



Serving as a Role Model...

- Turn off phone and email (avoid distractions)
- Use a virtual waiting room but be on time
- Demonstrate Professionalism
- Being online can cause people to act more casually (called disinhibition effect)
- Avoid self-disclosures or chatting (follow the 90/10 rule: listen, reflect, support, identify

discrepancies, roll with resistance 90% of the time; self-disclose/chat 10% of the time at the beginning/end of the session)

- Maintain boundaries (remember this is a counseling session, not a casual virtual meeting with friends)



Competency and Ethical Practice...

Most clinician/counselor Code of Ethics require them to only practice within their scope of expertise. Typically, initial competency required for licensure or certification is demonstrated through education, training, and clinical supervision. Recently, many professional associations (NASW, APA, AAMFT, etc.) have added sections to their ethical codes regarding the use of technology for clinical service delivery and the term “demonstrating competency” is used. Minimally, clinicians/counselors using a videoconferencing platform for service delivery should be able to show their capacity to use the technology with basic skills and be able to troubleshoot problems. Specifically, clinicians/counselors should be able to do the following when delivering services virtually:

- Advise and help patients/clients with their use of the selected technology platform
- Explain the reasons for their choice of technology platform (e.g., ease of use, affordability, functionality, privacy and security, federal confidentiality 42CFR Part 2 protections, etc.)
- Translate clinical skills to provide services virtually (e.g., online engagement, support, pointing out discrepancies, employing EBPs and best practices, making referrals, etc.)
- Determine which patients/clients should not receive services using videoconferencing



Ask yourself these five questions to determine your readiness:

- Just because I can use videoconferencing to conduct sessions, should I?
- What is my level of competence? (Beginner or Master’s level)
- Do I need more training and/or supervision?
- Does my practice/organization adhere to any specific videoconferencing guidelines?
- Am I proficient in the four skills listed above?



Determine if...

- State Licensing Boards waived restrictions on videoconferencing due to state declared disaster
- Your Professional

Liability Policy includes service delivery via videoconferencing platform. If so, get a copy of the policy and if not purchase a special rider policy.



References

Barshur, R., Shannon, G., Barshur, N., & Yellowlees, P. (2016). The empirical evidence for telemedicine interventions in mental disorders. *Telemedicine and e-Health*, 22, 1-27.

Hilty, D.M., Ferrer, C., Burke Parish, M., Johnston, B., Callahan, E., & Yellowlees, P. (2013). The effectiveness of telemental health: A 2013 review. *Telemedicine & e-Health*, 444-454.

APA and ATA Guidelines for Videoconferencing (2018) <https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdf/10.1089/tmj.2018.0237>