

Tele-Audiology A recipe for success.



Frances Lockhart

Learning Objectives

Goal : To investigate which ‘ingredients’ are needed to successfully implement Tele-Audiology in a modern audiology clinic or practice.

A Recipe for Success.

In order for a Tele-Audiology or Tele-Health service to be truly person centered, effective/efficient and manageable there are many factors that need to be considered prior to incorporating this style of care into a clinic.

Access the ‘Tele-Aud Investigation Guide ‘ document before progressing.

Ingredient 1: Patient Factors

Things to consider:

- What do your patients want from you?
 - (what type of services do you currently offer? What have they asked for?)
- How do your patients get access currently to your services?
 - (do they drop by, do they ring do they check out your website or get referred from others etc?)
- How do they currently access their other health care services.
 - (do they drive to appointments, do they have Tele-health appointments already with other specialists? Etc)
- What stage of the circle are most of your patients and focus groups at currently?

Ingredient 1: Patient Factors

- What type of Technology do your patients or focus group currently have access to?
 - (aid types/internet/smart phones/apps/laptops etc.)
- AND how often do they use these and other technology(daily/weekly/monthly)?
- How far do your patients need to travel in order to see you F2F currently?
- How is the age group of your patients broken up (what are the demographics? infants/children/under 65 years/over 65 years etc.)

Patient Factors: ACTIVITY

Fill in the investigations guide section labelled:

Patient wants and needs considerations.

Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

Things to consider:

- What are your Goals around providing a Tele-Audiology service?
 - i.e.: Do you need to develop a more user friendly or interactive website. Do you want to start offering appointments using Tele-Audiology or an SMS battery order service etc?
 - Where are the Gaps in your service?
- What additional skills do you or your staff require to implement your Goals.
 - Examples might be: learning how to update a website; use a video otoscope or connect up a webcam.
- Where are you located and do you have enough equipment?

Ingredient 2: Provider Factors -What do you believe?

Examine your own beliefs and experience with Tele-Audiology.

Some research suggests that provider attitude can be an important aspect of successful Tele-Audiology implementation.

[Provider attitudes to Tele-Audiology](#)

How do you feel about implementing a Tele-Audiology service?

What are you most concerned about?

Think about what could go wrong if this doesn't work?

What could go right if it does?

[A review of TeleHealth applications in Audiology](#)

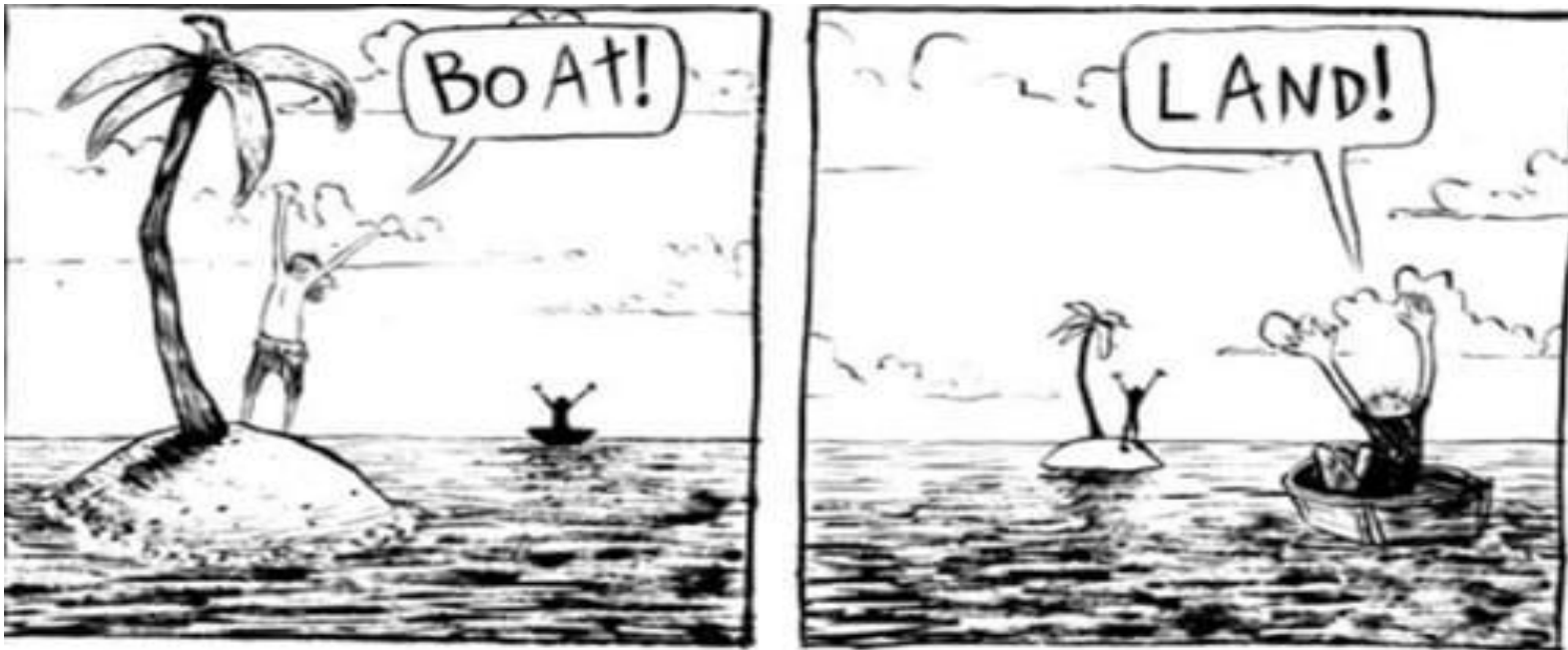
ACTIVITY: Read these articles to help generate your ideas and identify your concerns.

Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

A focus on Perspective taking :

Perspective taking is the ability to understand a situation from the perspective of another person. It is complementary to emotional intelligence but often is more useful. It involves placing yourself, in your mind's eye, in the physical or emotional position of the other person.

[perspective taking and theory of mind](#)



Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

Perspective taking an essential skill

Anthropologists, ethnographers, and other social scientists have identified perspective-taking skills as critical for promoting understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds. Perspective-taking skills can help bridge cultural divides within the workplace, including divides between younger and older workers. They also can help build understanding between patients and carers.

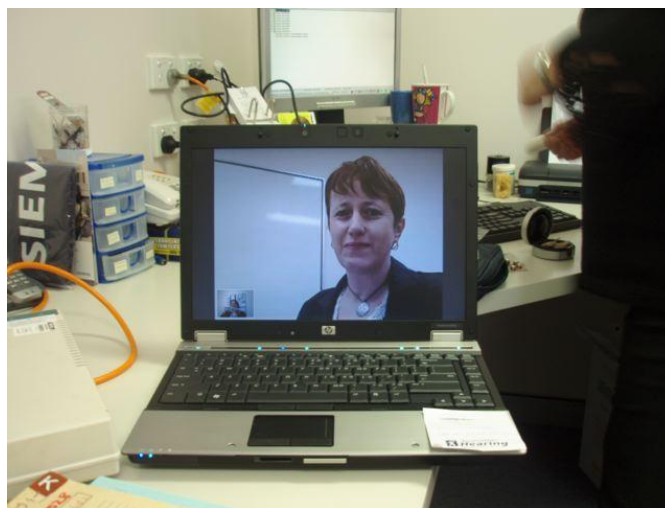


Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

Perspective taking an essential skill

The ability to take the perspective of another individual is considered by most mainstream cognitive and developmental psychologists to be a complex and critical set of cognitive abilities.

In Tele-Audiology we take this skill to the extreme as we need to place ourselves in our minds eye in the physical as well as cognitive space of our patients.



Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

- **Things to consider:**
- **Think about the User Experience: Are you skilled at perspective taking.**
 - What does the service look like from the patients perspective. Can you put yourself in your patients 'shoes' and imagine how they would find the service. Is it easy or hard to access and engage with the service?
- **Do you need any additional staff?**
 - Examples might be: Technology assistants in order to operate the remote equipment and be available for patients at the site where the patients attend
 - Or you may need to employ a website designer or App developer to help you build the functionality that you require. Maybe you can just use existing staff that you have and teach them new skills?

Ingredient 2: Provider Factors

- **Are your current premises suitable** for providing a Tele-Audiology service:
 - For example: Do you need to locate and arrange a remote site? Do you need additional rooms or facilities.
 - Is your current computer setup comfortable enough for a clinician to spend extended periods of time at the computer.

- **Do you have the right kind of or enough equipment?**
 - For example a webcam or an additional set of clinical equipment for the remote site, or a video otoscope. Do you have the right type of hearing aids with features that allow you to adjust them remotely?

Ingredient 2: Provider Factors: ACTIVITY

Fill in the investigations guide section labelled:

Service Provider considerations

Ingredient 3: Stakeholder/ Partnership

Things to consider:

- Who else do you work with that may need access to some or all of these technologies or services. (i.e.) hospitals schools/ other providers etc.
- Other hearing service providers or manufacturers, do you need to work with them to provide the best services. Could you co-ordinate services or link into their resources?
- Are there data security or patient security issues with other providers (esp. say hospitals or colleges). Are there IT firewalls that prevent you from web conferencing in to see patients at their sites.

Stakeholder/ Partnership : ACTIVITY

Fill in the investigations guide section
labelled:

Stakeholder/ Partnership
considerations

Ingredient 4: Government/ Licensing

Things to consider:

- Would your Tele-audiology service be available within the same state or territory or across states/territories or even countries?
- Are there state funded or government funded services available that reflect your service?
- Are there audiology specific licenses that you need to work within other states or territories
- Are there Tele-health specific licensing requirements for your local state or territory.
- **Activity:** Do a websearch of “telehealth” in your state or territory.

Government/ Licensing : ACTIVITY

Fill in the investigations guide section labelled:

Government/ Licensing
requirements

Ingredient 5: IT

Things to consider:

- **Internet and Telephone coverage.** Some more remote areas don't have internet or even quality phone coverage. If they do it may be intermittent or only available on certain days. Others have mobile but not landline services. Cable/ADSL or 4-5G services./Satellite services?
- **Software needed:** What additional IT applications might you need in order to provide your service? These might be web conferencing software/apps/ desktop sharing requirements. Some of these may require you to purchase user licenses. Think about the sorts of applications you looked at earlier on.

Ingredient 5: IT

Things to consider:

- **What technology do your patients have** and is it compatible?
Your patients might only have smart phones but not a computer, so is your website or service compatible to be viewed and accessed on those devices?
- **What additional equipment might you need?** (webcams, video otoscope, additional clinical equipment etc.)



IT : ACTIVITY

Fill in the investigations guide section labelled:

IT Considerations

Review your Guide

Now have a look at your complete Tele-Aud investigations guide document and add in any extra considerations you have thought of whilst you were progressing through this section of the course.

