

Avivit Ben Aharon, MS Ed., MA CCC-SLP is the founder and clinical director of Gr8 Speech, an innovative online speech therapy program for children and adults which utilizes video conferencing technology to provide live, interactive, highly individualized services worldwide. Visit www.gr8speech.com.

1. What is the current state of telepractice?

Response:

Through ongoing education and a stratified and targeted professional and consumer outreach initiative, awareness of telepractice as a viable and sometimes preferable source of speech therapy has increased. The involvement of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has played a major role in professional perception and training. The recent ASHA conference hosted numerous sessions educating therapists about the TeleSpeech model. In addition, school districts, particularly those in rural areas, are embracing the advantages of this model. Referring professionals, such as pediatricians and psychologists, after witnessing progress in their own patients, have become ambassadors of telepractice, thereby changing public perception. The result is an increase in consumer request for online clinical services.

2. What are the benefits of telepractice?

Response:

Working in a traditional private practice, therapists often face the challenge of lack of consistency. Clients cancel because of weather or scheduling issues and then complain about lack of progress. Also, when a client or therapist relocates, it often leads to a disruption of services.

TeleSpeech is not weather-dependent and scheduling issues can be accommodated as appointments are based on client convenience. Relocation is not an issue since the process can be continued as long as there is internet service. In addition, the digital nature of telepractice adds an innovative component which is particularly appealing to children and young adults, who are naturally digitally-savvy.

The bottom line is that with the telepractice model, no matter where you live, you have access to specific specialists who are available to treat you in the privacy of your home, at a time that is mutually convenient. The result is convenience, consistency in care and general improvement over a shorter period of time.