



**Tele-Behavioral Health:
Assessing Patients and
Providers for Fit**

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast
Wednesday, November 20, 2019
2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Central Time**

Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

Faculty

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Objectives

- Provide a general overview of clinical disciplines that use technology for the delivery of behavioral health services
- Discuss how to assess clinical providers and patients for appropriateness and fit using distance medians
- List programmatic and clinical considerations pertaining to risk management procedures for tele-behavioral health services.

**Tele-behavioral Health 101
Overview**

Justification of Need

Social Determinants and Health Disparities


Health Professional Shortage Areas

**Tele-behavioral Health
Medians**

- Desktop
- Laptop
- Tablet
- Cell Phone

**Type of Tele-behavioral
Health Modalities**

- Email
- Video Conferencing
- Navigator/Consultant
- Self Help Information Line



Technology Considerations

- HIPAA
- Encryption
- Bandwidth
- Firewalls
- Camera and Microphone
- Computer Security
- Equipment Error vs. User Error

Where Are Tele-behavioral Health Services Provided?

- Rural Clinic
- Residential Settings
- Community/Agency Settings
- Military Installations
- Detention or Correctional Facility

Who Are the Clinical Disciplines of Tele-behavioral Health Services?

- Therapists
- Social Workers
- Alcohol and Drug Counselors
- Mental Health Counselors
- Psychiatrists
- Psychiatric Nurses and Nurse Practitioners

Example 1: Licensed Therapists

- National Board of Certified Counselors
- Credential: Board Certified Telemental Health Provider (BC-TMH)
- Standards for Distance Professional Services

Example 2: Licensed Social Workers

- Alabama State Board of Social Work Examiners
- Social Workers should have an active license to practice in the State
- Be in good standing with the Board and in compliance with professional standards of conduct

What Are Some Tele-behavioral Health Clinical Services?

- Screenings and Assessments
- Patient/Client and Provider Consultations
- Individual Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Case Management
- Referrals and Linkages to Care

Assessing for Fit

Patient/Client/Provider Compliance
for
Security, Privacy and Confidentiality

Technological Standards Assessing for Fit

- Ensure that any electronic means that are used are in compliance with current regulatory standards
- Use encryption security for all digital technology communications for therapeutic services

Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Is there a mutual understanding around compliance with HIPAA standards for privacy and confidentiality
- Availability of secure back-up communications resulting from potential connectivity or disconnect

Provider Standards: Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Assess whether the provider has been trained to provide distance services
- Does the provider and patient/client know how to use the preferred method of technology

Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Warnings around the potential compromises of entering private information using a public computer that is on a shared network
- Warnings around the use of auto-remembering user names and passwords

Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Advising against the use of public social media
 - Discouraged due to the lack of security for PHI using online methods
 - Avoidance of tweets and blogs for communication between the provider and patient/client

Clinical Considerations – Assessing for Therapeutic Fit

- All initial sessions should be conducted face to face
- Methods of verifying mutual identities when using non-visual medians
- Determination of location for distance services

Assessing for Therapeutic Fit

- Location Appropriateness
 - Safety and Security
 - Privacy and Confidentiality
 - Access to Support Services
 - Access to Emergency Resources

Assessing for Therapeutic Fit

- Location Appropriateness (cont.)
 - Is the physical location/venue of the provider conducive to therapeutic services
 (homebased therapy considerations)
 - What is the visual background of the therapist?

Assessing for Therapeutic Fit

- What is the visual background of the camera?
- Supportive, uplifting, encouraging, non-threatening
- Examples:
 - Alcohol and Drug Use
 - Slogans and Sayings

Risk Management Considerations

Median: Desktop, Laptop, Tablet and Cell Phone

Issue of Concern: Client Notes and Clinical Documentation, Client Contact Information

Risk Factors: Lost, stolen, viewed by others, used on unsecure networks

Risk Management Solutions

Desktop, Laptop and Tablet

- Protect access with a unique password
- Use a Firewall and Norton antivirus program
- Don't share your device when logged on to any counseling software
- Set for routine and automatic updates

Risk Management Planning

Desktop, Laptop and Tablet (cont.)

- No other browsers open when logged onto a client session
- Set timers for user sign back in after 10 minutes of idle time
- No client information stored on the screen

Risk Management Planning

Cell Phone

- No client information should be stored
- Protect access with a unique lock (code, swipe, password)
- Use of security software for set up and automatic updates

Risk Management Planning

Storage Devices, Hard Drives, Flash Drives

- Use electronic medical record (EMR/EHR)
- Back up information on an external encrypted hard drive and secured in a safe place

Risk Management – Encryption Options

- BitLocker for Windows
- TrueCrypt
- FileVault for Mac

Risk Management – Reminder

Consult with your

Information Technology Department

for risk management planning, consultation and ongoing monitoring

Licensing and Credentialing Boards

- Alabama Board of Examiners in Counseling
- Alabama Board of Social Work Examiners
- American Psychological Association
- Alabama Board of Nursing
- Alabama Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (AADAA)

Considerations for All Disciplines

- Check in with your respective State licensing board
- Stay abreast of board policies and procedures
- Content specific training and certifications
- Continuing education and professional development

Continuing Education and Training

- HIPAA Compliance for Telemental Health
- Crisis Planning & Protocols in Video Telemental Health
- Telemental Health Settings and Care Coordination

Practicing Across State Lines

- Knowledge of regulation and reciprocity laws
- Legal regulations of the state in which the provider is practicing
- Legal regulations of the state in which the client/patient resides

Additional Resource Information

- [American Telemedicine Resource Center](#)
- [Southeastern Telemedicine Resource Center \(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina\)](#)
- [Adopting Telemedicine in Practice](#)

References and Acknowledgements

- <http://maoi.org/get-connected/telehealth-resource-center/>
- <https://positivepsychology.com/evidence-based-therapy/>
- <https://telementalhealthtraining.com/>

References and Acknowledgements

- <https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/operations-administration/telebehavioral-health>
- <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/telehealth/2/specific-populations/behavioral-health>
- <https://telehealth.org/>

Contact Information



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Next Month

**Wednesday,
December 18, 2019**

**Tele-behavioral Health (Part 3)
Evidence Based Practices in
Clinical Therapy**