How telehealth appointments can help you or a loved one access support and treatment for alcohol and other drug use (such as crystal methamphetamine use).

**WHAT IS TELEHEALTH?**

Telehealth involves using technology to conduct health consultations virtually rather than face-to-face. Telehealth appointments can be conducted via video chat, or over the phone. They can be incredibly beneficial and convenient, depending on a person's circumstances. Telehealth appointments are also safe, secure and can be helpful for those who need it.

**HOW CAN TELEHEALTH BENEFIT YOU OR A LOVED ONE?**

- Telehealth appointments can be more convenient, as they can be accessed anywhere there is phone reception and/or internet access.
- Reduced travel time to appointments, making treatment easier to access particularly in rural/remote areas.
- Attending appointments in a safe space, such as at home, may help reduce nerves or anxiety.
- The flexible nature of virtual appointments means there may be more time for treatment, or the option of shorter check-ins, if appropriate.

**WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?**

- Lack of access to required technology, phone reception or reliable internet.
- Difficulty finding a quiet space, free of distractions.
- Inconvenience of not being able to automatically claim certain types of appointments through Medicare.
- Financial costs associated with treatment.
- Preference for face-to-face or group options.
If a person chooses to pursue telehealth consultations to access help for alcohol or other drug use, they will likely receive counselling (individual or group), help managing withdrawal symptoms, harm-minimisation information (tips on how to stay safe when using drugs), as well as ongoing check-ups and advice from specialists. They may also receive referrals to other specialists or relevant treatments. 

_Cracks in the Ice_ provides a list of phone counselling support lines that offer support, information and referrals. _Family Drug Support_ also provides support for people who are concerned about a loved one’s use of alcohol or other drugs. Help is available via online counselling and a 24-hour hotline (1300 368 186).

### HOW DOES TELEHEALTH WORK FOR PEOPLE WHO NEED SUPPORT OR TREATMENT FOR ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUG USE (E.G. CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE USE)?

If you have a usual health service provider, it is a good idea to have a look at their website, or contact them directly to see if they offer telehealth services.

Don’t be afraid to ask what treatment will involve, and how it might differ from face-to-face treatment.

Try to find a quiet space in your home, and make sure others know not to come into the room during appointments if they are at home at the same time.

Put your phone on silent mode or turn it off, to eliminate distractions.

If it is your loved one who is having a telehealth appointment, check in with them to see if they need anything from you, and provide support the same way you would if they were attending face-to-face treatment.

Have a pen and paper handy to jot down notes if needed.

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**Crystals Methamphetamine**

Trusted, evidence-based information for the community

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### TIPS FOR A TELEHEALTH APPOINTMENT

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REFERENCES:


