. *Do you think that having your therapy online impacted what you hoped to get out of therapy? How so?*

- *Were you and your therapist able to agree on what you wanted to get out of therapy? Did your therapist understand what you wanted to get out of it?*
- *How did online therapy fit with your reason for seeking therapy and your goals?*

5. *How do you think online therapy impacted how you and your therapist worked together during sessions (e.g., agreeing on what you did or how therapy proceeded)?*

- *How did you feel about you and your therapist being able to agree on what you did during online sessions?*
- *Were you and your therapist able to agree on things to discuss or do during the online therapy?*
 - *Examples: homework, exercises during sessions, topics of discussion.*

6. *Thinking back to what you've told me, is there a time that comes to mind when you and your therapist disagreed on something, or were not on the same page while doing online therapy?*

- *Generally, what was the issue about? Did you resolve it?*
- *To what extent do you think that working online played a role in this disagreement?*

7. *Thinking back to everything we've talked about today, what do you think could improve your experience with online therapy?*

- *What could you or your therapist do/have done differently to improve the experience of receiving online therapy? What do you recommend to therapists and patients considering doing therapy online?*

Conclusion

8. *Is there anything about your experience with online therapy that you would like to add before we end?*

- *Ask if they have any remaining questions about the study*
- *Thank the interviewee for their time and responses.*
- *End recording.*