



POSITION STATEMENT: KINESIOLOGY AND VIRTUAL SERVICES

ONTARIO KINESIOLOGY ASSOCIATION

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INTRODUCTION*

If you are a Registered Kinesiologist considering offering or considering offering telehealth, tele-rehabilitation or other virtual services to clients within Ontario, you need to stop and consider several points regarding the service you will provide. Before offering this method of service to your clients, ensure you are able to offer it in a way which is compliant with your professional standards and ethics requirements and applicable laws, just as you would when providing in-person care.

All requirements of the College of Kinesiologists of Ontario (CKO) are to be maintained by Registered Kinesiologists regardless of whether you are delivering service in-person or virtually. The OKA recommends you review the [CKO's COVID-19 Guidance as it relates to virtual care](#).

Kinesiologists should utilize virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation services only after conducting an appropriate risk assessment of the client and the treatment requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIENT RISK ASSESSMENT

Utilizing professional judgement on a client-by-client and case-by-case basis, assess and determine whether virtual services are a suitable method of service delivery based on the following client factors:

- Current mental and physical health condition(s),
- Language (speaking, reading and writing) comprehension and interpretation of information,
- Ability and willingness to take direction (instruction), without hands-on cuing or assistance,
- Organizational skills,
- Client preference for, availability, trust of, and user competence in respect of internet technology and related equipment,
- Potential risks and benefits to the client of this treatment method and how the use and outcome(s) compare/contrast with a traditional in-person method of treatment.

Ensure the following:

1. Virtual services do not expose your client to greater risk than other possible service delivery methods. You must consider any risks to the privacy of the client's health information or risks to their safety depending on the physical environment and the ability to communicate effectively, whether it is home or community based.
2. Both you and your client are competent to understand the limitations and how to use the technology. You need to understand your platform's capabilities, including strengths, weaknesses and limitations and maintain access to technology support if needed. You are responsible for assuring the technological proficiency of those involved in the client's care.

* OKA would like to acknowledge and thank BCKA for most of the material in the Position Paper.

3. The client confirms suitable access to the technology, is aware of any limitations that virtual service presents as compared to an in-person session for that client's situation, including the inability to perform hands-on examination, assessment, and treatment.
4. You have informed the client of the process to follow if they have a concern or complaint about their kinesiology treatment/care. If the matter cannot be addressed directly, the client needs to know they have the option to raise their concerns with the College of Kinesiologists of Ontario.

A properly conducted virtual assessment will allow you, based on the outcomes, to determine whether you are able to deliver substantively similar client care virtually as you could in-person, or whether hands-on assessment/treatment is required for the client to ensure safe and competent service delivery.

CONSENT FACTORS

In delivering virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation services, you must be able to verify the identity of the client, other care providers, and any support personnel involved. Be sure to document the verification policy and processes used when charting.

You need to augment your informed consent processes appropriately to support virtual service. Informed consent is to be obtained for the transmission of information via virtual technologies, and for the participation of other health care providers or the client's family in the provision of care. This will include details on how the information will be secured to prevent unauthorized access and/or use.

Session recording: Videotaping, recording, storing information electronic images or data from virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation session(s), is not recommended due to challenges of meeting privacy legislation requirements in Canada and Ontario. These concerns relate particularly to storage, retention, destruction, unintended use and who may access the information in the future and for what purpose.

PRIVACY REQUIREMENTS

You need to ensure compliance with all privacy and security requirements, both during virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation sessions and when in contact with the client through other electronic means, such as arranging appointments via email or text. You need to document the privacy and security measures you use. Consider topics such as authentication and encryption technology, secure transmission systems, and storage mechanisms.

Written policies and procedures are required to the same standard as in-person care for documentation, maintenance, and transmission of the records of each session and interaction using virtual technologies. Ensure you offer to provide the client a digital copy of your **Corporate Privacy Policy** prior to intake.

Maintain and follow guidelines which ensure client records cannot be accessed by unauthorized users, tampered with or destroyed, and are protected at both the originating and remote sites. This includes securing the device(s) you (and your client) use in virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation and storing information related to the services. You should ensure all device software is up to date and firewall settings, antivirus/anti-ransomware, encryption and VPN services are utilized to minimize the risks of unauthorized viewing or access to the client personal information. Know and understand when client personal information is stored on a cloud server, when meeting with your client remotely, including the jurisdiction in which the software is housed and the privacy laws of the jurisdiction.

If you are an employee, familiarize yourself with your employer's policies for privacy and security for the use of virtual/telehealth/tele-rehabilitation as a treatment method.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

You must have a safety protocol in place to contact EMS in the event of a client emergency or adverse event (for example, client medical emergency such as a heart attack or fall).

You need to establish an alternative method to contact the client should the virtual service system fail or not be accessible, and the client needs to be provided with a similar alternative means of contacting you. For example, in the case of internet failure, you need to have a way to telephone the client.

You need to maintain appropriate internet technology technical support for troubleshooting in the event of operational difficulty or errors. It is also recommended all technologies be tested and trialed prior to actual client use/session appointments to ensure proper functioning of the system features.

USE OF TREATMENT ASSISTANT(S)

If you utilize student interns or practicum students as part of your professional practice, apply similar standards as when providing services in person. You are accountable for the care provided. You need to ensure adequate supervision of the intern/student is maintained, treatment follow up and review with the student/intern at the completion of each session is completed, in addition to ensuring proper documentation of care.