Client selection, intake, and assessment in Telemental Health
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Telehealth Learning Series: Tuesdays, 5-7 PM
May 12: Introduction to Telemental Health
May 19: Preparing your office for Telemental Health
May 26: Client selection, intake, and assessment in Telemental Health
June 2: Clinical engagement in Telemental Health
June 9: Emergencies, disruptions and pitfalls in Telemental Health
June 16: Risk Management in Telemental Health
Register @ NWATTTC website

Your presenter
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APA Telepsychology Guidelines
CESATE fellow
Unapologetic telehealth evangelist
Learning objectives

Client selection
Intakes, assessment
Building your practice

Class structure

Didactic lecture
Live Q & A at section breaks
Video demonstrations
Submitted questions nwattctelehealth@gmail.com
Live Q & A

Disclaimers

During a technology presentation, technology will fail
Offer best practice recommendations based on clinical work,
literature review and regulatory experience
Identifying personal best practices and guidance in developing area
Disclaimers

Always review state regulations
Consult with your own legal counsel
Consult with your risk management coverage
I do not provide legal advice nor clinical advice

Conflicts

Provides telehealth training
Known telehealth evangelist

Agenda: Preparing your office

Client selection
Inclusion, exclusion
Intakes, assessments, termination
Special populations (neuropsychology, forensic, youth)
Building your TMH practice
Advertising, staff
The role of physical space
Operational definitions

Telemental Health (TMH):
The provision of any mental health service using telecommunication technologies
...videoconferencing
Access is at the heart of this mission

HIPAA

Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):
Federal law (Pub.L. 104-191, 100 Stat. 1936, enacted August 21, 1996) that aims to make it easier for people to keep health insurance, protect the confidentiality and security of healthcare information and help the healthcare industry control administrative costs
HIPAA Privacy Rule
HIPAA Security Rule

Protected Health Information (PHI)/ ePHI
- Names
- Full-face photographic images
- Geographical subdivisions smaller than state
- All dates (birth, death, discharge)
- Phone/fax numbers
- Electronic mail addresses
- Social Security numbers
- Medical record numbers
- Health plan beneficiary numbers
- Account Numbers
- Certificate/license numbers
- Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers
- Decedent serial numbers
- Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs)
- Internet Protocol (IP) address
- Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
- Any other unique identifier numbers, code, or characteristic
Business Associates Agreement (BAA)

Contract between HIPAA covered entity and HIPAA Business Associate (BA) that is used to protect personal health information (PHI) in accordance with HIPAA guidelines.

Novel Coronavirus/ COVID-19

Current public health crisis
Social distancing and “stay home” orders
Telepractice as a tool to protect public health
Some providers now mandated to telehealth

Client selection
Client selection criteria

Research suggests equivalence of in-person and many remote treatments and high satisfaction
Observe usual standards of care/ APA ethics code
Technology is not a clinical specialty though it requires competence

Cultivating clients

Assess why remote service v. in-person
This assessment is evolving
Little empirical/few legal reasons to exclude specific clients; question of risk management
Assessing service appropriateness is ongoing

Your practice

What population do you serve
What services do you offer
What practice do you want
Client characteristics

- Client vision and hearing
- Preference for modality
- Practical adaptability

Client characteristics

- Health status/status of loved ones
- Jurisdictional requirements/rules
- Care access (e.g., distance, medical, financial)

Client clinical characteristics

- Diagnosis
- Avoidance, Delusions regarding technology, others
- Treatment history
- Stability
Client SUD history

- SUD considerations (UAs, reporting)
- Transportation concerns
- Medication assisted treatment for opioids
- DHHS/OCR announcements also apply
- Special considerations for controlled substances

Client characteristics

- Client care environment (e.g., office, home)
- Insurance/reimbursement
- Privacy/stigma

Client technical capabilities

- Technical ability
- Teaching
- Age, gender, education, experience < good explanation
Client technical capabilities

Does the client possess technical resources
Computer/mobile device access
Adequate internet speed
Hardware/software
Mobile device, phone

Not the perfect client

Emergency probability

Clients receiving interactive remote care have emergency plan
Consider what you will do in case of medical or psychiatric emergency (e.g., local hospital, wellness check, others).
Emergency probability

Problems that do not meet mandated reporting threshold but cause concern
Availability of support person
Where will patient discharge if no longer appropriate

Remember your clinical considerations

Assessment

Telehealth Appropriateness Assessment

Delivering psychological services through remote technology provides the opportunity to reach clients who might not otherwise receive care. However, not every client will be appropriate for telehealth services. The questions below provide guidance regarding clinical and technical factors that you may wish to consider before committing to deliver telehealth care.

Clinical Assessment

1. What is the patient's age?
   a. If a minor, how will you gather the parent's consent?

2. Is the client currently in crisis?

3. In the past 12 weeks, have they had thoughts, intention or plans to hurt themselves?
   a. About hurting someone else?

4. Have they ever been hospitalized for emotional health reasons?
   a. When?
   b. What happened?

5. Explain that telehealth services typically serve in non-crisis. Explain manner in which telehealth providers support patients who later develop crises, but may need to supplement care with in-person meetings or transfer care.

6. Is this issue related to an accident or legal action that is pending?
   a. Are they seeking an assessment related to legal action?

7. Are they hoping to use insurance to pay for your visit?
   a. Who is their insurance carrier?
   b. Are you/they familiar with your mental health benefits?
   c. With the insurance carrier's policy regarding telehealth?
   d. Will you or the client contact insurance to discuss the telehealth policy?

8. Why are they seeking telehealth care vs. in-person care?
   a. Is in-person care available in their community?

9. Are they available to meet in person with the provider now or in the future?

10. How do you plan to verify the client's identity?

11. In what state do es the client intend to receive care?
   a. Does the client intend to travel often while receiving remote care?

Technical Assessment

1. Do they have access to a private space in their home?

2. Is it relatively soundproof? How easily can conversation be overheard?
   a. Explain to the client the critical importance of keeping this space secure and confidential during appointments

3. Do they have access to a computer or mobile device?
   a. What kind (e.g., desktop, laptop, tablet)?
   b. How old is it (< 7 years old)?

4. Do they have internet access?

5. Can they access the internet through their own computer or mobile device? Do they have access to a private space in their home?

6. Is the computer or mobile device capable of high-quality video? Can you hear and see the client clearly?

7. Do they have access to a private space in their home?

8. Is the space relatively soundproof? How easily can conversation be overheard?
   a. Explain to the client the critical importance of keeping this space secure and confidential during appointments

9. Do they have access to a computer or mobile device? What kind is it (e.g., desktop, laptop, tablet)? How old is it (< 7 years old)?

10. Do they have internet access?

11. Can they access the internet through their own computer or mobile device? Do they have access to a private space in their home?

12. Is the computer or mobile device capable of high-quality video? Can you hear and see the client clearly?

13. Do they have access to a private space in their home?

14. Is the space relatively soundproof? How easily can conversation be overheard?
   a. Explain to the client the critical importance of keeping this space secure and confidential during appointments

15. Do they have access to a computer or mobile device? What kind is it (e.g., desktop, laptop, tablet)? How old is it (< 7 years old)?

16. Do they have internet access?

17. Can they access the internet through their own computer or mobile device? Do they have access to a private space in their home?

18. Is the computer or mobile device capable of high-quality video? Can you hear and see the client clearly?

19. Do they have access to a private space in their home?

20. Is the space relatively soundproof? How easily can conversation be overheard?
   a. Explain to the client the critical importance of keeping this space secure and confidential during appointments

Assessment
Take away

Convenience is neither a solely determining nor deterring factor
Not every client is appropriate
No codified exclusion criteria

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Take away

Know your jurisdictional rules regarding COVID-19
Decisions made using research and risk management
As with in-person practice, you are not obligated to provide service, but once begun you are obligated to refer for continued care

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Vignette: Dr. Evil

Client seeks services for alcohol use disorder
Active use, comorbid Panic Disorder
Avoidance of social circumstances
Moderate suicidal ideation without active plan or intent
History of self harm
Considerations

Accessibility of other treatment options
Client health, willingness for in person care, referral availability
Role of exposure
Client willingness to pursue safe exposure
Your comfort with remote emergency management

Live Q & A

Intakes, assessments, termination
Intakes

Intake preparation

Who: inclusion/exclusion criteria
What: what services
How: which technologies (videoconferencing, telephone)
When: schedule by phone, secure email, EMR
Rules: jurisdictional concerns, initial intakes

Intake preparation

Fee structure
- Self-pay v. direct bill insurance
- Payment for session in which technology disruption occurs
- Surcharges
- Collection of fee
Intake preparation

Your space: austere background, adequate lighting, soundproof
Consider use of headphones
Home office v. professional office
  Privacy
  PHI
  Smart speakers

Intake preparation

Intake documentation
  Telehealth informed consent, emergency plan, questionnaires,
  payment, ROI
  Simple documents; verbal consent

Intake preparation

Secure document exchange
  Mail, fax, downloads from your website
  Secure email programs, secure FTP, EMR
Intake preparation
Communicate expectations
  Video call mechanics/ embed this in reminders
Boundaries
  Interruptions, help
For clients new to modality, 5 minute “test” check in

Initiating the intake
Confirm client can hear/see you
Confirm location and setting security
Silence devices, windows, notifications

Initiating the intake

REVIEW RISKS AND BENEFITS
REVIEW EMERGENCY PLAN
ANSWER ANY REMAINING NON-CLINICAL QUESTIONS
Conducting the intake

Advance information  Engage with usual skills  Ask questions

Consider structured clinical interview

Pace may differ

Assessment measures

Collect in advance  Verbally review  Screen sharing
Intake conclusion

Engagement/how to meet their needs
Additional intake session is indicated
Discuss future homework/information transfer

Intake conclusion

Usual concluding statements
If appropriate, propose an engagement (a number of sessions, treatment plan)
If accepted, schedule the next appointment/invite client to schedule online
Review options or possible referral out/where will referrals go
Answer patient's questions

Assessment
Remote assessment

- Norm availability
- Licensing, permissions
- Consultation

Remote assessment

- Observed administration
- Impacts of remote assessment on self report
- Potential secondary gain issues

Online psychometric assessment

- Many more tests now online
- Remote MMPI administration
- Batteries constructed for remote administration
- Observations/ psychometricians
Forensics

COURT AVAILABILITY IN YOUR JURISDICTION
HILL ADAPTATION WITHSTAND EXAMINATION
SECONDARY GAIN GOING INTO JAIL

Youth

Zoom fatigue
Relevance of referring questions for IEP
Consider abbreviated sessions
Consider increased parental involvement where appropriate

Neuropsychological

Permissions, licensing
Necessity of physical exam
Feedback sessions
Watch the marketplace
Interorganizational practice committee
Vignette: Dr. Impossible

- Forensic assessment case
- Parental fitness
- Quarantine configuration
- Academic impacts

Considerations

- Courts open/closed
- Stability of living situation
- Withstand attorney's review
- Current school configuration
- Is delay appropriate

Termination
Termination and referral

Termination occurs for diverse reasons
Referral resources
Know your telehealth community

Termination due to modality
What is clinically advisable
Role of avoidance v. preference
Your recommendations

Vignette: Dr. Venture
Client treated for comorbid benzodiazepine use and anxiety disorder
Does not like modality
Frustrated
Considerations

- Willingness/availability of referral
- Medical safety
- Legal involvement
- Your clinical judgement

Live Q & A

Building your TMH practice
Building a TMH practice

Role of physical space
Referrals
Documentation
Training and consultation

Advertising

Practice website
National registries
Additional ads
Relationships in community you wish to serve

Outreach

Primary care
Specialty clinics
SUD, medication assisted opioid care
Community organizations
   Consider offering free psychoeducation to membership
Physical space

Office space
Emergency management, assessment
Jurisdictional requirements

Technology investment

Products designed for healthcare
Videoconferencing, telephone
Document transfer (email, fax, secure message)
EMR

Administrative staff

Integrating administrative staff into use of TMH
Coordinate 1 treatment “room” for patient
Administrative login to EMR/videoconferencing product
Administrative staff

- What do we want them to accomplish?
- Measure collection
- Confirm privacy, visibility
- Review risks/benefits

Coronavirus considerations
Long-term TMH

Transition from short-to long-term Telemental Health
Existing clients, new clients
Investment in long-term

Temporary v. a practice you will continue to offer
Balance
Self care

In summary
Client selection

Determine and document your inclusion/exclusion criteria
Determine what services you want to offer who
Assessment is ongoing

Intakes

Collect information beforehand
Slow the pace
Ask question, structured interviewing
Focus on rapport

Assessment, special populations

Use appropriate online assessment when possible
Practical considerations
Abbreviated batteries
Some assessments will be delayed
Termination

Know your referrals
Contemplate avoidance
Offer your opinion

Building your practice

Advertise, reach out
Invest in sustainable technology
Role of physical space
Know your jurisdiction
Train staff

That’s a good question

Previously submitted questions
Telepsychology templates

SAMSHA handout
EMR (Simple Practice) may have templates
Live Q & A

Questions for future learning series sessions

Please contact nwattctelehealth@gmail.com

Thank you!

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