

Core Module Manual

Full Care Lifetime

TELEHEALTH POLICY

Telehealth, in the context of the Australian healthcare setting, can be defined as the use of videoconferencing technologies to conduct a consultation where audio and visual information is exchanged in real-time. Telehealth can be conducted between a Full Care Lifetime clinician and a participant in a supported or unsupported format.

Full Care Lifetime clinicians will review participants, then only undertake telehealth consultation with participants who have the capacity to participate in a videoconference, to ensure appropriate provision of support and access.

POLICY

This policy has been designed to allow Full Care Lifetime to meet the needs, interests and goals of our participants during natural disasters, pandemics, or when specific circumstances warrant this approach. During events of this type, changes and adjustments to our service provision may occur, requiring the adaptation of current practices to meet government or participant requirements.

The role of telehealth, in the overall management of a participant, will be determined by the clinician and other relevant providers. The implementation of telehealth will depend on the specialty of the clinician and the participant's requirements and location. Clinicians should be mindful of the limitations of telehealth and communicate these limitations to all video conference participants.

Participant selection

Clinicians should determine which participants are suitable for telehealth based on available resources, technology and care requirements. Full Care Lifetime will determine whether a telehealth consultation is the most appropriate type of consultation for each participant. The decision to use telehealth incorporates the following factors:

- **Clinical:** Continuity of support and the best model of support for the individual.
- **Practical:** Availability of appropriate technology and participant-end support. The quality of the technology at a remote site will play a significant role in the information received during the clinical consultation.
- **Participant needs:** Ability to travel, and consideration will be given to their family, work and cultural situation. Clinicians should also consider the participant's capacity to participate (e.g., a video consultation may be inappropriate for participants with vision or hearing impairments).

Prior to a telehealth consultation

Full Care Lifetime clinicians will inform the participant on how the consultation will proceed; this may include:

- providing the participant with plain language information about telehealth
- informing the participant of the other available support options (if available)
- informing the participant of any charges for telehealth consultations in comparison to other available options
- indicating the length of the telehealth consultation.

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Clinicians will ensure that the participant has been given adequate information regarding the telehealth consultation, and they will liaise with the participant-end worker to ensure the participant is sufficiently informed.

Seeking participant consent

Full Care Lifetime clinicians should be satisfied that participants have consented to participate in the telehealth consultation.

In cases where the participant is not competent and cannot provide consent, consent should be obtained from an advocate in the same way as for a face-to-face consultation, using a Telehealth Consent Form. The clinician will arrange for a Telehealth Consent Form to be provided to the advocate who has the requisite legal authority (e.g., enduring guardianship), so they can provide consent on the participant's behalf.

While it is not Full Care Lifetime's standard practice to record a video conference, on occasion, the participant will record the telehealth consult; therefore, their consent applies to this recording. Where a recording is made by Full Care Lifetime for assessment purposes, the participant will be informed prior to the recording taking place. The participant must provide verbal approval to record the consultation and agree to the planned use of the recording at the start of the telehealth consultation.

Consultation

Telehealth is no different from any other type of consultation and should be conducted similarly to a face-to-face consultation. A telehealth consultation of high quality is one in which the participant has a voice, screens are shared, listed supports actioned, and active listening is undertaken as per current best practice models.

In supported consultations, a support worker is present with the participant for some, or all, of the video consultation. The support worker should confirm both their identity and that of the participant to the clinician.

For unsupported consultations, the participant may be alone or may elect to have a family member present. For the first unsupported consultation, the clinician and participant introduce themselves, and the clinician provides some background information, including their credentials and experience.

Privacy and confidentiality

Telehealth consultations should be private and confidential. Clinicians should have processes in place to facilitate this as per standard face-to-face consultations. The participant's privacy and confidentiality should always be maintained.

Full Care Lifetime reviews privacy and confidentiality risks associated with telehealth consultations and develops procedures to mitigate such risks, which include, but are not limited to:

- implementing an appropriate system to prevent interruptions during a consultation (at both clinician and participant end)
- requesting that participants join a telehealth consultation in a quiet room where they will not be interrupted
- alerting other staff that a telehealth consultation is being conducted and requesting not to be disturbed

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- storing all recorded telehealth conversations securely, so the participant's privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- selecting telehealth video conferencing technology (hardware and software) that offers appropriate security features
- storing all reports provided for, or generated from, the telehealth consultation securely online with password access
- informing the participant if there is a valid and clinically appropriate reason for the recording of a consultation and requesting and receiving their verbal consent.

Technology

Basic requirement of telehealth

- The basic requirement of telehealth is the transfer of audio and visual data in real-time between the clinician and the patient.
- Only specific telehealth technology (hardware and software) appropriate for participants will be used to conduct telehealth consultations.
- Encryption, ease of use and access is considered as part of the software selection (e.g., Zoom has encryption storage capacity and is accessible from home computers and tablets).

Adequate performance

- The information and communications technology used for telehealth should be fit for the clinical purpose of the consultation. Specifically:
- the equipment is reliable and works well over the locally available internet network and bandwidth
- the equipment is compatible with the technology used by the patient-end health worker
- the equipment and the network are secure, so privacy and confidentiality are assured during the consultation
- the equipment is of a high enough quality to facilitate clear communication with all participants and to transfer accurate clinical information.

Risk management

Full Care Lifetime will conduct a risk analysis to determine the likelihood and magnitude of foreseeable problems using telehealth consultations. The analysis will include:

- identifying the limitations of technology being used
- developing procedures for detecting, diagnosing and repairing equipment and repairing connectivity issues
- availability of equipment and connections
- software support services available.

Possible risk management strategies

Computer breakdown

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- Contact technician to repair
- Purchase a new computer
- Have a spare computer available

Privacy and confidentiality

- Consent in writing
- Verbal consent at the beginning of each consultation
- Encrypted video kept in participant's file
- Secure encrypted server

Internet failure

- Phone participant
- Reschedule

Encrypted end-to-end software

- Locate encrypted software
- Determine if accessible via participant systems
- Inform participant of any breach

Zoom

- Encrypted storage
- Review for end-to-end encryption (currently being developed)
- Use of waiting room