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Covid-19 Precautions & Procedures for Evaluations

In order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in our office, we have implemented some strategies to help protect ourselves and our patients. We are offering most evaluations by telehealth (video, phone, online forms, etc.) since telehealth testing options have improved dramatically since the start of the pandemic and this continues to be a safer way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 or other illnesses. Most evaluations can be completed effectively this way and most patients and families find this to be more convenient than driving to an office. However, for some patients (depending on the need or purpose), it may be better to give some tests in person. If we think this is the case, we will arrange for some testing in the office or refer you to another provider who can better meet your needs at this time.

Evaluations now available through telehealth:

We are providing many evaluation options through telehealth approaches (video meetings, phone calls, online testing, etc.) for diagnostic evaluations for ADHD, Autism, and psychological symptoms. Some cognitive testing, intellectual testing (IQ), and academic testing can also be done by telehealth.

What is Telehealth:

Telehealth is the process of receiving services through a video meeting, phone call, and other electronic methods rather than at a provider's office. Due to Covid-19, many providers have added telehealth options to provide services in a safe and convenient method. It is believed that telehealth options will continue to be offered in the future since many patients prefer this option.

What is Needed for a Telehealth Appointment:

In order to do an appointment by telehealth, the patient/family should have access to a computer, tablet, or phone to participate in the video portion of the meeting (computer or tablet would be better than phone because the screen is larger). Please check to make sure the video and audio/microphone settings are on before the meeting. You would also need a phone connection to have a call with the psychologist. Finally, if you want to complete forms and assessments online, this works best from a computer (and the Chrome browser, which can be downloaded for free). However, these can be mailed to you instead if you prefer.

It is also important that you have a private place in your home to have the phone call or video meeting with the psychologist. Ideally, this would be a room where you can close the door to block out other noises or distractions in the house (people, pets, etc.). Some people like to wear headphones during their phone or video meetings but this is optional.

What is Involved in an Assessment through Telehealth for Children:

Diagnostic assessments (for ADHD/Autism, etc.) for children include all of the same components when completed by telehealth as they do when done in the office. Most cognitive, IQ, and academic tests can also be completed by telehealth (with a few limitations). If cognitive or learning disability assessment is required for school or services, please check with them to see if an assessment done by telehealth will be accepted since this has been changing often during the pandemic.

Specifically, the following procedures are included:

- A comprehensive interview with the parent/guardian by telephone or video to review history and areas of concern.
- Parent/guardian completes a comprehensive history form prior to the meeting with the psychologist. This form can be completed online or sent by mail. This information is reviewed in greater detail during the interview.
- Parents can provide copies of any past evaluation reports, examples of schoolwork, report cards, IEP/504 Plans, and other relevant records.
- Parent/guardian completes several psychological assessment tools that look at symptoms and areas of difficulty and strength. These can be completed online or sent in the mail. These are reviewed by the psychologist in depth.
- Older children may also be asked to complete a psychological measure that asks about their thoughts or feelings.
- Input from teacher(s) are requested through assessment tools that can be completed online (or sent in the mail). They can complete a more general input form instead or have a telephone call with the psychologist.
- The psychologist will review all records provided by the parent/guardian or other health care providers (at parent's request). Any past evaluation reports, special education plans, etc. should be provided for review.
- For certain types of evaluations (IQ, Academic), some paper forms may be mailed home with instructions not to open these until on the video meeting with the psychologist. The psychologist will give instructions about when to open it, what to do with them, and when to put them in a provided, stamped, return envelope. If these are opened before the appointment, they cannot be used. Parents may need to be available during the appointment to make sure the child has the envelope when needed and a pencil or pen to use.
- Interview with the child by video.
- Review of short videos provided by parents that include samples of the child's behavior (optional). Some examples may be when child is restless or inattentive while trying to complete remote learning tasks or homework, engaging in repetitive or odd behaviors, etc.
- After all the above steps are completed, Dr. Beldotti will score and interpret all of the assessments and prepare a final report that includes the results, diagnostic impressions, and recommendations. This report can be used as proof of diagnosis (when applicable) for schools or other services. The report will also include any relevant recommendations for supports and/or school services (i.e., special education, accommodations, etc.).

What is Involved in an Assessment through Telehealth for Adults:

Assessments (for ADHD/Autism, psychological conditions, etc.) for adults include all of the same components when completed by telehealth as they do when done in the office. Most cognitive, IQ, and academic tests can also be completed by telehealth (with a few limitations). If cognitive or learning disability assessment is required for school or services, please check with them to see if an assessment done by telehealth will be accepted since this has been changing often during the pandemic.

Specifically, the following procedures are included:

- A comprehensive interview with the patient by video to review history and areas of concern. If the adult patient has a guardian, there will need to be an interview with the guardian first.
- The adult patient (or their guardian if have one) completes a comprehensive history form prior to the meeting with the psychologist. This form can be completed online or sent by mail. This information is reviewed in greater detail during the interview.

- The adult patient (or guardian) can provide copies of any relevant records for our review before the appointment.
- For certain types of evaluations (IQ, Academic), some paper forms may be mailed home with instructions not to open these until on the video meeting with the psychologist. The psychologist will give instructions about when to open it, what to do with them, and when to put them in a provided, stamped, return envelope. If these are opened before the appointment, they cannot be used.
- The adult patient (or guardian) completes several psychological assessment tools that look at symptoms and areas of difficulty and strength. These will be completed online with the psychologist during the video appointment.
- Input from other relevant persons can also be helpful. This may be a parent, spouse, significant other, friend, roommate, etc. This will be discussed with the adult patient (and guardian) and it will be determined if input from someone else would be possible and appropriate.
- The psychologist will review all records provided by the patient or other health care providers (at parent's request). This may include past evaluation reports, special education plans, etc.
- After all the above steps are completed, Dr. Beldotti will score and interpret all of the assessments and prepare a final report that includes the results, diagnostic impressions, and recommendations. This report can be used as proof of diagnosis for school, work, or other services. The report will also include any relevant recommendations for supports or services.

In-Office Testing:

Depending on the purpose of the testing and the type of tests needed, we may recommend that some of the testing be completed in person. If this is the case, we will schedule some of the testing in our office or refer you out to another provider who can better meet your needs.

Our in-person testing is completed by a licensed psychologist experienced in all tests given. Our psychologists have all been vaccinated for Covid-19 and are screened for symptoms. Our testing rooms are sanitized after each patient and the rooms all contain an air purifier. Masks will need to be worn during testing and in all common areas (until further notice) with breaks outside to remove the mask as needed. Testing will be discontinued and rescheduled if masks are not worn as needed. If the patient is unable to wear a mask for medical or other reasons, they can be scheduled for video testing instead.

Patients will be screened for symptoms before the appointment. Patients with symptoms will be rescheduled. We will ask about patient vaccination status, recent Covid exposure or symptoms, and any medical vulnerabilities that may put them or their family at greater health risk. This information is not to prevent patients from being seen but to determine any precautions that need to be put in place to reduce the spread of Covid-19 or other illness. This information may also help to determine if a patient would be better for video testing.

Other Steps in Reducing Covid-19 risk:

Please review the information below to see what else we are doing to help reduce the risk of covid-19 spread and what you can do to help:

What we are doing:

- Monitoring our symptoms, including temperature checks the day before an appointment and the morning of the appointment.
- Washing hands and disinfecting surfaces frequently.

- Practicing physical distancing and avoiding crowds.
- Wearing masks when indoors (with others besides immediate family) and when outdoors if physical distancing is not realistic.
- Requiring mask use and social distancing in our office.
- Screening patients for symptoms or risk factors prior to coming in for their appointment.
- Temperature checks upon arrival to the office.
- We plan to reschedule appointments if our psychologist becomes symptomatic or believes she may have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus. Self-quarantine and Covid-19 testing will be completed if infection is suspected.
- If we learn of anyone who has recently been in the office testing positive, we will notify anyone else who might have potentially been exposed (without giving out any names).
- Using modified assessment procedures to reduce risk (example: some procedures done by video, air purifier, some testing by computer, reduced time in same room, online forms and payment, etc.).

What you can do:

- Monitor your symptoms, including temperature checks the day before an appointment and the morning of the appointment.
- Wash your hands and disinfect surfaces frequently.
- Practice physical distancing and avoid crowds.
- Wear masks when indoors (with others besides immediate family) and when outdoors if physical distancing is not realistic. Help children get used to wearing a mask as needed. Fabric masks with several layers and an insertable filter provide more protection than thin masks (bandana, etc.). Masks with an adjustable nose strip and ear straps usually fit better. These are available from many places online (example: [Purakamasks.com](https://www.purakamasks.com), [Vistaprint.com](https://www.vistaprint.com), [shopvida.com](https://www.shopvida.com)).
- Notify us ahead of time if you think you or someone in your household has tested positive or may have been exposed. We will reschedule you and give you a priority appointment when ready.
- Complete your paperwork and payment online if you are able. If you cannot do so, please let us know and we will make other arrangements for you.
- Respect and follow our policies for mask use and social distancing in our office. Please notify us ahead of time if you cannot wear a mask for some reason and we will discuss the options.
- If you learn after your appointment that you or someone you had close contact with before your appointment is positive for Covid-19, please notify us as soon as possible.

Thank you!!!!