

# Video Consultations: Clinical Modules

## Mental Health

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## Summary – Key Messages

- E-mental health refers to the broad range of digital resources, services, or programmes, delivered via online, mobile or phone-based platforms, including telehealth mental health consultations.
- There are many benefits associated with the use of e-mental health tools and resources, which have potential to fill gaps in service provision and reach hard-to-access consumers.

## Evidence

Mental health is one of the most researched areas of virtual health. There is strong evidence to suggest that e-mental health interventions are effective for use in the management of mild to moderate depression and anxiety and can be disseminated in the primary care setting.

The evidence shows that video consulting:

- Is as accurate as in-person consultation for psychiatric diagnosis (Hyler 2005)
- Produces similar outcomes in psychotherapy treatment including cognitive behaviour therapy. The evidence covers conditions such as PTSD, other anxiety disorders, anorexia, and mood disorders (Backhaus 2012)
- Is equivalent for assessing and treating psychosis; does not trigger symptomatology in patients with schizophrenia (Sharp 2011)
- Effective in treating children and adolescents (Slone 2012)
  - Adolescents and young adults easily transition to virtual sessions as they are exposed to online platforms in daily life via social media so are comfortable sharing in that environment
  - Mason Durie Virtual engagement is beneficial for Māori teens and young adults. (Te Huinga Takiora Manukura o Nōku te Aō; 31 March 2022)
- Supported in patients with mental disorders ([Telemed](#))
- Is consistent across mental health studies for both adult and child services
- Has the potential to offer many additional benefits to patients, families and clinicians besides treatment. They are reported to improve and widen patient and family access to healthcare, support co-production and self-management, increase efficiency and improve clinical outcomes, as well as significantly reducing clinical time and patient and family travel ([Johns, 2020](#))
- In theory, technology can extend access to mental health care in several ways: by enhancing the reach to priority populations, addressing system capacity issues, supporting training, improving clinical decision making, lowering the "consumer's

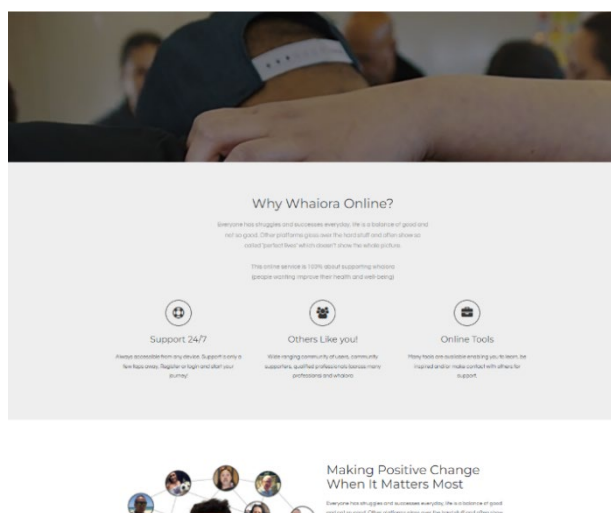
threshold" for treatment, delivering preventive mental health services, speeding innovation and adoption and reducing cost barriers to treatment ([Clarke, 2013](#)).

"I do a lot of mental health consults on-line which is wonderful for my patients with anxiety or who are lacking in motivation to come out."

- Dr Wiki Gillespie at Swanson Medical

There are many benefits of e-mental health – RANZCP provides a good summary [here](#). They note that it offers particular benefits for certain groups in New Zealand such as young people, rural and remote communities and those who do not access traditional services. Studies have shown that young people feel favourably towards the use of mobile phone applications and online resources for mental health care (Montague et al, 2015; Struthers et al, 2015).

RANZCP also note that for Māori, a number of e-mental health tools are available based on a holistic model of Māori health, incorporating spiritual, mental, physical and family dimensions. Examples in this field include [SPARX](#), which is a self-help e-therapy tool in a game format, and [Whaiora Online](#), an interactive web-based tool that allows individuals to set their own goals and monitor their progress.



### Red flags

Alternatives or adjunctive treatment pathways should be considered for people who have:

- complex and/or severe mental illness
- comorbid personality disorders and/or substance dependence
- an elevated risk of self-harm or suicide and require urgent clinical management.

## Assessing suitability to receive a mental health service, or consultation, via video

Factors include:

- Capacity to access technology
- Form, frequency and degree of symptoms
- Extent of psychological disturbance/crisis
- Barriers to access the service (i.e., language, physical and visual impairment)
- Quality of social supports
- Risk of harm to self and/or others
- Environment — do they have a private and safe place to talk freely and undisturbed?

### Clinical risk management

Management of elevated clinical risk follows the same principles of in-person work, with additional considerations for:

- a. the risk of losing contact with the client when they are not physically present, and
- b. the possibility that the client is in a distant location where the practitioner may be less familiar with services.

Useful elements of a risk management protocol include:

- Ensuring an alternative means of contact such as telephone is available
- Ensuring there is a record of address details for the client, and contact details for their mental health practitioner or GP
- Becoming familiar with psychiatric triage services local to the client
- Familiarising oneself with relevant legislation or regulations local to the client
- Reinforcing with the client the importance of accessing the telehealth service from a consistent location and/or knowing their location at the time of the session
- Considering the impact that any location changes have on risk management and access to local resources
- Considering the use of a support person (family, friend, etc) in sessions and/or as an emergency contact
- Worthwhile checking who else is in the house.

## Template/prompts/checklist/how-to (making it easier!)

### Adjusting your therapeutic skills: Empathy

- Empathy can predict outcomes regardless of the modality, delivery mode, treatment format and severity of the client's presenting problem.
- Research suggests that developing rapport with a client when delivering psychological services via video requires health professionals to alter their communication style.
- Making adjustments to the way empathy is conveyed may compensate for factors such as delayed sound, reduced eye contact (i.e. looking at the screen instead of the camera), and the ability to respond in a physical manner (e.g. handing the client a box of tissues).

Adjustments can include:

- To facilitate rapport-building, emphasize verbal (e.g., expressions of unconditional positive regard, acceptance and caring) and non-verbal gestures. Health professionals will need to be more deliberate with non-verbal communications e.g. nodding, engaged facial expressions, inflection, tone, gestures, and mannerisms.
- Skills that may need to be used more often include active listening, taking turns, paraphrasing, using shorter sentences, paying more attention to social cues and emotional expressions.
- More frequently clarifying the meaning of clients' facial expressions and body language.
- Approaching the session with friendliness and warmth to aid patients to feel comfortable and at ease with the different consultation environment. Patients in a virtual session are generally more sensitive to the level of friendliness and warmth expressed by the health professional.
- Be aware of clinician fatigue due to change in engagement style and focused empathetic attunement. Regular breaks recommended.

## Techniques to consider using

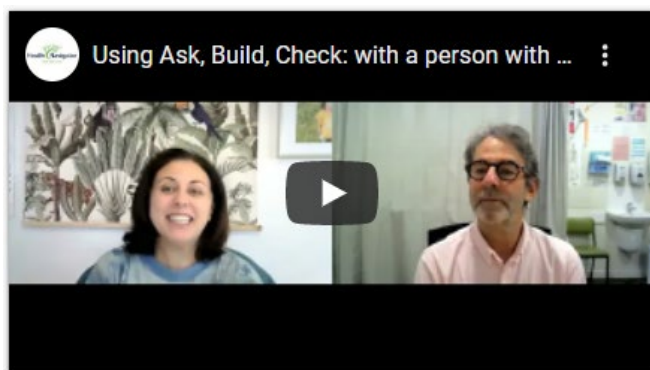
There are dozens of approaches and techniques that can be useful to enhance a more therapeutic interaction. Here are a couple to consider including or learning if not familiar with these evidence-based approaches yet.

### 1. Ask, Build, Check

Ask, Build Check is a simple and useful evidence-based technique to improve effectiveness of how we communicate with whānau, improving health literacy and leading to positive behaviour change.

- Simple to use (once you've practiced it a few times)
- Takes approximately 1 minute
- Evidence-based
- Improves diabetes control, mental wellbeing, follow through and outcomes.

For those who'd like to learn more, there are some video examples and more detailed training modules and information via the SMSToolkit website: [Ask, Build, Check videos and outline](#), including information specifically tailored to behaviour change and health coaching.



## 2. Behavioural Activation

Behavioural activation is more effective at improving mood and wellbeing than any psychology input or medication. [In one week, people showed a 40% improvement when encouraged to get back to activities they enjoyed or were meaningful for them](#) (e.g. connecting with a friend, meeting someone for a walk, gardening, helping someone etc). Importantly, behavioural activation can also be supported by others within the primary care team, such as health coaches and kaimanaaki<sup>1</sup>, spreading the follow-up workload.

- Behavioural activation encourages a person to develop or get back into activities which are meaningful to them. The therapy involves scheduling activities and monitoring behaviours and looking at specific situations where changing these behaviours and activities may be helpful. A therapist, GP, nurse, health coach or peer support workers (kaimanaaki) may support people in person, over the phone, or online, usually over multiple sessions.



[What is behavioural activation \(BA\)?](#) — Psychological therapy for depression explainer (Cochrane Common Mental Disorders; August 2020)



[Behavioural activation therapy for depression in adults](#) (Cochrane Common Mental Disorders; August 2020)

### Learn more



- [Behavioural activation guide](#) — Therapist Aid
- [Psychology Tools](#)
- [Cochrane Reviews](#)
- [Featured Reviews: Behavioural activation therapy for depression](#)

<sup>1</sup> The term 'Kaimanaaki' is a taonga — a term that embodies the core essence and nature of a workforce that is passionate, resilient, diverse, highly skilled and committed to supporting hauora (holistic wellbeing) outcomes of all in Aotearoa. Kaimanaaki represents all people — whānau, communities, hapū, iwi, and kaimahi (workforce) within the social services sector who support tāngata (people) to live well, embrace and exercise tino-rangatiratanga (selfdetermination) in navigating their own journey to whānau ora. Read more: [Kaimanaaki Workforce Development Plan 2019-2020](#), Careerforce NZ



### 3. FACT (Focussed Acceptance Commitment Therapy)




Best source of FACT resources is from Professor [Bruce Arroll's website](#), including a manual that explains FACT.

 <p><a href="#">11 minute consultation demonstrating the seven step model for a first consultation.</a></p>	 <p><a href="#">Anxiety away – how to deal with anxiety</a></p>
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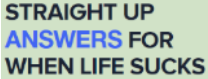
The Goodfellow Unit also offers a free 1.5hour [e-learning course](#) which provides a CME certificate.













### 4. Whanau resources

In this section you will find a range of useful resources to support further learning, understanding and behaviour change following your telehealth consultation.




Children / Tamariki, and for whānau	
<p><b>Health Navigator NZ</b></p> 	<p>Wide range of resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mental health for children</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to support a child or teenager with depression</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ADHD in Children</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ADHD NZ</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">How to manage your anxiety as a young person</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mental health for young people</a></li> </ul>
 <p><b>What's up</b> 5-12 years</p> 	<p>Kid-friendly resources available on their <a href="https://whatsup.co.nz/kids">website</a> (<a href="https://whatsup.co.nz/kids">whatsup.co.nz/kids</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone counselling (0800 what's up); chat and email</li> </ul> <p>NB: what used to be called Kidsline has joined this line</p>

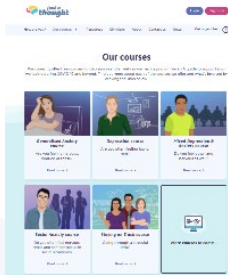



<p><a href="#">Sparklers</a></p> 	<p>Research shows that all children can benefit from learning early about managing wellbeing, emotions and relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Sparklers at home</a> provides fun wellbeing activities to support whānau to look after their wellbeing and help kids find calm and feel good.</li> <li>• <a href="#">How to help kids with differences and diagnoses</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>For parents</b></p> 	<p><a href="#">All Right? Parenting and Whānau</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Parenting Guides</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Parenting routine charts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Strengths Finder</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Articles eg. Get your kids loving daily routines</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tips to help your teen get organised</a></li> </ul>
	<p>Triple P is an evidence-based programme that provides a range of programmes, support and resources to help parents and children deal with life, behavioural problems and mental health issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fearless programme</b> - Online support for parents of anxious kids (6-14 years)</li> <li>• <b>Online parenting programme</b></li> <li>• Support near you.</li> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.triplep-parenting.net.nz/">www.triplep-parenting.net.nz/</a></li> </ul>
Youth / Rangatahi	
 	<p>Text 5626, or visit <a href="http://thelowdown.co.nz">thelowdown.co.nz</a> (email form available on the website). 24/7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support to help young people recognise and understand depression or anxiety</li> <li>• Resources to help with anxiety, depression, grief and loss, health, relationships, school, COVID-19, friends and if life sucks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>24/7 Counselling and Helplines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">1737</a> Need to talk? — free text or call to talk to a trained counsellor</li> <li>• <a href="#">Youthline</a> — free text 234, call 0800 376 633, email or online chat. Also have an</li> </ul>

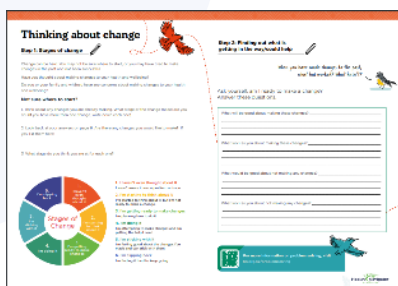
<p><b>NEED TO TALK?</b></p> 	<p>advice hub on their website, and provide face-to-face counselling in some parts of NZ.</p>
 <p><b>What's up, 13-19 years</b></p>  <p>Mon-Fri 12pm - 11pm Sat-Sun 3pm - 11pm free call 0800 942 8787</p>  <p>Mon-Fri 1pm - 10pm Sat-Sun 3pm - 10pm</p>	<p>Teen-friendly resources available on their <a href="https://whatsup.co.nz/teens">website (whatsup.co.nz/teens)</a> Phone counselling; chat and email</p>
<p><b>Online tools</b></p>        	<p>There are now dozens of quality online apps and programmes to support rangitahi and adults. Find independent reviews in the <a href="#">NZ Health App Library</a>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">SPARX</a>: interactive online self-help tool that teaches CBT techniques and self-help skills. Aimed at 12-19 year olds feeling down or depressed.</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Aunty Dee</a>: free online tool for anyone needing help working through a problem (structured problem solving). Aimed at Pacific youth.</li> <li>3. <a href="#">Mental Wealth</a>: an online mental health literacy education programme for young people. Also Mana Restore for gamers.</li> <li>4. <a href="#">Melon</a>: Youth resources such as little reminders, facing fears, mood boosters, anxiety toolbox and many more. Also offer coaching, community and behaviour change modules.</li> <li>5. HABITs Messenger app, is a chatbot platform co-designed with young people by Auckland University. It features three support options:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Aroha</b> — stress support for COVID,</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>b. <b>Headstrong</b> – a personal trainer for the mind, and</p> <p>c. <b>Stress Detox</b> – general stress support.</p> <p>Aroha chatbot, via Facebook messenger, provides practical evidence-based tools to help young people cope with stress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designed for 13-25 year olds.</li> </ul>
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General	
<b>Health Navigator NZ</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Depression (mate pāpouri)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Anxiety (mate māharahara)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Mental health</a></li> <li><a href="#">Stress information and resources</a></li> <li><a href="#">Sleep topics</a></li> </ul>
<b>24/7 Counselling and Helplines</b> <b>NEED TO TALK?</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">1737</a> Need to talk? – free text or call to talk to a trained counsellor</li> <li><a href="#">Lifeline</a>: helpline 0800 543 354. Also offer 4-6 counselling sessions in-person or online for parents of children aged up to 17 years. Resources available on the website.</li> <li><a href="#">Depression NZ</a>: helpline 0800 111 757, text 4202. Resources available on the website.</li> <li><a href="#">Anxiety NZ</a>: helpline 0800 ANXIETY (269 4389). Resources available on the website.</li> <li><a href="#">Samaritans</a>: crisis helpline 0800 726 666, operated by volunteers from the community for the community.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Puawaitanga</a> 	Individual phone and online counselling. 9am-9pm <a href="#">Enrol online</a> or call 0800 782 999
<a href="#">Just a thought</a>	<p>Free online therapy for all New Zealanders, funded by MOH.</p> <p>Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) programme for anxiety, depression and staying on track (help through times of stress).</p>

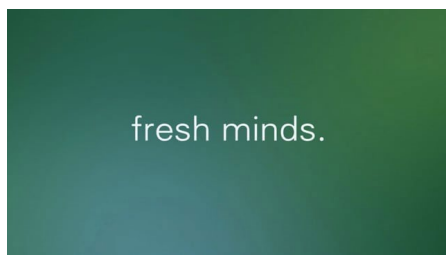
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalised Anxiety course</li> <li>• Depression course</li> <li>• Mixed Depression &amp; Anxiety course</li> <li>• Social Anxiety course</li> <li>• Staying on Track course</li> </ul>
<p><b>Small Steps</b></p> 	<p>Whether you're looking to maintain wellbeing, find relief or get help, <a href="#">Small Steps</a> can support you and your whānau with practical tools, strategies and advice.</p>
<p><b>CALM:</b> Computer assisted learning for the mind</p>	<p>A <a href="#">website</a> run by the University of Auckland covering topics such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental resilience,</li> <li>• managing stress, anxiety and depression,</li> <li>• healthy relationships and finding meaning in life.</li> <li>• It includes audio modules e.g. guided meditation, mindfulness.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Online tools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fight flight freeze response</a> (a good explanation of anxiety)</li> <li>• <a href="#">3 minute breathing exercise</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mindfulness in everyday life</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mental health foundation</a> — resources, services and support groups</li> </ul> <p>Groov app (formerly Mentemia), co-founded by All Black legend Sir John Kirwan, aims to support people 19 years and older with day-to-day mental wellbeing, as well as at times of increased stress or distress.</p>
<p><b>Useful handouts and one pagers</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Health Navigator: Take Charge</a> provides a range of one-pages you can download, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal setting templates</li> <li>• <a href="#">Weekly activity diary</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Food diary for 3 days</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sleep tips, relaxation and breathing and sleep diary/tracker</a></li> </ul>

### Te Kete Haerenga – tools, diaries and self-care guides (NEW)



- A new set of tools, guides, diaries and care planning resources to share with patients, clients and whānau as you support them on their journey to wellbeing.
- [I see myself right now](#) – your physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing
- [My medicines and medicines list](#) – use this to list all your medicines, puffers, etc.
- [What I'm tracking](#) – use this to record your test results, mood etc.
- [Action plan and goals](#) – use this to record your goals and your action plan
- [Shared plan](#) – use this to record key issues, goals and actions for the next 12 months
- [Acute plan: What to do when I'm unwell](#) – also known as an emergency plan.
- [Sleep tips tracker](#) – use this to help track progress with improving your sleep.
- [Weekly activity diary](#)
- [Food diary](#)
- [Symptom diary](#)
- [Problem solving process](#) – a step-by-step guide to problem solving.

### [Fresh Minds](#)



[This animation](#) encapsulates what Fresh Minds offer, how to access their webinars and what to expect.

## Video guides, References and learn more

- **Webinar:** [NZ Telehealth: Mental Health Webinar](#)
- **Guide:** [A practical guide to video mental health consultations](#) (PDF), Mental Health Online, March 2020
- [Effectiveness of e-mental health approaches: Rapid review](#), Te Pou, July 2021
- [RACGP e-mental health: a guide for GPs](#), 2015
- [Telehealth in Psychiatry](#), RANZCP, November 2021
- **E-Learning:** [Medcast: eMental Health for General Practitioners – Online Module Series](#)
- [Psychological toolkit](#): practical resources to assist health professionals manage mental health conditions in their clinical work (Black Dog Institute)
- [Te Pou: Let's get real](#) – a framework that describes the values, attitudes, knowledge and skills required for working effectively with people and whānau experiencing mental health and addiction needs. This includes two RNZCGP-endorsed e-learning activities: trauma-informed and responsive approaches e-learning and working with Māori e-learning.
- [Te Pou: Providing support by phone or video](#) – practical guidance, April 2020
- [e-Therapy in Primary Care Mental Health](#), The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners 2018