

# KEY MESSAGES: Mental health and substance use impacts of COVID-19

## INDIVIDUALS WITH A PRE-EXISTING MENTAL ILLNESS



### VIRTUAL INTERVENTIONS MAY BE EFFECTIVE FOR TREATING SCHIZOPHRENIA

Social restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic have reduced access to in-person clinical services. Almost all clinical services for individuals with schizophrenia are delivered in-person, and it is unclear which interventions have evidence for delivery through virtual options.

Virtual cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and cognitive remediation have demonstrated preliminary efficacy to treat schizophrenia but require the most training for appropriate implementation.

More evidence is needed regarding which psychosocial interventions are most effective through virtual care for schizophrenia-spectrum disorders.



### THERE ARE BENEFITS TO REMOTE COGNITIVE ASSESSMENT IN SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS, BUT MORE RESEARCH IS NEEDED

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need to identify best practices for remote cognitive assessment of individuals living with severe mental illness to ensure they can properly receive psychological interventions delivered through digital technologies.

Wider geographical reach and automation of procedures appear to be important benefits; however, privacy and the need for more validation of assessment tools are major factors to consider in the future use, development and implementation of these solutions.

Learn more at <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52001.html>