

Online Supports Fact Sheet



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many therapists, psychologists and educators are now offering their supports to children, young people and families/carers online. There are several terms used to describe this approach including telehealth, telepractice, teletherapy and online supports.

Lifestart is an experienced, award-winning provider of supports online. Before COVID-19, we provided online supports to families across Australia and continue to do so and we specifically train and support our staff to do this work.

Whether you use Lifestart services or not, we know families have questions about this type of service delivery.

How does it work?

You need to have a computer, laptop, tablet or phone and an internet connection to access supports online. Your support can consist of videoconferencing, phone calls, emails or a combination of all of these.

You do not need to have a good knowledge of technology as your key worker or therapist can guide you through the process. Usually it is as simple as clicking on a link.

Are Online Supports as good as face-to-face?

Research has shown that many interventions can be delivered online and that the outcomes achieved can be equal to

(or even better than) than when you see your therapist in person. This research has been done specifically in Australia, as well as across the world.

To get these results, it will mean a change to the way your sessions have previously looked. Families may need to play a different or more active part in the sessions, being guided by their key worker or therapist in how to use strategies with their child. Resources can be shared on screen, as well as by email.

The other benefits of Online Supports include:

- You can continue to receive supports during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Some children and young people prefer to be online and find it motivating and engaging
- You get to learn and practice in your own environment and can continue this between sessions
- There is no need for travel
- Other family members can easily join sessions, whether they are in the home, far away or socially isolating.

What supports can be delivered online?

Speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, educators, behaviour clinicians and social workers can all use online supports effectively in partnership with you. This includes assessments, direct interventions, family support and education, group sessions, meetings and some assistive technology trials.

Some supports are not suitable for online delivery. Your therapist will be able to discuss this with you and help you to find alternative solutions.

What will happen during an online session?

This will vary depending on the needs of your child or young person but could include:

- Developing a plan and goals for the upcoming sessions.
- Observing your child or young person in specific activities and coaching you in ways to guide their skill development in these activities. This will have a focus on what is important and available to you in your daily routines.
- Engaging with your child or young person directly online to deliver specific interventions and activities.
- Sharing resources with you on screen and before/after the session by email.
- Providing recommendations until the next session.

What should I ask providers about receiving supports online?

It is important that you feel confident to receive supports online from your provider.

Some questions that you may want to ask them include:

- Do you have experience, training or support to deliver services online?
- Are you using a secure platform for videoconferencing?
- How will you be able to help me to access and feel comfortable with the technology?
- What goals will we be able to work towards if I want to take up this option?
- How will we review how things are working?



Contact us

Call us on **1800 953 390** or email engagementteam@lifestart.org.au