



COVID-19

Homeless System Response: Engaging Clients with Remote Case Management

In order to respond to COVID-19, communities now more than ever are pivoting case management and telehealth strategies to problem-solve around engaging clients remotely. Below are tips from entities who have been implementing remote engagements.

Many individuals who are currently and formerly homeless have consistent interaction with mental health providers and the healthcare system. With the stay-at-home orders and the requirement of social distancing that come with the COVID-19 pandemic, treatment practices and case management need to adapt in order to maintain engagement and continuity of care.

Person-Centered Remote Engagement of Clients

- If you reach out to someone and they do not respond, try again at different times of day.
- Reiterate that it is an unprecedented time for everyone.
- Convey that you care about how they are doing rather than “checking up” on them.
- Convey that privacy is important. Offer to discuss how you can protect your client’s privacy during remote conversations. If personal safety is a concern, identify a “safe word” the client can say to trigger a quick change in topic should someone enter the room.
- Ask for their preferred method of communication (e.g. phone calls, text, email, video conferencing, etc.)
- Ask if a certain day or time is better to connect; recognize that work and family responsibilities may influence when they are available.
- Encourage clients to identify their top concerns and priorities.
- Remind clients that you may communicate more frequently to ensure they have what they need while staying home.