



GLOBAL
Teletherapy

The Complete
Guide to **Online**
Speech Therapy

What is Online Speech Therapy?

Online speech therapy is the online delivery of speech therapy services over the Internet.

Online speech therapy sessions are very similar to traditional speech therapy sessions with one major exception. Instead of sitting in the same room, students and therapists interact via high quality video conferencing.

During these sessions, the student and therapist can see, hear, and interact with one another in real time, using webcams, headsets, and a live, synchronous online learning environment. Remote therapy has gained acceptance as telehealth has become mainstream in America.

Fully accredited and licensed therapists use traditional therapy techniques and activities while enhancing the speech therapy experience with innovative software and tools. They have the technology literally at their fingertips to plan and deliver high-quality services.

On-Site Speech Therapy Just Can't Do it Alone Anymore

As reported by The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "there is a considerable national shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) projected over the next few years. An additional 40,500 SLPs will be needed to fill the demand between 2019 and 2029—a 25% increase in job openings."

As a result of the worsening shortage, schools are increasingly unable to provide sorely needed SLPs for their students. Inflated costs press upon already over-strained budgets, and school personnel are forced to devote inordinate amounts of time and effort to hunt down scarce resources.

However, suppose for a moment that there was no SLP shortage. Let's even imagine that there was a healthy surplus...

Would that make the problem disappear? The answer is probably not. That's because of an equally imposing hurdle: money, or not enough of it.

Aside from budget shortfalls, there are the higher recruitment fees charged by staffing agencies to find "distant" SLPs, and then once the SLP is found, those SLPs must be reimbursed for their transportation expenses. The heartbreaking reality is this: there isn't enough money available to provide the children with the therapy they need.

Further exacerbating the problem is that these shortages are unequally distributed geographically. The problem in rural areas is even worse than in the rest of the country. The bottom line is that many children in Rural America do not receive adequate speech therapy, and some do not receive it at all due to the extreme shortage of SLPs.

The growing speech-language pathologist shortage means higher caseloads for therapists in rural districts, which results in inferior therapy sessions for the children, leads to SLP burnout on an unprecedented scale, causes unexpected recruiting and turnover expenses, and students making slower—or no—progress against their IEP goals.

Recruiting and retaining staff serving students with language or speech problems is particularly severe in rural areas. Salaries are not competitive, and the rural regions are far from urban cultural centers and universities, which restrict therapists from participating in training and development programs that would enhance them professionally.

What's more, attrition of speech therapists in rural districts can be two to three times the national average. Turnover is especially acute among professionals who travel long distances from site to site on an itinerant basis to serve students with disabilities.

Moreover, even when an administrator finds a quality therapist, it is often difficult to hold onto that therapist throughout the school year, which hampers a student's progress. Frustrated schools have no choice but to solicit traditional speech therapy staffing agencies to find therapists to fill the void.



COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Don't think the problem ends with children not receiving adequate speech therapy. There are many potentially more dangerous consequences to this silent but tragic problem that continues to mushroom in Rural America.





LOW SELF ESTEEM

A speech impediment can erode a child's self-confidence. Kids know when they talk differently than other children. When a child is young, a stutter or a lisp may seem harmless, but as the child matures, it could undermine the child's confidence.



ACADEMIC STRUGGLES

Everyone agrees that reading is perhaps the most fundamental skill that children need to be successful in school. As the academic challenges increase throughout the years, reading deficits will guarantee more educational failures. Without a strong foundation in language skills, there is less chance that a child will become successful in reading.

Aside from reading, speech difficulties often impact other areas of the school experience as well. When a child senses that the teacher is struggling to understand him/her, it discourages that child from sharing ideas, making requests, and participate in class. This frustration will deter the student from engaging in activities necessary for healthy development.



SOCIAL ANXIETY

According to a study in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, children showing signs of social and communication problems early on may be at risk of developing social anxiety. By analyzing [reports of social and communication difficulties](#) and anxiety symptoms in 9,491 children, researchers found a direct correlation between social and communication challenges and heightened social anxiety.



LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

At the heart of a child's success socially is the ability to understand and communicate effectively.

On a very practical level, if the language processing is complicated for the child, how can he/she hope to play and talk to friends? Often unclear children don't respond appropriately in a social setting and are either considered unintelligent or "not with it." Without adequate language processing, the child can be marginalized which may leave him/her lonely and vulnerable to bullying or other traumas.

Beyond this, there is another and perhaps more deleterious derivative of a communication disorder. As we all know, excellent communication skills are at the core of creating and developing healthy relationships. These skills are critical to both understanding concepts and emotions and are crucial to self-expression, as well as problem-solving.

Social discourse and interactions which are so crucial to a child's healthy development and confidence are likely to become a nightmare. Children and teenagers with communication deficits are saddled with a burden that over time may become overwhelming and tragically result in loneliness and isolation.



COMPROMISED MENTAL HEALTH

Studies show that nearly 45% of children and teenagers that are recommended to receive mental health services suffer from unidentified communication problems. In other words, the underlying mental health issue for many of these children is not being addressed or adequately helped with mental health therapy alone.



But the problem of subpar communication skills becomes even more complicated for these children. If young people cannot adequately express the problem, then how can the therapist hope to find a solution? In other words, without the benefit of speech therapy, mental health intervention may not be very effective at all.

While the ostensible goal of speech therapy is to enable the child to improve communication, it is clear that the consequences of being denied adequate services are potentially devastating in other realms as well.

What will become of the growing numbers of children, predominantly in Rural America, who have no access to the speech therapy they so desperately need?

Online Speech Therapy is the Obvious Solution

Enter online speech therapy! The distinct advantage of online speech therapy is that now any school anywhere can access top-quality therapists at competitive rates and ensure that their students will receive excellent uninterrupted services. Geography, mobility and time have ceased to be the barriers they once were.

It blends the most excellent quality in speech-language therapy with the many benefits that digital innovations afford. Aside from the many advantages to SLPs, it offers much for schools as well. Perhaps most important of all, **studies suggest that online speech therapy produces outcomes that may be as good or better than face-to-**



face therapy.

By extending top-quality clinical services to remote, rural, and underserved populations, online speech therapy holds the promise of reducing the harmful consequences of the SLP shortage, alleviating severely strained school budgets, and helping the children who so much need the services.

Best of all it is highly engaging for today's students. By utilizing fun and engaging digital technology, online speech therapy is exceptionally kid-friendly. Today's children are comfortable with computers and love game-based activities such as video interactions and digital learning.

In this rapidly developing technological world of ours, the digital dimensions of online speech therapy have become very natural and almost expected. The technology is simple, affordable, practical and extremely engaging. And increased engagement means the kids spend more time on tasks, which translates into quicker progress.

TOP BENEFITS OF ONLINE SPEECH THERAPY INCLUDE:



AVAILABILITY Districts no longer need to depend on local therapy agencies, worry about interruptions in therapy when SLPs are absent, are on vacation, or move away. Instead, they can enjoy "Anytime, Anywhere Access" to licensed, credentialed SLPs.

BUDGET Online speech therapy maximizes the therapist's time by eliminating traveling which translates into savings for the school. What's more, there are fewer expenditures related to recruitment, screening, contracting, training, and the managing of SLPs.

CONVENIENCE Online speech therapy redefines flexibility and convenience while improving staff efficiency. While traditional face-to-face therapists may lock the school into a rigid schedule, the online delivery model allows for therapy when it is convenient for the student, even outside of school hours.

DIVERSITY Schools have better access to culturally and linguistically diverse therapists as well as clinicians with specialties. Better targeting produces more

effective outcomes.

EXCELLENCE Online speech therapy affords schools previously unprecedented access to top-notch therapists, as they are no longer limited to locally-based clinicians, but can draw from an extensive nationwide network of highly qualified, certified and licensed therapists.

OTHER KEY ADVANTAGES:



CONSISTENCY since the attrition rate of therapists is often linked to travel time, eliminating travel results in a marked rise in the therapist's consistency with the child

UNINTERRUPTED the child is guaranteed sessions even when SLPs are sick, on vacation, or move away as the agency can draw upon a large pool of therapists

AUTOMATION scheduling, tracking, reporting, auditing are digitized to bring clarity to the administrator's fingertips and reduce compliance issues

INDEPENDENCE & PRODUCTIVITY therapists enjoy flexible hours from the comfort of their home increasing productivity and allowing more time with the kids

MATERIALS clinicians can access an ever-expanding array of creative, engaging and highly motivating materials available on websites and apps

Popular Online Speech Therapy Myths Debunked

MYTH #1 Teletherapy is Not an Adequate Substitute for Onsite Therapy

There is a myth that online speech therapy is somehow inferior when compared to face-to-face speech therapy. However, there is no evidence in the research supporting this assertion.

Over the past twenty years, the numerous studies that have been conducted, most notably by The Mayo Clinic and Kent State University, have shown that online speech therapy can be on a par with on-site therapy. What's more, in 2005, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the American Telemedicine Association (ATA) independently have corroborated and endorsed those findings as well.

What must be understood is that the online venue and the wondrous digital tools utilized by clinicians aren't meant to replace the one-on-one therapeutic interaction between clinician and child. They are merely available to enhance it. Speech therapy was initially designed and is intended to remain within the domain of the therapist working intimately with the child; never to be given over

to digital substitutes.

Studies aside, ask the clients, the kids, what they think of online speech therapy. Having experienced the wonders of digital technology from a tender age, they love online video interactions. Their motivation, enthusiasm, and success say it all.

MYTH #2 The Online Modality Compromises the Client's Privacy

There are voices out there complaining that the risk of compromising client confidentiality and their private information undermines the many benefits mentioned above. Their objection goes something like this. "Being that technology in general, and electronic communications in particular, are more vulnerable to be exploited, the privacy of clients will more likely be exposed."

And the truth is that they are correct. Being worried about privacy leaks and hacks in the online transmission of information is a legitimate concern. Just look at how the field of cybersecurity continues to explode and grow in sophistication. Take something as simple as email. There is no way to ensure complete safety and confidentiality.

But to focus on the online venue is to miss the point. To be human means that privacy isn't guaranteed. People are people, and there are plenty of security breaches out there in the "offline world" as well. It's always been that way, and it will always be that way. So is it reasonable to institute a standard for the "online world" that is unattainable in the "offline world"?

In other words, the privacy concern isn't really about "online" but is much broader than most people realize. It often boils down to adherence to regulations that have been established to protect client privacy. So what is a responsible caring school administrator to do?

The only answer is to work with a high-quality, reputable agency that can assure that all of the industry regulations of privacy are being followed and that everything is being done to satisfy all HIPAA standards, ensuring the confidentiality of all sessions and data.



Bottom line, receiving speech therapy online is no riskier than face-to-face. Both are very confidential; neither is 100% perfect. So when you consider the many benefits of teletherapy and weigh them against your confidentiality concerns, rest assured that you are probably much safer than you think.

MYTH #3 The Technology is Vulnerable and Untrustworthy

A significant objection to, or let's face it, "fear," of online speech therapy is that since it is computer-based, the entire success or failure of the session rises or falls on the flawless performance of the technology. And many responsible school administrators ask, "How can I take that risk with my students?"

While this fear indeed indicates the concern and profound sense of responsibility of the administrator, at the same time it also reveals a considerable misunderstanding of the technology itself, as well as the care taken by quality online agencies in assuring the smooth delivery of the therapy.

Truthfully, the technical requirements are relatively modest compared to the many other online activities that most of us engage in daily. Video communication only requires the use of a computer, webcam, video conferencing software, secure web-based programs, a headset or speakers and an internet connection.

And yet that "fear" often boils down to one thing—connectivity. If anything could jeopardize the session, it is weak or erratic connectivity. To mollify that fear, consider some of the following factors in determining an appropriate connection strategy.

If the download speed is calibrated correctly, the connection should be optimal for the session and screen sharing. As a precaution, establishing an alternative connection (e.g., telephone, e-mail) enables troubleshooting the connection or rescheduling the session. Also, a hard-wired connection is optimal in a shared Wi-Fi environment.

MYTH #4 Online Speech Therapy Compromises Client Engagement

Many schools considering online speech therapy are scared away by the fear that online speech therapy will compromise student engagement during the session. Is there a way to alleviate this concern? More specifically, what can a speech therapist do to ensure the high-quality session that online therapy is designed to provide?

Truthfully, many of the problems afflicting client engagement in the online venue are unrelated to the fact that the therapy is delivered online. They exist even when the therapy is face-to-face. And many of these challenges can be solved by following some simple guidelines that will enhance client engagement.

To name but a few, these guidelines include removing distractions at the outset of the session, taking short



breaks, connecting with the child on a personal level, keeping the activities relevant to the skills being worked on, and supplying heavy doses of positive reinforcement.

Some have mentioned that the lack of direct eye contact is a problem. But it need not be. As long as both the SLP and the client look directly into the camera, there will be a more natural interaction between therapist and client.

Alternatively, the online venue can often help to engage the student. For some kids, it is easier to focus on the computer than when the therapist is in the room. Distractions such as the way the therapist is sitting or peripheral movements don't exist during when the therapy is delivered online.

And of course, the plethora of games, video interactions and imaginative digital learning creations afforded by the online venue assures that the student will enjoy an endless array of exciting choices which will enhance engagement in the therapy.

Why Global Teletherapy is Your Best Online Speech Therapy Option

Global Teletherapy has formed a large and expanding team of highly qualified speech-language pathologists who deliver top-quality teletherapy in over 27 states. Over the past few years, Global Teletherapy has played a pivotal role in helping children, regardless of geographic location, who otherwise would have no access to SLPs to get the therapy they need to lead successful lives.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS INCLUDE:



FOR SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE The mission of Global Teletherapy is to staff schools with top-quality therapists who will deliver exceptional value through excellent, flexible, and affordable online speech therapy. We provide a high-quality video, and follow best practices according to the general industry standards.

COMPLIANCE All Global Teletherapy speech therapists are ASHA certified and are seasoned with a minimum of two years of professional experience. They are fully trained in teletherapy techniques before providing services. We maintain complete compliance with federal mandates including IDEA, which means reduced liability regarding potentially painful punitive legal or financial consequences.

FULL-SERVICE Global Teletherapy handles recruitment and management of clinicians and ensures that they are appropriately licensed and credentialed in the school district's state. Global Teletherapy assures that therapists are available when needed and handles session scheduling. The school district provides an onsite paraprofessional to facilitate logistics during therapy sessions.

SECURE Global Teletherapy ensures that sessions are extremely secure and in compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, and COPPA guidelines. Sessions are conducted using Zoom, a trusted technology used by millions of users worldwide with 24/7 support to ensure the success of every therapy session.



FOR THERAPISTS

SUPPORT Administrative staff acts as a knowledgeable liaison and advocate for Global Teletherapy clinicians, stewarding the relationship between therapist and school. In an interview that can be found at Glassdoor.com, an employee shared, "Administrative staff within GT (Global Teletherapy) is *phenomenal* at clearly communicating expectations and providing training and *support* for therapist responsibilities."

MATERIALS Once a new therapist is professionally trained to deliver onsite speech therapy, Global Teletherapy opens the door to the trove of materials available in their extensive library of resources and activities. These resources and activities can be utilized as is or modified to meet specific student needs. In addition, Global Teletherapy shows therapists how to gain access to even more excellent resources available free of charge.

COMMUNITY While you might deliver therapy in the comfort of your home, you are never alone with Global Teletherapy. We have developed an active work community that encourages clinicians to share ideas and troubleshoot problems. Sharing is at the core of

our philosophy to provide every student with the best possible speech therapy experience. Global Teletherapy offers training and collaborative support sessions monthly for therapists to share their knowledge and expertise, discuss challenges, brainstorm solutions, and grow professionally.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT Utilizing the renowned platform Zoom has many benefits. Zoom has a stellar reputation for being stable and reliable. In the unlikely event, a technical problem arises, the dedicated and professional technical support provided by Zoom is available to you 24/7.



FOR FAMILIES

TOP-NOTCH THERAPISTS Global Teletherapy ensures that each child will work with a top-notch therapist. They meticulously screen every clinician with a comprehensive interview and an exhaustive review of clinical experience, licenses, and qualifications and assurance that the prospective therapist has all the necessary credentials for your state or region.

QUALITY CONTROL Upon acceptance, the therapist is trained in online therapy technology, and each and every therapist's subsequent performance is closely monitored. Global Teletherapy's policies promote consistency. Although the flexible nature of online speech therapy allows for a child to have multiple therapists, every child is assigned to a particular clinician, who assumes responsibility for that child's therapy.

RELATIONSHIP This one therapist per child arrangement promotes continuity and a trusting and consistent relationship between the online therapist, child, parents, and teacher. If the child needs a new therapist for any reason, Global Teletherapy will ease the transition with minimal disruption to the child's therapy.

SUPERVISION Global Teletherapy provides supervision. An onsite paraprofessional (or a parent/learning coach for virtual school students) supervises and handles any hands-on requirements, especially for younger students. Some older students may not require supervision, depending on the policy of the school.





Experience The Global Difference™

Contact Global Teletherapy to
learn more and schedule a demo.