

## Restoring Natural Eye Contact in Virtual Therapy

When clients assess whether or not they can trust a therapist, the answer arrives through eye contact even before any words are exchanged. This visual connection conveys emotional understanding and forms the basis of therapeutic relationships.

**Research also shows that increased eye contact combined with forward body posture enhances perceived empathy from the therapist, strength of the therapeutic alliance, and treatment credibility in the client's assessment. Studies of virtual counseling reveal that nonverbal compassion markers (like eye contact, facial expressions, and head nodding) have measurable therapeutic benefits. When this nonverbal connection was absent, participants perceived the session more negatively.**

### The Problem: Virtual Care's Missing Link

1

Standard videoconferencing creates an unavoidable conflict: therapists must choose between looking at their client's face and appearing to make eye contact through the camera. A 2024 review on telehealth nonverbal behavior identified six communication channels that video consultations systematically diminish: gaze, facial expression, gesture, head movement, proxemics, and posture. Among these, **gaze direction presents the greatest clinical challenge.**

2

Many providers report feeling less competent in virtual sessions specifically because standard videoconferencing disrupts natural eye contact. Yet 67-88% of mental health clinicians agreed that video therapy still provided opportunities to build rapport. This suggests that **if technological barriers are removed, virtual therapy can approach the effectiveness of in-person sessions.**

### The Solution: How iVi Works

#### Beam-Splitter Technology:

iVi positions the camera directly within your visual field using a built-in beam-splitter. When you focus on your client's face during a session, your eyes effortlessly align with the camera lens.

#### Professional Components:

Sony 4K camera sensor • Harman Kardon audio with 4-microphone array • Integrated adjustable lighting • Direct USB-C connection

#### Universal Compatibility:

Works with Zoom, Google Meet, Doxy.me, SimplePractice, and all major platforms. No proprietary software required.

#### Setup (Under 5 Minutes):

Connect power → Connect USB-C cable to computer → Select "iVi Camera" and "iVi Audio" in your platform settings.

#### Shared Practice Flexibility:

Multiple therapists can share one device. Switching between users takes seconds. Simply disconnect and reconnect the USB-C cable.

## Clinical Benefits By Population

### Trauma Therapy:

Helps trauma survivors feel truly seen and safely held during difficult work.

### Anxiety Treatment:

Reduces discomfort when eyes appear naturally focused rather than looking away at a screen.

### Pediatric Work:

Maintains engagement with younger clients who need connection to stay focused.

### Autism Spectrum:

Helps trauma survivors feel truly seen and safely held during difficult work.

### Couples/Family Therapy:

Helps trauma survivors feel truly seen and safely held during difficult work.

## Key Outcomes

### Strengthen Therapeutic Alliance:

Clients experience less anxiety about being “on camera” when they sense authentic connection.

### Improve Clinical Assessment:

Catch fleeting expressions of distress or defensiveness. Monitor emotional regulation through real-time facial cues during difficult conversations.

### Boost Treatment Effectiveness:

Research shows that stronger therapeutic rapport predicts better clinical outcomes. Better rapport reduces dropout rates and improves homework compliance between sessions.

### Build a Stronger Practice:

Patients report higher satisfaction with virtual sessions that feel personal and attentive. Professional video presence distinguishes your practice in an increasingly competitive market.

## What Professional Guidelines Say

**American Psychiatric Association & American Telemedicine Association (2022):** Best practices emphasize gazing at the camera rather than the screen. Maintaining camera placement “at the same elevation as the eyes with the face clearly visible” is a basic requirement for effective telehealth delivery.

**Harvard Medical School:** “Looking at the camera achieves 'eye-contact' with the patient” and “the interaction will be more natural if you use facial gestures and body language fitting for the conversation.”

## What Therapists & Patients Report

### 1 Therapists

“Feel more confident in clinical assessments, catch microexpressions and emotional shifts previously missed, and notice the difference within their first few sessions.”

### 2 Patients

“Sessions feel more like being in the room together” or “I can tell you're really paying attention now” and report feeling more comfortable and connected.”

*Your clinical practice deserves technology that enhances how you communicate. Because your patients don't just need to hear you. They need to truly see you.*