

Telehealth Privacy and Consent Information

STEPP is a multidisciplinary intervention service for people experiencing persistent pain; the STEPP service is not a business entity on its own, but is jointly owned and administered by Rowena Field Physiotherapy (ABN: 89127451688) and Illawarra Shoalhaven Psychology (ABN: 26530326420).

This supplementary document describes the policy of STEPP for the provision of pain treatment services by telehealth (including video calls and telephone) and is intended to be read in conjunction with the General Privacy and Consent Information form. The pain treatment service provided is bound by the legal requirements of the National Privacy Principles from the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

TELEHEALTH SERVICES:

Telehealth services includes assessment and intervention sessions provided by video or phone call. Video calls are the preferred mode of delivery for STEPP as this most resembles face-to-face therapy. Once a Telehealth session is scheduled, STEPP will email and text clients a secure link specific to the Practitioner who they have booked with (also available from www.ispsychology.com.au). When clients click on the link, they will be able to connect to their Telehealth session via the Telehealth platform (i.e. Doxy.me or CoviU). No software needs to be downloaded by clients.

Telehealth services require clients to have a secure and reliable internet connection and a device (including smartphone, iPad, laptop, desktop) with a camera, microphone and speakers. It is advisable for clients to choose an environment for each session where they are not likely to be distracted, interrupted or overheard, and one that has minimal noise disturbance. Clients are encouraged to also choose an environment with good lighting and consideration of the background as it may be visible to the Practitioner. Because clients may be in varied locations for their Telehealth sessions, STEPP will require clients to provide their location at the commencement of each session. Please be aware that clients are responsible for any costs associated with setting up the technology needed so they can access Telehealth services and their data or call usage. STEPP will be responsible for the cost associated with the platform used to conduct Telehealth services.

Clients should be aware that problems may occur due to connection issues causing image delays or less than optimal image quality. Video call generally limits the amount of non-verbal information exchanged between the Practitioner and clients and as a result, there is greater potential for misinterpretation. Clients are asked to please have patience with the process and clarify information if they think the Practitioner has not understood them well and to also be patient if the Practitioner asks for periodic clarification.

Please note that the Practitioner will be taking notes and at times will need to look down during Telehealth sessions to record these. In accordance with legislative requirements, electronic records and paper records are kept in secure storage. STEPP will not make video or audio recordings of Telehealth sessions and clients are asked to respect STEPP's privacy by agreeing not to make such recordings of Telehealth sessions and not to use materials from the sessions for purposes other than therapy (e.g., posting any portion of said sessions on internet websites such as Facebook or YouTube is not permitted).

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS:

For privacy reasons, at the commencement of each session the Practitioner must identify the client before proceeding to discuss their personal information. This process will be different for phone sessions as opposed to video calls.



Phone Calls: The Practitioner will ask for the client's full name, date of birth and current address at. They will also ask for the address or specific location where the client will be located for the duration of the call; this is for use in case of emergency only. Please note that if the connection is lost and reset, the Practitioner will have to repeat this process.

Video Calls: At the initial appointment the Practitioner will ask the client for their full name, date of birth and current address. For future video calls the Practitioner will be able to identify the client by sighting them on the camera. At each appointment the Practitioner will also ask for the address or specific location where the client will be located for the duration of the call; this is for use in case of emergency only.

PROCEDURES IN CASE OF TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES OR DISRUPTIONS IN SERVICE:

If there is ever a disruption of services on the internet or technical difficulties The Practitioner will message or call the client to discuss how to proceed with the session, and in most cases the session will be completed by phone. If reconnection is not possible within 10 minutes The Practitioner will send an email to schedule a new session time.

PROCEDURES FOR MENTAL HEALTH SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

If the Practitioner has concerns for the client's mental health safety and feels that the person may pose a risk to themselves or someone else then they are mandated by law to take action to mitigate this risk as much as possible. Hence if the situation arises in which the Practitioner believes that the client is at risk during a telehealth appointment they are required to action the following steps:

1. Complete a thorough risk assessment with the client and record the outcome of this in their file
2. If required contact the person's emergency contact or referring Doctor to ensure they are safe and that support is available
3. If deemed necessary, contact emergency services on behalf of the client

If the Practitioner believes that the client is at risk during a telehealth appointment and the connection is lost for any reason, they are required to action the following steps:

1. Make three (3) attempts to reconnect with the client either by phone or video call, and if this fails then;
2. Attempt to contact the person's nominated emergency contact and/or next of kin, and if this fails then;
3. Contact emergency services to request that a welfare check is carried out on the client i.e. in most cases police will visit the client's location to ensure they are safe.

PRIVACY:

The privacy of any form of communication via the internet is potentially vulnerable and limited by the security of the technology used. To support the security of your personal information STEPP uses either Doxy.me or CoviU, both of which are compliant with the Australian standards for online security and encryption (e.g., peer to peer connection, end-to-end encryption and with no third parties involved).

FEES:

For medicare or private paying clients, the relevant fee (see our website for current fees) will be charged at the end of the Telehealth session to the client's credit card provided to STEPP via the client intake form.

- Clients may be able to claim a rebate from Medicare after full payment is made to STEPP if certain criteria are met (e.g., client is referred by a GP and has a current and valid mental health care plan and/or Chronic Disease Management Plan). From 06/04/2020 clients who in response to COVID-19 are in a "vulnerable category" and

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STEPP

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for persistent pain

meet the above Medicare rebate criteria will be bulk-billed. Please advise STEPP if you are a client in the "vulnerable category" (see full criteria below*).

- Clients may be able to claim a rebate from their private health insurer after full payment is made to STEPP if certain criteria are met (e.g., client's policy covers psychology and physiotherapy telehealth services).
- For clients accessing the service under a funding scheme e.g. SIRA, DVA or CTP the invoice will be sent to the relevant funder for payment.

**Vulnerable means a person who is at risk of COVID-19, so a person who:*

- *is required to self-isolate or self-quarantine in accordance with guidance issue by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee in relation to COVID-19 (see our website for who this includes); or*
- *is at least 70 years old; or*
- *is at least 50 years old or over and is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; or*
- *is pregnant; or*
- *is the parent of a child under 12 months old; or*
- *is being treated for a chronic health condition; or*
- *is immune compromised; or*
- *meets the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection.*

Cancellation Policy:

As stated in the general Privacy and Consent Information, if for some reason you need to cancel or postpone the appointment, please give at least 24 hours' notice. For private or Medicare clients, if 24 hours' notice is not given or the client is a 'no show', STEPP will be entitled to charge the full fee to the client's card, and the Medicare rebate will not be claimable for that session. For those under third party funding, the session may still be charged to your funder for late cancellations.

Client Agreement:

By agreeing to participate in a Telehealth session, I agree to expressly release Rowena Field Physiotherapy and Illawarra Shoalhaven Psychology from any liability associated with unintended cyber security issues and/or difficulties with unsecured communications.

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