

Virtual Backgrounds & Green Screen Technology

There are many interactive features available in virtual practice platforms that are accessible to clinicians – such as virtual backgrounds, green screens, whiteboard, and/or mirroring/sharing screens.

The risks and therapeutic benefits of using these features must be considered prior to use as they pose an increased risk of breach of privacy and/or information. A therapist must determine if the therapeutic benefit of these features outweigh the risks associated with using them and efforts must be made to minimize risks wherever possible.

Under circumstances where therapeutic use of these features is appropriate, a verbal agreement with the client is essential. **Discuss what features will be used, the benefits, associated risks and what parameters will be in place** (i.e., clinician will use a virtual background during the visual scanning activity). Only begin using these background features once the client has joined the session and after an agreement has been made.

Examples of Therapeutic Use of Background Features in Occupational Therapy:

- Using a solid colored background to decrease visual clutter and help the client attend to the therapist.
- Use a background image that is meaningful to the client and to the intervention (e.g. a beach background if the client is talking about a vacation destination, or planning a trip as a cognitive activity).
- Using a green screen with the cut out of a house to play a game of hide & seek. This will engage the child in asking questions, remembering information or in using vocabulary from the home environment.
- Memory and/or visual scanning purposes (e.g. ask the client to find items on the therapist's screen, identify the stimulus, and remember/recall or sort the items seen).
- Using the whiteboard to have the client sketch their ideas before beginning to write or for playing a game of Tic-Tac-Toe to build rapport or for making a grocery list.

Potential Barriers or Risks

- Client may not be able to see materials properly when a virtual background is used (i.e., they seem to disappear when not placed right in front of the therapist).
- Client may see confidential information on a therapist's computer. Be sure to exit programs and close documents that are not to be shown to the client.
- Client may feel uncomfortable when the therapist is in an "unnatural" environment; they may feel like something is being "hidden" from them. Revisit the verbal agreement and alter your intervention approach as needed.