

My Telehealth

Q&A

With Matt Connolly
MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE



Q: Why does telehealth matter to you?

I live with schizophrenia, and it took me years to finally see a doctor, get diagnosed and become stable. Timely preventive care is important to keep me from relapsing. Virtual appointments in particular became important during the height of COVID-19.

To manage my condition, I see a psychiatrist who helps me stay up-to-date with my prescriptions. I also see a life coach for counseling. When the pandemic hit, both switched from in-person appointments to phone and video calls.

Regular appointments, along with daily wellness routines and preventive care, allow me to keep living the life I want. I know from past experience how lack of care can quickly lead to a downward spiral.

Q: How would you describe the quality of care in a virtual visit?

For me, the quality of care is equal to that of an in-person visit.

You're able to talk things through with your doctor. You stay current with your medications, and when you're not feeling well you have the chance to figure out why. It's almost like the good old days when you could just call your doctor.

Even if it's talking for a few minutes, it's helping me stay healthy. No gaps in care, no regression with my disease.

Tel·e·health

noun

Getting immediate care when I need it, no matter where I am

Q: What are the key benefits of telemedicine, based on your experience?

Flexibility, for one. As a real estate broker, community advocate for mental health and father to two young children,

I lead a busy life. Telemedicine provides the flexibility I need when a work, family or community engagement arises and I cannot make an in-person appointment.

And it's time. You don't have to fight traffic. You don't have to carve out a big chunk of your day when you could be doing other things. You get your time back.

Telemedicine also keeps care continuous, which is critical for people like me living with a mental health condition.

“I know how lack of care can lead to a downward spiral.”

Q: Do you hope to have access to telemedicine after the pandemic?

Yes. I like having telemedicine as an option, even though my personal preference is for an in-person visit.

Post-pandemic, I'd like to see policymakers push for a hybrid-based telemedicine model, where patients use in-person and virtual appointments to fit their needs.

People are doing hybrid workplaces now and hybrid school, mixing in-person with virtual. I think we've moved past the point where people have to choose one or the other. There's no reason health care shouldn't evolve in the same way.

“Being able to call in, even if it's for five minutes, is life saving.”



PATIENT & PROVIDER
**Advocates
for Telehealth**