As telehealth counseling expands, privacy worries abound

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Patient privacy has arisen as a major concern as psychological health professionals have moved their work online during the pandemic.

Some college students — like those with roommates — have had difficulty ensuring they have private spaces in which to engage in counseling services.

“There are a few differences that we have had to accommodate for, including making sure students are in a private location when they call in for their sessions,” said Stacy Gerberich, the outreach coordinator at Utah State University’s Counseling and Psychological Services, or CAPS.

Gerberich said CAPS has worked with its partners at Sorenson Center for Clinical Excellence to provide secluded spaces for students in Logan.

Sam Shaw, a student at USU, feels fortunate his roommates are usually gone during his telehealth session.

“I feel open to say anything about myself, but I feel like I can’t say anything about someone else,” Shaw said. “It’s the concern that someone will hear.”

Maddie Alder, another Utah State student, has noticed the issue, too.

“You’re worried the sound will travel through the walls,” Alder said. “Sometimes I feel like I have to speak quietly so nobody hears through the vents.”