



CASA

**Child, Adolescent and Family
Mental Health**

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Telepsychiatry Information for Parents & Guardians

In Alberta, if a family doctor or pediatrician feels that their child or adolescent patient would benefit from a psychiatric consultation, and they are practicing in a remote location and cannot easily refer to a psychiatrist, they can refer to a psychiatrist who will see the child over videoconferencing (telepsychiatry). This means that you and your child would go to your local hospital or health care centre, and after checking in with admitting or reception will be directed to a videoconference suite. A television screen, a video camera and a microphone are the essentials of a videoconference suite.

The television screen will automatically connect you to a psychiatrist who is physically located in a major centre at a clinic or hospital. The psychiatrist will be able to talk back and forth with you almost as if you were in the same room. The appointments may vary in length but new assessments can take 1 to 2 hours to complete. Videoconference connections are private, they only connect you to the psychiatrist, and no one else. The sessions are not recorded without your specific permission.

The psychiatrist will then dictate and have typed up a report, which will include recommendations for treatment, as well as recommendations about what further information or tests may be required. This report will go to the referring doctor but also at times to the therapist involved in your child's treatment.

The referring doctor and therapist will review with you on the recommendations for treatment and decide with you on the best course of treatment. The psychiatrist is acting as a consultant to your doctor and does not take over your child's care.

The child's legal guardian will need to accompany the child to the appointment. It's best if siblings do not attend. If there is a mental health therapist involved, he/she can also attend. At times you may choose to have support workers or school staff in attendance as well. Private information will be reviewed, but you get to choose who is in the room when sensitive matters are discussed.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me at (780) 400-4503.
Sincerely,

Michelle Whalen
Telepsychiatry Admin assistant

