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Covid-19 Precautions & Procedures for Evaluations

In order to reduce the spread of the coronavirus in our office, we have implemented some strategies to help protect ourselves and our patients. We are offering some evaluations through telehealth and some evaluations using a modified in-office process to help keep everyone safe. Please see below for more details about these approaches.

Diagnostic Evaluations now available through telehealth:

We are providing some evaluations through telehealth approaches (video meetings, phone calls, online testing, etc.) for diagnostic evaluations for ADHD, Autism, and psychological symptoms (without cognitive testing).

What is Telehealth:

Telehealth is the process of receiving services through a video meeting, phone call, and other electronic methods rather than at a provider's office. Due to Covid-19, many providers have added telehealth options to provide services in a safe and convenient method. It is believed that telehealth options will continue to be offered in the future since many patients prefer this option. Most insurance companies currently cover telehealth services (if done in part by video) but this approval is temporary for now.

What is Needed for a Telehealth Appointment:

In order to do an appointment by telehealth, the patient/family should have access to a computer, tablet, or phone to participate in the video portion of the meeting (computer or tablet would be better than phone because the screen is larger). Please check to make sure the video and audio/microphone settings are on before the meeting. You would also need a phone connection to have a call with the psychologist. Finally, if you want to complete forms and assessments online, this works best from a computer (and the Chrome browser, which can be downloaded for free). However, these can be mailed to you instead if you prefer.

It is also important that you have a private place in your home to have the phone call or video meeting with the psychologist. Ideally, this would be a room where you can close the door to block out other noises or distractions in the house (people, pets, etc.). Some people like to wear headphones during their phone or video meetings but this is optional.

What is Involved in an Assessment through Telehealth for Children:

Diagnostic assessments (for ADHD/Autism, etc.) for children include all of the same components when completed by telehealth as they do when done in the office. Specifically, the following procedures are included:

- A comprehensive interview with the parent/guardian by telephone or video to review history and areas of concern.
- Parent/guardian completes a comprehensive history form prior to the meeting with the psychologist. This form can be completed online or sent by mail. This information is reviewed in greater detail during the interview.

- Parent/guardian completes several psychological assessment tools that look at symptoms and areas of difficulty and strength. These can be completed online or sent in the mail. These are reviewed by the psychologist in depth.
- Older children may also be asked to complete a psychological measure that asks about their thoughts or feelings.
- Input from teacher(s) are requested through assessment tools that can be completed online (or sent in the mail). They can complete a more general input form instead or have a telephone call with the psychologist.
- The psychologist will review all records provided by the parent/guardian or other health care providers (at parent's request). Any past evaluation reports, special education plans, etc. should be provided for review.
- Interview with the child by video.
- Review of short videos provided by parents that include samples of the child's behavior (optional). Some examples may be when child is restless or inattentive while trying to complete remote learning tasks or homework, engaging in repetitive or odd behaviors, etc.
- After all the above steps are completed, Dr. Beldotti will score and interpret all of the assessments and prepare a final report that includes the results, diagnostic impressions, and recommendations. This report can be used as proof of diagnosis (when applicable) for schools or other services. The report will also include any relevant recommendations for supports and/or school services (i.e., special education, accommodations, etc.).
- Sometimes, during the course of the evaluation, it is determined that the child might benefit from cognitive or academic testing (example: possible learning disability, etc.). If this is the case, options for scheduling this will be discussed with the parents/guardian at the feedback appointment. This type of testing must be done in an office setting and cannot be done effectively through telehealth.

What is Involved in an Assessment through Telehealth for Adults:

Diagnostic assessments (for ADHD/Autism, etc.) for adults include all of the same components when completed by telehealth as they do when done in the office. Specifically, the following procedures are included:

- A comprehensive interview with the patient by video to review history and areas of concern. If the adult patient has a guardian, there will need to be an interview with the guardian first.
- The adult patient (or their guardian if have one) completes a comprehensive history form prior to the meeting with the psychologist. This form can be completed online or sent by mail. This information is reviewed in greater detail during the interview.
- The adult patient (or guardian) completes several psychological assessment tools that look at symptoms and areas of difficulty and strength. These can be completed online or sent in the mail. Specific instructions for how and when to complete these will be provided. These are reviewed by the psychologist in depth.
- Input from other relevant persons can also be helpful. This may be a parent, spouse, significant other, friend, roommate, etc. This will be discussed with the adult patient (and guardian) and it will be determined if input from someone else would be possible and appropriate.
- The psychologist will review all records provided by the patient or other health care providers (at parent's request). Any past evaluation reports, special education plans, etc. should be provided for review.
- After all the above steps are completed, Dr. Beldotti will score and interpret all of the assessments and prepare a final report that includes the results, diagnostic impressions, and recommendations. This report can be used as proof of diagnosis for school, work, or other services. The report will also include any relevant recommendations for supports or services.

- Sometimes, during the course of the evaluation, it is determined that the patient might benefit from cognitive or academic testing (example: possible learning disability, etc.). If this is the case, options for this will be discussed at the feedback appointment. This type of testing must be done in an office setting and cannot be done effectively through telehealth.

In-Office Evaluations using 2-room process:

We are also providing some evaluations in the office following a modified approach (described below). This approach is most useful for children or adults who need to have testing of thinking, intelligence, and/or academic abilities included in their evaluation.



Due to risk factors in Dr. Beldotti's family, she is only providing in-office assessments that can be validly completed in a 2-room office process. The testing room and examiner's room are next to each other with a large viewing window in between. Testing materials are shown through the window or on a mirrored computer monitor in the testing room. Items shown on the computer monitor are designed for such presentation format (i.e., digital materials developed by the test publishers). When needed, duplicate sets of physical materials are used (i.e., blocks) so that the patient and examiner each have their own set to use. Paper response booklets are provided in the testing room in designated folders when needed. A 2-unit portable intercom system allows for clear 2-way audio communication between the rooms. There is no video connection during the testing session. Testing sessions are not recorded.

With this 2-room setup, the patient is able to work in the testing room without needing to wear a mask. Masks are only needed when in common areas (hallway, bathroom, etc.) or if the examiner needs to enter the room briefly to bring or remove an item. An air purifier is used in each room on the low setting during testing so that the sound would not interfere with the assessment process. Only one patient per day is tested for added safety.

Due to these procedures, the types of testing that Dr. Beldotti can do right now are limited. Currently, adults and children aged 8 or older (if parent/guardian thinks child can handle it) can be seen for the following types of evaluations: possible ADHD, Autism, learning disabilities, or intelligence testing. However, this can only be completed for individuals who would be cooperative and able to participate effectively without the psychologist in the same room with them. That is why younger children are not being assessed yet since they typically require more direct involvement from the psychologist in the room. Additionally, comprehensive neuropsychological testing is not being completed yet since these require many additional tests that cannot be administered in a valid manner through this setup. Anyone needing evaluations that cannot be done under the current procedures will be referred to other providers or put on the waiting list to be seen when the virus is under control.

Other Steps in Reducing Covid-19 risk:

Please review the information below to see what else we are doing to help reduce the risk of covid-19 spread and what you can do to help:

What we are doing:

- Monitoring our symptoms, including temperature checks the day before an appointment and the morning of the appointment.
- Washing hands and disinfecting surfaces frequently.
- Practicing physical distancing and avoiding crowds.
- Wearing masks when indoors (with others besides immediate family) and when outdoors if physical distancing is not realistic.
- Requiring mask use and social distancing in our office.
- Screening patients for symptoms or risk factors prior to coming in for their appointment.
- Temperature checks upon arrival to the office.
- We plan to reschedule appointments if Dr. Beldotti becomes symptomatic or believes she may have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus. Self-quarantine and Covid-19 testing will be completed if infection is suspected.
- If we learn of anyone who has recently been in the office testing positive, we will notify anyone else who might have potentially been exposed (without giving out any names).
- Using modified assessment procedures to reduce risk (example: 2-room assessment process, air purifier, some testing by computer, reduced time in same room, online forms and payment, etc.).

What you can do:

- Monitor your symptoms, including temperature checks the day before an appointment and the morning of the appointment.
- Wash your hands and disinfect surfaces frequently.
- Practice physical distancing and avoid crowds.
- Wear masks when indoors (with others besides immediate family) and when outdoors if physical distancing is not realistic. Help children get used to wearing a mask as needed. Fabric masks with several layers and an insertable filter provide more protection than thin masks (bandana, etc.). Masks with an adjustable nose strip and ear straps usually fit better. These are available from many places online (example: Purakamasks.com, Vistaprint.com, shopvida.com).
- Notify Dr. Beldotti ahead of time if you think you or someone in your household has tested positive or may have been exposed. We will reschedule you and give you a priority appointment when ready.
- Complete your paperwork and payment online if you are able. If you cannot do so, please let us know and we will make other arrangements for you.
- Send records to us by fax or encrypted email (Lockbin.com), or bring them on a CD or thumb drive if possible. If this is not possible, please bring them in a folder or envelope.
- Respect and follow our policies for mask use and social distancing in our office. Please notify us ahead of time if you cannot wear a mask for some reason and we will discuss the options.
- If you learn after your appointment that you or someone you had close contact with before your appointment is positive for Covid-19, please notify us as soon as possible.

Thank you!!!!