



# **GREAT THERAPIST HANDBOOK**

## **Policies & Procedures**

---

## Table of Contents

Welcome to the Great Speech team! .....	4
Why this is important:.....	5
Mission & Vision.....	6
A Note from Our Founder.....	7
What Successful Therapists Do .....	8
Credentialing and Licensing .....	10
General Credentialing Requirements .....	10
Licensing Requirements.....	11
Tax Liability .....	12
Privacy Regulations .....	12
Additional Responsibilities .....	13
Communication Guidelines .....	14
Communicating with Clients: .....	14
Communicating with Caregivers & Parents: .....	14
Communicating with the Great Speech Team: .....	15
Scheduling & Availability .....	16
Scheduling Policy:.....	16
Entering Availability:.....	16
Communicating with the Great Speech Team About Scheduling: .....	16
Confirming Scheduling With Clients: .....	17
Compensation for Extended or Unusual Sessions .....	17
Touching Base with Clients: .....	14
When Clients Ask to Pause Their Sessions: .....	18
Preparing For Discharge: .....	18
Clinical Expectations & Frequency:.....	19
Summer Schedules for Therapists: .....	19
Cancellation & No-Show Policy .....	20
No-Shows: .....	20

Late Clients:.....	20
Cancellations: .....	20
Working with the Scheduling Coordinator.....	22
Responsibilities of the Scheduling Coordinator: .....	22
Responsibilities of the Therapist: .....	22
Last Minute Cancellations: .....	22
Using the Portal .....	23
Yearly Therapist Touchpoint Sessions .....	24
Compensation.....	25
Rate Increases:.....	25
SOAP Notes: .....	25
Indirect Therapy:.....	26
Payment:.....	26
Financial Questions: .....	26
Terminating Service with Great Speech: .....	26
Documentation.....	27
SOAP Notes .....	27
Compensation for SOAP Notes:.....	28
Progress Reports .....	28
Example Progress Report: .....	29
Compensation for Progress Reports: .....	30
Client Discharge .....	31
A Practical Guide to a Successful Great Speech Session .....	32
Useful Contact Information.....	34
In Summary.....	35
Acknowledgement:.....	35

---

## Welcome to the Great Speech team!

We invited you to be part of our family because we value you tremendously. We recognize that you have both the compassion *and* talent to change our clients' lives...so we'd like to work as a team to make that happen.

In this handbook, we'll clarify exactly what is expected from us and you, in order to empower confident communication.

Thank you for taking the time to review these policies and procedures thoroughly. As always, we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions at any time!

---

## Why this is important:

There's no greater feeling than knowing that you're changing someone's life.

At Great Speech, we're committed to giving our clients the tools they need to succeed.

The work you do with them opens new doors, opportunities, and relationships that they might never have had if it weren't for you. That's life-altering stuff!

Great Speech is the pioneer of the virtual model of speech therapy. We offered virtual therapy long before it became popularized during the pandemic. Over the years, we discovered that there are certain keys to making a virtual model highly effective.

The policies and procedures laid out in this handbook are based on those keys.

**Following these systems is good for both you and your clients**, because...

- They will make your life easier and more organized, which saves you time.
- These systems empower our team to support you more effectively.
- Predictable, reliable communication is crucial to keeping clients engaged and happy.

**We value therapists who understand the importance of a systematized approach** to providing the highest quality of service. Implementing these systems successfully indicates your professionalism and commitment to serving your clients at the highest level. We reward professional, committed therapists with more clients.

It is our hope that we will grow together, and these systems are a great place to begin our teamwork.

---

## Mission & Vision

Great Speech's mission and vision takes three main parts:

**We empower children and adults with confident communication.** Speech is how people communicate their thoughts; it's what they hear. Language is what they want to say; it's what they think. When people have both, they express themselves fully and connect to others. Without this, they are trapped in a world where they face constant frustration with never being fully seen and heard. We are committed to removing these invisible restraints and freeing our clients to become the best they can be, whatever that might look like for them.

**We are agents for change.** We pioneered the virtual model of speech therapy long before the pandemic forced other organizations online. From our inception, we have been committed to an approach that creates access to speech therapy without borders -- offering greater convenience, accessibility, comfort, and safety for our clients.

**We cultivate a safe, encouraging space for our clients to thrive.** We believe that the best way to do this is through keen awareness of the way we offer our services. Therefore, we strive to provide our clients with a white-glove, concierge level of care and dedication. We want our clients to continuously feel that we are there behind them: supporting them, cheering them on, and ensuring their success.

---

## A Note from Our Founder

When I was 14 years old, my family immigrated to the United States. I arrived in New York City and was fascinated by the fast pace and diversity. I was in total awe, but I was also totally overwhelmed... I didn't speak a word of English, and school started just three days later!

I was placed into an English as a Second Language class and was absolutely shell-shocked. I couldn't communicate with the other kids or the teachers because no one understood me.

New York City doesn't slow down for anyone, though, so I had to learn how to communicate. The journey was isolating and frustrating, but it paved the way for my future. I became a speech therapist so I could help other people feel heard and understood, like I wanted most.

After working in the field for over a decade, I saw countless situations where people could not access the therapeutic services they needed. Some of the reasons included:

- Challenges with transportation
- Cancellations due to inclement weather
- Busy schedules due to work and family life
- Generalized therapy in school that didn't address a specialized need
- A pandemic that called for a mandated quarantine

I noticed that speech therapy was often put on the backburner because the traditional methods of therapy didn't integrate easily with modern-day lifestyles. I knew there had to be a better way.

Great Speech started when I began experimenting with technology to deliver speech therapy entirely online. Not only did it create the convenience I was looking for, but it also allowed us to hire the best therapists in the country... because we weren't limited by location.

Today, Great Speech continues to offer highly specialized, convenient, and flexible speech therapy that is widely available to those who need it most.

I'm so glad that you joined our mission to transform lives and make a real difference. As therapists, we are agents for change. We chose you to join our team because we know that you possess the necessary clinical skills, personality, energy and passion to help others meet their maximum potential.

Sincerely,

Avivit Ben-Aharon  
MS Ed., MA CCC-SLP  
Founder, President & Clinical Director, Great Speech Inc.

---

## What Successful Therapists Do

We can't fulfill our mission alone. In this section, we'll provide a bulleted description of what our successful therapists do to provide outstanding service.

It's important to note that **above all, we value proactive therapists** who solve problems before they exist. Striking a productive balance between resourceful, independent problem-solving and active communication with our team will ensure the smoothest experience for you, and the greatest success for your clients.

### Here's how to succeed with Great Speech:

-Manage your schedule effectively:

- **All client sessions are scheduled two weeks in advance in the portal.** This means that by the first of the month, all sessions are scheduled until the 14th. On the 15th, all sessions are scheduled until the 30th.
- **In general, you'll meet with your clients twice per week.** As progress is made, the frequency can be reduced based upon your clinical judgement. Be sure to update your SOAP notes so the current frequency is up to date.
- **Inform us of vacations or breaks that either you or your client are taking.** Just send an email [hello@greatspeech.com](mailto:hello@greatspeech.com) as soon as you're made aware. Additionally, let your clients know of any upcoming schedule changes that you may have, and plan around these changes so they can still achieve their goals.

-Communicate openly with our team and clients:

- **Reach out for support when you need it.** We want you to feel fulfilled with your important role here at Great Speech. If you have any questions or concerns, please email [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) to let us know. We want to help you thrive!
- **Communicate with clients and caregivers** so they know how they're progressing, what goals they'll tackle next, and how to succeed in between sessions.

-Set your clients up to succeed:

- **Assign homework to your clients in the portal when it's helpful.** This will reinforce what they've practiced during their sessions, so they can progress further, faster. This is a great way to save time for *both* you and your clients!
- **Ensure that your clients' goals and progress are up to date,** and that your clients and caregivers are aware of the progress. Designate the last few minutes of your sessions to update the client or caregiver.
- **Promptly update SOAP notes following sessions,** so that each client's progress can be tracked, monitored, and measured.



-Adhere to HIPAA guidelines:

- **Utilize the portal to communicate with your clients**, so all their information remains in one central, private location. Our portal is HIPAA secure.
- When sending emails outside of the portal to our administrative team, please ensure that you **don't use any identifying information for your clients**. Use initials as often as possible. This includes forwarding messages from your clients to other members of our team.

-Bring your best energy to your sessions:

- **Be professional**: prepare for your sessions ahead of time and plan your activities around the client's specific needs.
- Check in with your clients frequently to **ensure that the goals you are targeting are still relevant**.
- Let your personality shine through and **show how much you care**. Be thoughtful and let clients feel your warmth.
- **Be creative and flexible!** Change things up, keep things interesting; adapt your approach to benefit your client's learning style and level of maturity.
- Your energy is powerful; it can motivate and energize your client. At the same time, we don't want to overwhelm more quiet or laid-back clients. **Adjust your energy to match** your client's learning style and personality.
- Know that **someone from our team might check in** during a session. This is not a reflection of your performance. It's just our way of being present, both for you and your client.

The most straightforward way to succeed with Great Speech is to implement the simple, yet meaningful steps listed above!

For more specific details, reference our Table of Contents on the next page.

---

# Credentialing and Licensing

## General Credentialing Requirements

At Great Speech, we pride ourselves on offering the highest levels of professionalism and expertise to our clients.

Therefore, we require that all therapists...

### Maintain Proper Credentials:

- Active ASHA credentials
- Active speech therapy license(s) in the state of residence
- Active speech therapy license(s) in states where assigned clients reside
- Updating current licenses, credentials, and certifications as needed in order to meet credentialing guidelines.
- In general, expenses associated with certifications and licensing are the therapist's responsibility.
- Under certain circumstances and with prior approval, some licensing may be reimbursed. See below for more info.

### Maintain a Current CAQH Profile:

*CAQH is a credentialing database used by commercial insurance providers to verify the qualifications of therapists. Maintaining this profile will allow you to grow your caseload and work with a wider range of potential clients, making you a more valuable member of our team.*

To maintain the profile, you must:

- First, apply for an NPI registry number at <https://nppes.cms.hhs.gov>
- Apply for a CAQH profile at <https://proview.caqh.org/PR/Registration>
  - Read the "Before You Begin" section so you can prepare the list of things you will need in order to complete the registration. Once you have a login and password, we can provide you with a release form to sign and you can provide your account credentials to us so we can assist in completing updates and uploading documents.
- Maintain all attestation and documentation as required every 90 days.
  - We will attest on your behalf, but you must create your profile and maintain up-to-date information and documentation.

### Maintain Liability Insurance:

- Therapists must maintain professional liability insurance in order to provide speech therapy services to Great Speech clients.
- Reimbursement is not provided for obtaining and renewing liability insurance.

### Complete Observations & Training:

- Newly onboarded therapists who don't have prior teletherapy experience must observe a minimum of 3 teletherapy sessions during their training period.
- After each observation, complete the Observation Summary in the Great Speech portal.
- Compensation is not provided for training or observations.

### Keep Current & Accurate Credentials in the Portal:

- Upload and update state license(s), ASHA certification, liability insurance and expiration date(s) in the Great Speech portal. Be sure to notify the Great Speech admin staff when you do (see the "Useful Contact Information" section at the end of this document)
- Provide a signed W-9 to Great Speech along with all other tax documentation.
- Inform Great Speech of any changes of your address, phone number, or certifications immediately.

## Licensing Requirements

One of the key advantages of virtual speech therapy is the ability to help clients, regardless of location. To fully leverage this benefit, we encourage our therapists to maintain licensing in multiple states.

- Licenses held by the therapist prior to joining the Great Speech team remain the responsibility of that therapist.
- If a therapist chooses not to renew a current license, that decision may impact their caseload. Please notify Great Speech admin staff during your consideration process.
- To verify that a new license will qualify for reimbursement, therapists should reach out to the admin team at [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) for email approval before pursuing that license.

Under certain circumstances, Great Speech may consider reimbursing a therapist for new licensing. Speak to Great Speech Clinical or Operations management to discuss.

- Great Speech management must approve in writing any request for reimbursement for licensing.
- Once an admin from the Great Speech team approves reimbursement for a new license, the therapist will receive a form and any other necessary paperwork to track licensing and expenses.
- If you are using the new license with Great Speech clients, we will provide reimbursement for that license within 45-60 days after the license becomes active.
- *Great Speech does NOT reimburse for the renewal of licenses.* An increased caseload warrants the expense of maintaining the license moving forward.

## Tax Liability

As independent contractors, therapists hold sole responsibility for their taxes. Great Speech will issue a 1099 by January 31 if over \$600 was earned during the previous fiscal year.

-----

## Privacy Regulations

Great Speech follows standard industry practices in ensuring client confidentiality.

All therapists are expected to carefully adhere to the guidelines specified in the Ethics, HIPAA and HITECH manual provided during onboarding.

To ensure HIPAA compliance, **all communication between clinicians and clients/caregivers must be done via the Great Speech portal.** The use of an external email system (i.e.: Gmail, Yahoo, etc.) to communicate medically related information can be considered a HIPAA violation and put the company, and you, at risk.

In addition, we also ask that therapists practice care when forwarding documents or emails between our team. Even though this communication may be informal in nature, it can still constitute a violation of HIPAA regulations. All identifying information of clients should be removed and we recommend that you use initials to refer to your clients whenever possible.

## Additional Responsibilities

In addition to attending and facilitating your online sessions, there are a few additional duties we expect our therapists to undertake. This ensures the highest level of professional care for our clients, and that things run smoothly and easily for our team.

### Therapeutic Responsibilities:

- **Prepare for your sessions in advance.** This includes organizing or creating digital materials as needed.
- **Complete SOAP notes for each of your clients** at the end of each session. *If a SOAP note is not completed within 72 hours, the therapist access will be automatically restricted* until the note is completed. Once the SOAP note is completed, the portal will restore normal access.
- Ensure that all the details on the SOAP note are accurate (including the session time), so that reimbursement is accurate.
- When requested, **Progress Reports (PR) are to be completed within 48 hours** of the initial request. The therapist is compensated for a 15-minute increment per approved report. (Note that the Great Speech portal pre-populates most of the progress report based on data previously included in SOAP notes.)
- **Attend and facilitate related indirect therapy as needed** (i.e., communication with doctors, teachers, psychologists). If a client requests additional related formal meetings in advance, please notify the Great Speech administrative team. Time spent on these meetings should be tracked, because the therapist will be reimbursed for additional time.

### Client Scheduling:

- Carefully **adhere to the scheduling guidelines** laid out in this manual.
- At the end of each session, confirm the upcoming session with the client and/or the caregiver.
- Always offer to reschedule a missed or canceled session.

### Handling Technical Issues:

- Update the office of ANY issues. (see the “Useful Contact Information” section at the end of this document)
- Any tech-related issues with Zoom platform must be reported to Zoom - 1. 888.799.9666 6:00AM – 10:00PM PST URL: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

### Managing Issues with Clients:

Update the Great Speech office ASAP if ANY issues arise before, during or after the session (i.e., scheduling conflicts, internet issues, behavior challenges, lack of client supervision during sessions, inability to establish meaningful connection with the client etc.). We will work with you to support both you and the client, and to prevent future recurrences. You’re not in this alone!

---

## Communication Guidelines

**We recommend that therapists reserve approximately the final 5 minutes of each session to communicate progress with their clients and caregivers. This way, they are compensated for their time.**

### Communicating with Clients:

In order to ensure that clients and therapists stay on the same page about progress, practice expectations, and goals, we advise that therapists end each session with a wrap-up. This is a brief touchpoint that follows the check-in.

In order to guarantee clear communication, five points should be covered at the end of each session:

1. Today, we worked on...
2. Before your next session, I recommend you practice...
3. Our goal for next time is...
4. Your next session is... (ensure that the next session is scheduled)
5. Any questions?

### Communicating with Caregivers & Parents:

We expect our therapists to be in regular communication with parents and caregivers, checking in at a minimum of once a week. More frequent communication may be necessary, depending on the situation.

Check-ins with caregivers and parents should cover the same essential points as a session wrap-up, listed above.

If you are having difficulty connecting with a parent or caregiver, please send a message asking when they might be available to talk through email, voicemail, or text. Please reach out to us via [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) to document this contact, so we can track our efforts to serve the client.

### Formal or Extended Update Requests:

All formally scheduled sessions with clients - including pre-arranged meetings to discuss progress - are reimbursed by Great Speech. Please confirm these types of unusual meetings with the office before scheduling to ensure that your time will be reimbursed.

However - impromptu, unscheduled conversations with clients/caregivers are not reimbursed. If clients ask for an informal conversation, let them know you need authorization from the office

beforehand. Once the office confirms that you can meet with the client/caregiver, you may meet and receive compensation.

## Communicating with the Great Speech Team:

We ask that you stay in touch with us, especially as clients experience any milestones, successes, or challenges. If the frequency of sessions changes, or a client is preparing for discharge, we would like to know.

Also, we can support our therapists in handling many potential issues proactively, such as attendance problems, clients who are growing bored or burned out, and caregivers feeling frustrated with results.

(see the “Useful Contact Information” section at the end of this document)

---

## Scheduling & Availability

**Scheduling is a *crucial* part of success on the Great Speech team. Proactive scheduling and schedule adherence are critical to clients' successes, and to the quality of their experience with Great Speech. Your time is valuable, and our scheduling policies are here to enforce that.**

*Great Speech reserves the right to change a client to an available provider or terminate your independent service agreement if scheduling guidelines are not followed.*

### Scheduling Policy:

All client sessions must be scheduled two weeks in advance in the portal. This means that by the first of the month, sessions must be scheduled all the way to the 14th. On the 15th, all sessions must be scheduled all the way to the end of the month.

Please confirm scheduling for the next 15 days at the end of each client session, during the wrap-up period (see above for Wrap Up period guidelines). This is particularly important during holiday periods.

If the client is not sure what their schedule will be, tell them you will follow-up within 24 hours. At this time, remind clients that they must either confirm their session times, or else those times will be made available to other clients.

### Entering Availability:

Keeping your calendar accurate prevents confusion when scheduling sessions.

- Enter your availability in the Great Speech calendar at the beginning of each month.
- Update your availability in the portal and with the Scheduling team as soon as you know of a change.
- Schedule a minimum of ten (10) hours of availability per week and honor your scheduled availability.
- Make sure you add availability for new clients, as well.

### Communicating with the Great Speech Team About Scheduling:

Message clients through the portal regarding scheduling. This way, our team can assist you if needed, and all communication stays HIPAA compliant.



If any of your clients are experiencing challenges adhering to the two-week scheduling policy, inform us at [hello@greatspeech.com](mailto:hello@greatspeech.com) so that we can support your efforts in proactively maintaining the schedule.

We ask that you inform us ASAP of any last-minute cancellations or changes made to schedules, so that our team stays up to date.

### Confirming Scheduling with Clients:

- At the end of each session, confirm the upcoming sessions.
- Always offer to reschedule a missed or canceled session.
- It is the therapist's responsibility to cancel sessions in the portal as soon as a client/caregiver requests. This will prevent the client from being charged for sessions that did not occur.
- If the therapist needs to make a change, the office and client should both be notified, and the session should be cancelled or rescheduled in the portal.

### Compensation for Extended or Unusual Sessions

We understand that sometimes, actual sessions deviate from what has been scheduled or documented in the portal. (For example: the therapist and the client both agree to extend the session duration or add an additional session in a week, because you're making great progress, the client has an outstanding need, or there is a need for a consultation with a caregiver) We leave this decision to the discretion of the therapist; however, these changes must be documented correctly.

- Before any additional sessions, conferences, etc. (anything outside the typical window of frequency) are scheduled or held, the therapist must communicate with the client or caregiver that additional charges will apply. Clients will be charged their regular rate for the time spent.
- If possible, notify the office before the additional session so that we can follow-up with the client or caregiver and confirm additional charges in advance.
- Any sessions that occurred more spontaneously outside of what is documented in the portal, must be reported to the admin team within 48 hours so that we can ensure accurate information is recorded and shared with the client.
- Please report any deviations from what is noted in the Portal directly to [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) within 48 hours.
- We cannot guarantee that we will reimburse sessions that are documented incorrectly.

If a therapist doesn't let us know that a session happened... or if the duration of the session is documented incorrectly, we cannot guarantee that they will be paid.

## IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT INSURANCE CLIENTS

When working with insurance-based clients, session durations are typically not flexible. Our health plan contracts often limit session duration to a specific time frame.

- If an insurance-based client wants to extend a session, advise them that we are limited by their insurance to a set number of minutes. Their plan may not cover a session that goes longer, and they would be responsible for the full cost of the session.
- Additional sessions per week can be a resolution for insurance-based clients but contact the Scheduling team immediately before scheduling these sessions as most insurance plans limit the number of therapy sessions that are covered within the plan year.
- Direct a client to the admin team for any detailed discussion about their health plan coverage. Other than the basic guidelines identified above, therapists are not expected to discuss health plan coverage with clients.

## When Clients Ask to Pause Their Sessions:

We accommodate our clients' needs to pause or take breaks. However, therapists should **always ensure that a concrete plan is in place** to resume sessions or contact. For example, the therapist and client should agree upon a specific date to check in and determine when they will resume sessions again.

To minimize the time therapists invest in this, and to prevent clients from slipping through the cracks...we recommend **automating these check-ins where possible**. For example, the next session can be scheduled through the portal, or a time to check in could be marked on the calendar and an invitation sent to the client. Check-in emails can be pre-written and scheduled to send.

This is important for successfully maintaining a full roster of satisfied clients, because if a client pauses without a clear, concrete restart plan, it is likely that they will stop therapy altogether.

We also ask that therapists **notify the office of clients who are taking a pause or a vacation**, so that we can support you in following up proactively.

## Preparing For Discharge:

Clients who are preparing for discharge or a longer pause should follow a pre-planned taper-down sequence. This means that their session frequency should be steadily reduced, rather than a more abrupt stop in services.

For example, reducing sessions to once per week *or* reducing the duration of the session is a common way to prepare clients for discharge. 15-minute sessions are reserved for clients preparing for discharge only, approximately 6 weeks before they stop services.

As always, these changes should be noted in the SOAP note and the administrative team should be updated at [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com).

### Clinical Expectations & Frequency:

Unless specifically told otherwise, all newly enrolled private clients are expected to receive services for a minimum of 1-hour a week, typically broken down into two 30-minute sessions. As progress is made, frequency can be reduced based on the therapist's clinical judgement.

*If the therapist advises a change to frequency - whether to increase therapy hours or decrease them - this should be noted within the SOAP note.* Additionally, therapists should reach out to the office and let us know immediately via [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com).

In addition to consistent scheduling, clinical feedback in the form of SOAP notes and progress reports are required to be submitted accurately and promptly.

### Summer Schedules for Therapists:

Therapists commonly ask if they can add additional hours or accept more clients during summers or other temporary periods.

We welcome therapists to take on additional clients -- however, when a therapist takes on a client, we expect that they will serve that client throughout the tenure of the client's program. This means that all new clients accepted during a period must be retained long-term.

We are happy that our service model provides therapists with a great deal of flexibility and freedom. When you take time off, however, **it is mandatory that you schedule make-up sessions with your clients around your plans**. Missed sessions result in a lack of progress for clients and a reduction in pay for you, and we want both you and your clients to succeed.

---

## Cancellation & No-Show Policy

**We take cancellations and no-shows very seriously.**

We know that cancellations and no-shows are a hassle for therapists and prevent our clients from making good progress. Therefore, we do everything possible to discourage this and ensure that clients show up when they should.

Upon enrollment, clients are informed that they must provide advance notice prior to cancelling a session. Plus, our automated system sends *both* text messages and email reminders to the client 24 hours prior, 1 hour prior to the session, *and* when the session begins.

### No-Shows:

Even so, occasionally no-shows happen. Please follow these guidelines to deal with clients who miss their sessions without notice:

- If a client has not logged into the session within the first 3 - 5 minutes, call, text and email to see if they are having technical difficulties.
- Wait 15 minutes just in case they are having an issue connecting. You are free to end the session after 15 minutes.
- Document your attempt to connect with the client and mark the session as a No Show in the portal.
- Send an email to [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) documenting what happened within 12 hours.

### Late Clients:

If the client shows up within 15 minutes, continue for the remainder of the scheduled session and document their tardiness in the SOAP notes.

### Cancellations:

When a session is cancelled 24 hours or more in advance, we will not charge the client, and therapists will not be compensated for that session. However, we encourage therapists to schedule a makeup session.

*Great Speech adheres to a two-strike policy.* The first time a client cancels without advance notice, the session is marked as canceled; if this happens a second time, the session will be marked as a No Show with approval from the Great Speech office.

Therapists are responsible for documenting last-minute cancellations as no-shows within the SOAP note. This should be done immediately after the client notifies the therapist of a cancellation, to prevent erroneous charges. Sessions should only be documented as a cancellation when given 24 hours or more notice. Otherwise, it should be documented as a no-show.

Clients who cancel at the last minute or no-show should still be offered a chance to schedule a make-up session. Scheduling this make-up session is the therapist's responsibility.

When a client cancels a session within the 24-hour window for the first time, they will not be penalized - however, the therapist should remind them of the 24-hour policy and make it clear that they will be charged for missed sessions moving forward.

We recommend using language such as this:

**Client name-**

**Yes, that's alright that you can't make this session. I understand that emergencies happen!**

**I am required to note that Great Speech has a 24-hour cancellation policy. Moving forward, please cancel sessions 24 hours or more in advance in order to avoid being charged for that session. If Great Speech receives less than 24 hours' notice, your session will be marked as a no-show and you will be charged for that session.**

**When would you like to reschedule this session?**

**Sincerely,**

**Your Name**

---

## Working with the Scheduling Coordinator

Our Scheduling Coordinator (SC) is here to support our therapists and reduce the administrative hassle of scheduling.

Once assigned a client, managing the client's schedule is your responsibility. Even so, the SC is here to support you with any issues that may arise getting in touch with clients. When needed, the SC can handle most routine scheduling tasks on behalf of the therapists.

### Responsibilities of the Scheduling Coordinator:

- Contacting therapists about potential clients.
- Making the therapist-client introduction via email once the therapist has acknowledged acceptance of the new client
- Checking in with clients when they come back from vacation
- Ensuring the client is scheduled at the frequency that is listed in their SOAP note
- Rescheduling sessions as needed with at least a 24-hour notice
- Providing assistance to therapists regarding scheduling issues, as needed

### Responsibilities of the Therapist:

- Inputting availability into the portal bi-weekly for the upcoming 2-4 week period, and ensuring that availability is always current and correct.
- Managing scheduling issues with clients, when clients reach out to the therapist directly.
- Cancelling sessions in the portal, when directly requested by the client.
- Setting the recommended frequency for clients' sessions. Changes to recommended frequencies must be logged in the clients' SOAP notes. Therapists should also advise the office of these changes.

### Last Minute Cancellations:

Because clients usually reach out directly to therapists about last-minute (less than 24-hour) cancellations, we expect the therapists to manage these cancellations in the portal. For more information about this, please see the No-Show and Cancellation Policy page in this manual.

When clients cancel, it is important to be very proactive in making changes in the portal. Automatic notifications will continue to be sent until changes are logged, which can cause confusion and additional administrative hassle for both the therapist and the Scheduling Coordinator. Also, clients might be accidentally charged for a session when they followed the cancellation policy if changes are not logged immediately.

Remember, therapists can log onto the portal from their laptop and cell phones. It's fast and easy to manage cancellations.

-----

## Using the Portal

One of the things that makes working with Great Speech unique is our online portal. The portal is intended to make your life easier and to make handling routine tasks more convenient.

We designed it with our therapists' needs in mind, so that you can...

- **Set your scheduling availability.** This makes it easy and convenient for you to keep on top of your schedule and make changes on the go.
- **Handle last-minute scheduling changes and cancellations for your clients.** We have a 24-hour scheduling policy, but sometimes, clients still cancel at the 11th hour. The portal makes it easy to handle these changes quickly, even when you're away from your office.
- **Message your clients through our HIPAA compliant messaging center in the portal,** so that your communications stay within privacy regulations.
- **Assign homework to your clients,** so they can make greater progress at a faster rate. You can also track whether they are actually doing the exercises you give them, so you know how to best follow up in your sessions.

The portal is easily **accessible via both desktop and mobile**. Just visit <https://greatspeech.com/login/> to log in!

---

## Yearly Therapist Touchpoint Sessions

Periodically, we invite our therapists to 1:1 touchpoint session. We schedule these at least once yearly.

We value our therapists highly, and it's important to us to keep track of how you're feeling, whether you're receiving the support you need, and what's working well...as well as what isn't.

To give you an idea of what to expect, **here are some topics we might discuss in a typical Touchpoint Session:**

- Availability and types of clients served
- Potential for growth and compensation changes, if applicable
- Shared feedback from us and you

Someone from our Great Speech admin team will reach out when it's time for your Touchpoint Session to schedule with you and make sure you have a Zoom link.

Remember, when we reach out to set up a Touchpoint Session with you, it's not because you're doing anything wrong. This is just our way of staying closely connected with our team, celebrating successes, and making sure that everything is going smoothly!



---

## Compensation

### Rate Increases:

Great Speech offers salaries/compensation that is competitive with current industry standards and dependent on performance and contribution to our team. In general, we consider increases and growth opportunities on a yearly basis. Those who add significant value to our team and adhere to the guidelines in this handbook are rewarded.

Here are a few of the factors we may take into consideration when determining increases:

- Reliability in honoring listed availability and in showing up for sessions as they are scheduled
- Proactivity in managing scheduling issues as they arise with clients
- Starting and stopping sessions in a timely, punctual manner
- Keeping internal notes and documentation updated
- Communication with both clients and with the Great Speech team
- Availability and flexibility, in working with different time zones, times of day, and a wide range of clients
- Adding licenses to increase your range of potential clients
- Ensuring that your clients' programs are successful by assigning relevant practice between sessions, setting clear goals and checking in with clients regarding these, and adhering to discharge processes fully.

We know that some therapists may prefer more limited involvement (such as limited hours, only accepting specific types of cases, etc.). One of the great things about our model is that we can accommodate these needs. However, *therapists operating under limited parameters should not expect the same level of advancement as therapists who show greater flexibility and eagerness to develop.*

### SOAP Notes:

- All SOAP notes must be completed by the payroll cutoff date (the 15th and the last day of each month) in order to be eligible for compensation.
- If a SOAP note is completed incorrectly or lacks relevant details, the therapist will be asked to resubmit the SOAP note. In these cases, compensation will not be given until the SOAP note is correctly logged in our system.
- SOAP notes must also be completed 72 hours after each session, or the therapist will be restricted from full access to the portal until the SOAP note is completed.

## Indirect Therapy:

Great Speech offers compensation for time spent in additional meetings related to therapy, such as communication with doctors, teachers, and/or psychologists. In order to receive compensation, the therapist must submit documentation of all indirect therapy including the time spent, the date, and an explanatory note.

Documentation must be submitted via the portal. **Therapists should notify [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) as soon as possible, before the meeting(s) take place.**

## Payment:

**Payment will be made bi-monthly on the 1st and 16th of each month.** Payment will reflect compensation for services provided for the same pay period of the previous month.

For example, if a therapist completes SOAP notes for sessions and submits them from December 16-December 31, those sessions will be compensated on January 16. If the therapist submits SOAP notes from January 1 - January 15, those sessions will be compensated on February 1. SOAP notes covering January 16-January 31 will be compensated on February 16.

December							January							February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4							1
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Therapists can view their invoices on the portal at the end of each pay cycle.

## Financial Questions:

Direct any questions or concerns regarding financial matters to the office via email or by phone.

## Terminating Service with Great Speech:

In order to best serve our clients and ensure a high quality of care, the therapist is required to provide sixty (60) days written notice to [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) of intent to terminate the independent contractor agreement or cease providing services as our network provider.

# Documentation

## SOAP Notes

As a therapist, it is necessary to document your client's progress with SOAP notes.

When completing SOAP notes, all of the information must be functional, measurable, clear, achievable and personal. Client goals should be created and periodically reviewed with the client or caregiver(s).

*Here is an example:*

### Long Term Goal(s)

*Clients and caregivers can view the information in this field in their portal under Goals & Progress.*

Client will improve his overall intelligibility utilizing a combination of articulation and rate of speech compensatory strategies in order to improve his ability to communicate effectively in home, school, and community environments with familiar and unfamiliar listeners.

### Objectives/Short Term Goal(s)

*Clients and caregivers can view the information in this field in their portal under Goals & Progress.*

1) Client will correctly produce /s/ and /z/ with no lateral lisp with 80% accuracy at the conversational level given hierarchal multimodal cueing. Progressing: Initiated articulation production at the isolation level with Client achieving 75% accuracy given minimal to moderate verbal/visual cueing.

2) Client will demonstrate understanding/application of speech strategies to improve his articulation and intelligibility overall (over-articulation, rate strategies, control the external environment) with 90% accuracy given multimodal hierarchical cueing.

### Subjective

Client present and on time for his 2nd telepractice session. He reports he enjoys taekwondo and learning the guitar. Used metaphor of articulation exercises as a similar concept = practice makes perfect. Provided Client and his mother education, reviewed the schedule, and sent homework for carryover of instruction and skilled therapy targets initiated in today's session.

### Assessment

Initiated placement instruction and visual cue card for /t/ sliding into /s/ sound. Client explained placement with tongue tip on roof of mouth sliding behind back of front teeth with 70% accuracy in return demonstration. Client is able to imitate cues as follows:

t->s | snake sound | straight like a straw

Client engaged in "would you rather" language embedded game with conversational /s/ with ~50% accuracy independently increasing to 70% with moderate reminder cues and clinician modeling/imitation.

## Compensation for SOAP Notes:

Therapists are not reimbursed for their time completing SOAP notes. SOAP notes must be completed in order to be compensated for the scheduled session.

Please ensure that all the details on the SOAP note are accurate (including the session time), so that reimbursement is accurate.

If a SOAP note is completed incorrectly or lacks relevant details and information, you will be asked to resubmit the SOAP note in order to be compensated.

*Additionally, if a SOAP note is not completed within 72 hours, you will be restricted from full access to the portal.* When you attempt to log in to the portal, a pop-up will prompt you to complete the SOAP note. Once you complete the SOAP note, the portal will automatically revert your access to all features.

For your greatest convenience, we recommend that you **complete SOAP notes for each of your clients at the end of each session.**

## Progress Reports

Great Speech offers progress reports to some clients. Our goal in doing this is to improve communication between the therapists and clients. Also, this helps to document progress and keep clients engaged in the program.

Private clients may be enrolled in the Progress Report (PR) program. Reports can be configured to generate automatically after 12 hours of direct therapy, with goals pulled from SOAP notes. The Progress Report also includes a space for giving feedback, which therapists must complete. After they are generated, Progress Reports must be completed within 4 business days. Once complete, supervisors approve reports and securely send them to the client/caregiver.

To receive approval, all areas in a Progress Report must be functional, measurable, clear, achievable and personal.

## Example Progress Report:

### How are your goals tracking?

*This field is pulled from the most recent SOAP note: Long Term Goal(s)*

To improve articulation of age-appropriate sounds at the word level through conversation.

### How are your objectives tracking?

*This field is pulled from the most recent SOAP note: Objectives/Short Term Goal(s)*

Improve articulation of /l/ in words and phrases to 80% in all positions.

Currently: Accuracy for /l/ in all positions in words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs is 90% or greater consistently. Goal has been updated to achieve accuracy in conversation to 90%.  
Improve articulation of prevocalic r and vocalic r in words to 80% accuracy.

Currently: Accuracy for prevocalic r is 85% on average. Will progress to phrases to achieve 90%. Accuracy for vocalic r is 30% on average, will continue.

Improve articulation of the voiced and voiceless /th/ in words 80% in all positions. Currently: Accuracy for /th/ in all positions in words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs is 90% or greater consistently. Goal has been updated to achieve accuracy in conversation to 90%.

### Time to reflect / Summary:

*This field is where therapists enter their summary, share updates, and share personal reflections about this client's progress.*

Steve is a very sweet, hardworking young man who is very cooperative for all speech sessions. Articulation of the l, /th/ and /r/ sounds have been addressed. Accuracy for l words at the initiation of treatment was 70%. The /th/ sound was produced with 20% accuracy in words. With minimal cues needed for correct tongue placement, accuracy for l and /th/ have improved to 90% and greater for words, sentences and small paragraphs. Moving forward, activities will be presented for carryover of this sound into conversation.

The r sound can be a difficult sound to learn but Steve is working hard and showing improvement. Accuracy for r at the beginning of words was initially 45% and has improved to 85% on average. The r sound at the end of words is difficult to master. Steve is producing this sound with more consistency than previous. Attention will be given to pairing the r with various vowel combinations to perfect correct placement for this sound.

It is a joy and my pleasure to work with Steve. I am proud of how hard he works and the progress he has made. Keep up the great work Steve!

### Compensation for Progress Reports:

Therapists are reimbursed for 15 minutes of their time for every approved MPR.

## Client Discharge

When a client has achieved their goals and is getting ready to be discharged from the program, we follow a standardized process. Clients work very hard to reach this point, so it's important that we take the proper steps to help our clients maintain their skills.

First, email the office at [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) to let us know when one of your clients is in the discharge process.

Next, you may begin to steadily reduce the frequency of their sessions until all of their sessions are complete. It is important to taper down sessions in this way (rather than abruptly stopping services) because it tends to yield greater success for the client.

A suggested process to weaning off a client is to begin scheduling sessions as follows:

- 1 session per week for two months
- 1 session every other week for a month
- Then, one session a month for 2 months as a follow up when possible OR 15 minute check-in sessions for no longer than one month

Once the client has completed the discharge process, that means they have graduated from the Great Speech program.

Congratulations on changing another life!

---

# A Practical Guide to a Successful Great Speech Session

During each session, the therapist implements goals and objectives derived from the client's intake interview and assessment. These goals are unique and specific to each client.

We expect our therapists to utilize content-rich, virtual activities to facilitate these goals. This may include using virtual whiteboards, annotation tools, and/or games. We also provide homework options in the online client portal, which the therapist can assign to supplement their sessions.

## **To conduct technologically successful sessions, the therapist will need:**

- Computer (PC or Mac) with 14" monitor or greater
  - NOTE: Chromebooks, iPads or other small devices are not recommended as our portal may not operate as expected
- High speed internet connection
- High-definition Webcam with built-in microphone
- Headset or free-standing microphone (recommended, but not required)
- Quiet location with no visual or audio distractions in the background
- Proper front-facing lighting (avoid dark shadows on your face)
  - Facing a window or placing a lamp behind your camera can suffice. There are numerous small and inexpensive lights available for this purpose.

## **Before Each Session:**

- Mute phones in your home (including landlines) that may ring during therapy.
- Maintain professional appearance when interacting with clients via video.
- If possible, have a backup computer with a microphone and webcam available in case tech issues arise.
- Connect at least 5 minutes prior to the session.
- Be aware that clients can see and hear you as they log in, so when setting up your materials and getting ready, keep yourself muted and your video off.
- Zoom now has mandatory waiting rooms that cannot be disabled. You will need to manually admit your client to begin sessions.
- Test internet speed, audio, microphone and speaker prior to each session.
- Launch websites and materials prior to session beginning.

## **During Sessions:**

- Keep your props within reach and use them to keep clients engaged.
- Bring high energy, excitement, lots of smiles and have FUN!!
- Use Zoom's features, where appropriate – whiteboard, screen sharing, etc.



**Ending Sessions:**

- Take the last 5 minutes to wrap up. Discuss clients and caregivers' goals, objectives and progress.
- Confirm upcoming sessions for the next two weeks with the client/caregiver.
- Ensure that the schedule in the portal reflects any changes.
- Complete the SOAP note, updating frequency of sessions and any other relevant changes.
- If there were any issues or changes, notify the office at: [hello@greatspeech.com](mailto:hello@greatspeech.com)

**Info to Have on Hand:**

- Contact information for your clients
- The Great Speech's office phone number (954.247.8757)
- The Zoom customer service number (1.888.799.9666) or website (<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>)
- When Zoom is malfunctioning, the best first step is to download the latest version or update, which you can do here: <https://zoom.us/download>
- You can also run a test Zoom meeting here: <https://zoom.us/download>

If you follow these simple steps, your online sessions will flow smoothly, and you'll be more successful in keeping your clients engaged and helping them reach their goals.

---

## Useful Contact Information

**Here is some useful contact information that you may need, during your journey with Great Speech!**

**Avivit** - clinical feedback, career-related information

- Email: [avivit@greatspeech.com](mailto:avivit@greatspeech.com)
- Phone: (954) 284-8482

**Sherri** - operations, troubleshooting (i.e., portal issues, Zoom troubleshooting), client satisfaction (nearing discharge, how the parent/caregiver dynamic is going), 911s

- Email: [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com)
- Phone: (954) 247-8757

**Stephanie** - scheduling, availability, client matching and provider relations (i. E., CAQH profiles, insurance claims, eligibility requirements)

- Email: [hello@greatspeech.com](mailto:hello@greatspeech.com)
- Phone: (954) 247-8757

---

## In Summary.....

Thank you for taking the time to review our standards and procedures. We hope they make your life easier, so you can focus on doing what you love most: **empowering confident communication**.

Remember that we are a team, and we wouldn't be here without incredible team players like you! If you have any questions, concerns, or need to have a conversation...we are here for you. Simply email [info@greatspeech.com](mailto:info@greatspeech.com) to let us know how we can help.

We are in this together, and our collaboration helps our clients communicate with greater confidence. Welcome to the Great Speech family!

Please sign this document to acknowledge your understanding of, and agreement to, these policies.

## Acknowledgement:

I understand that as an independent contractor of Communication Therapy LLC, by signing this document, I acknowledge reading and reviewing the Great Speech Policies and Procedures Manual and will be responsible for the associated policies and procedures.

---

Signature

---

Print Name

---

Date