

Getting the Most Out of Your Group Telehealth Sessions: Tips for Patients

1. Come prepared as if you were coming to an in-person group session. Being dressed for the camera and sitting up will help to put you in a ready mindset for the group session.
2. Keep your camera on. Group members will want to see your face, and you will want to see them. Nonverbals convey meaning as well.
3. The same rules of an in-person group apply to the telehealth group session as well. Confidentiality, respectful communication of feedback or thoughts, and mindfulness to what is conveyed through nonverbal communication are a must.
4. Set aside time and space. To maintain the confidentiality of yourself and other group members, be sure to set aside a quiet space where you can engage in sessions uninterrupted by work or others. Understand that your confidentiality may be potentially breached if others in the group are not in a confidential or private setting.
5. Familiarize yourself with the technology you will be using in advance. Work with your peers and provider to learn how to effectively use the platform your group will be held on.
6. Have a backup for your technology. In case of disrupted Wi-Fi signals, etc., having another connection or a telephone backup (with the number written down just in case) will help to ensure a continuous connection with the group.
7. Some group members may only have access to a telephone connection. Facilitators may check in on them, and it is also nice for other members of the group to remain mindful of their presence and check in on them during the discussion as well.
8. Remember that the same rules that apply to in-person group sessions will apply to telehealth group sessions. Be prepared and sign on early or on time with plans to remain for the entire session. If you need to depart early, let the group know in advance.
9. If you are in crisis or require additional support, you may wish to contact your group facilitator in advance of your tele-session to receive support.
10. Remain present. Be spontaneous and engage in the moment as you would in an in-person group session. Also, when things get difficult, please be sure to remain on the line and in the teletherapy room even if tempted to hang up or disconnect. We want you with us so we can offer support and work it out.