

Statement on Virtual Mental Health Care Effectiveness and Privacy

Virtual mental health care has received increased attention and use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parents and clients may be questioning the effectiveness of services provided on the phone or via videoconferencing. While this is a relatively new area of research, the evidence so far indicates that virtual mental health care via telehealth has similar effectiveness to in-person services.

Regarding your privacy and security of your information, AFS follows all provincial and federal legal requirements and only uses technology that meets appropriate industry security standards. Two platforms that we use are:

1. Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN)
2. Zoom for Healthcare

Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN) is part of Ontario Health, a government agency responsible for ensuring Ontarians continue to receive high-quality health care services where and when they need them. OTN uses a variety of physical, administrative and technical methods to protect your personal health information from unauthorized access, use, copying, modification or disclosure. This includes a private network over which data and images flow between sites. OTN continually monitors, reviews and updates its practices to ensure the privacy and security of confidential information on the network. More information can be obtained here: <https://otn.ca/privacy-centre/>

Zoom for Healthcare is a more recent video conferencing platform. It includes tools designed for the virtual mental health care industry, including integrations with medical devices and electronic health records (EHRs) and uses industry compliant technology to ensure your privacy. More information can be obtained here: <https://zoom.us/healthcare>