

Telemedicine Contingency Plan

The Telemedicine Contingency Plan must outline the necessary provider actions for providing safe and effective telemedicine services. Not only should the contingency plan identify the plan for addressing students who can't meet goals using telemedicine services, but it must also indicate how the provider will assist a student in a crisis (medical or safety-related emergency) during a telemedicine service.

TELEMEDICINE REQUIREMENTS:

- Equipment must be suitable for diagnostic, and treatment uses, readily available when needed, and fully functional during encounters.
- Safety guidelines must specify who is responsible for regular testing and maintenance
- Providers must know who to contact for technological assistance

IN CASE OF TELECOMMUNICATION DISRUPTIONS:

Providers must plan for alternate ways to reconnect with the student via phone or an alternative video platform. The plan must indicate who will call and at what number.

LACK OF PROGRESS ON GOALS:

To meet a student's need when it comes to telemedicine services, the provider will continue to monitor the student's progress toward goals via routinely established progress monitoring. If the student is not progressing towards goals, the provider will attempt to work with the student and their team to identify and decrease barriers to progress. The provider and the team will consider the following barriers:

- Access to technology
- Confidentiality of the student's environment
- The student's ability to attend sessions independently or with support
- Flexibility of scheduling
- Engagement and Treatment Strategies

If in-person services are needed and there is a feasible and safe manner to conduct those services, the provider will work with the student's team to identify the most feasible route to provide those services.

SAFETY CONCERNS:

Safety concerns may arise for students participating in telemedicine services. It is important to attempt to proactively identify and discuss any safety concerns when working with students. To ensure that the student is completing the telemedicine service in a safe environment and to help ensure the provider knows exactly where the student is and where to respond if needed. At the start of every telemedicine session, the provider will ask the student their location and who is with them.

When able to, providers should discuss the following with their students within the first couple of telemedicine services:

- Confidentiality of their setting (many students are attending sessions at home, and may have others around them during sessions).
- Need for a code between student and provider to indicate a safety concern, or a need to disengage in regards to someone's presence. (For example, if a student and provider are engaging in a discussion regarding home dynamics, and the student notices someone listening outside their door, or doesn't feel comfortable continuing that conversation, the student could hold 2 fingers up to indicate to the provider that the conversation has now become unsafe).
- Identify emergency contact information for student
- Creating a safety plan with students receiving services if they have dealt with, or expressed any suicidal or homicidal ideation, or have expressed feeling unsafe at home.

SUICIDAL IDEATIONS:

If a student expresses suicidal ideation during services the provider will:

- Assess the student's risk and access to means using clinical judgment and Columbia Student Risk Rating Scales if this falls within your scope of practice. If this does not fall within the provider's scope of practice or if the provider feels an immediate and imminent risk, the provider will attempt to stay online and connected with the student, while notifying emergency contacts and/or services.
- **Imminent Risk:** If the student appears to be in imminent danger and at high risk of dying by suicide, (has many risk factors, a plan, and access to means) the provider will attempt to stay connected with the student on one device, while using another device to contact family members and emergency services. If the connection with the student is lost during this time, the provider will attempt to reconnect with the student while contacting local emergency services.
- **Non-Imminent Risk:** The provider will work with the student to update their Safety Plan and ensure they are communicating with parents or school staff needed to help keep the student safe as part of their plan.
- Involve the student in these conversations if possible and increase the frequency of services as appropriate.

RISK OR HARM TO OR BY OTHERS:

If a student becomes unsafe due to the risk of harming others or having others harm them during sessions providers will:

- Contact emergency services immediately if the student is in imminent danger.
- Contact the local police department to request a well-child check if imminent danger is not present but cause for concern is.
- Communicate and debrief the incident with the supervisor.

MANDATED REPORTER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Being an employee of a school district within the state of Michigan, you are still a mandated reporter and are responsible for reporting any issues that may arise during telemedicine sessions related to mental health, unsafe behaviors within the home, or activities and conversations that may endanger the student. Any existing district policies and procedures for a mental health crisis or response are still applicable.

All school staff and providers will follow [MDHHS-mandated reporting guidelines](#) and report accordingly.