

FREE GUIDE

How online therapy works

What the research says, how Medicare covers it, and how to set up for a good session.

The short answer

Online therapy is a session with a psychologist by **video or phone**. A large 2021 meta-analysis of 103 studies found no meaningful difference in outcomes between video and face-to-face therapy. Medicare pays the **same rebate** for telehealth psychology sessions anywhere in Australia, with a valid plan and referral. All MeHelp sessions are online, by phone or video, Australia-wide, including evenings and weekends.

103

studies in a 2021 meta-analysis comparing video and in-person therapy

Same

Medicare rebate for phone, video or in-person

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

- What the research says about phone and video therapy
- How Medicare covers telehealth psychology
- Phone or video: choosing what suits you
- Setting up a private space at home, at work or in the car
- Privacy and security for online sessions
- When face-to-face care may suit better



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Reviewed by **Phillipa Brown**, registered psychologist and founder of MeHelp. Information current at October 2026. General information only, not individual advice.

Does online therapy work?

For many common concerns, research has found phone and video therapy to be comparable to face-to-face sessions.

2021 META-ANALYSIS

Video and in-person compared

Fernandez and colleagues pooled 103 studies and found no meaningful difference between video and face-to-face therapy. Results were strongest for CBT for depression, anxiety and PTSD.

2022 REVIEW

Less common conditions

An Australian review of 12 trials found no significant difference in symptoms, working relationship or satisfaction, while noting more research is needed.

Why people choose it

- No travel, parking or waiting rooms
- Access from regional and remote areas
- Easier to fit around work and family
- Choice of psychologists beyond your local area
- Some people find it easier to open up from home

GETTING SET UP

Make the space yours

A few small things make a big difference to how a session feels.

PRIVACY

Find a quiet spot

A closed door, a parked car or a walk outside on the phone. Headphones help.

TECH

Check it early

Charge your device, test the link and have the phone number handy as a backup.

COMFORT

Settle in

Water, tissues and a notebook. Give yourself a few minutes before and after.

Phone or video?

	VIDEO	PHONE
Feels like	Closest to being in the room	A focused conversation
Good when	You'd like to see your psychologist	You're on the move or prefer not to be on camera
Medicare	Same rebate	Same rebate

At MeHelp: sessions are 50 minutes by phone or video, with Ahpra-registered psychologists, Australia-wide. They're bulk billed with a valid plan and referral, or \$180 privately.

What people ask us

Is online therapy covered by Medicare?

Yes. Psychology sessions by video or phone attract the same Medicare rebate as face-to-face sessions, anywhere in Australia.

Is a video session secure?

Use the link your psychologist sends, which should be a secure telehealth platform. Join from a private space and avoid public Wi-Fi if you can.

Can I have online therapy from work?

Yes, if you can find a private room. Many people use a meeting room, their car or a quiet outdoor space.

Is online therapy suitable for everyone?

It suits many people and concerns. Your psychologist will tell you if they think face-to-face care would suit you better.



Prefer to talk it through with a psychologist?

MeHelp is an Australian online psychology practice. Sessions are by phone or video, Australia-wide, and can be bulk billed with a valid Mental Health Treatment Plan and referral. We also accept NDIS, WorkCover, DVA, EAP and private health funding.

How MeHelp works at mehelp.com.au/how-it-works

1300 323 411 · info@mehelp.com.au

MeHelp is not a crisis service. If you or someone else is in danger, call 000. For 24-hour support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. Under 25: Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800.

This guide is general information about the Australian health system. It isn't individual medical, legal or financial advice, and it doesn't replace an assessment by your GP or a psychologist. Government rules and fees change. Figures are current at October 2026; check health.gov.au, servicesaustralia.gov.au or your insurer for the latest. All MeHelp psychologists are registered with Ahpra.