



Mountain Plains ATTC (HHS Region 8)

ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Telebehavioral Health Group Service Delivery Part II

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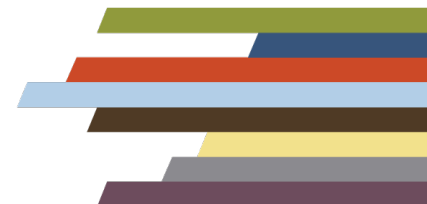
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Learning Objectives

- Discuss safety protocols and issues related to ethics and privacy/security and confidentiality in the context of online group case scenarios.
- Provide specific recommendations for online group facilitation and how it differs from in-person groups (e.g., tips and techniques, group agreements, etc).

Online groups are practical and can improve outcomes, attendance, and assist those with transportation issues, mobility issues, care givers, etc.

Banbury et al., 2018



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Zoom Group Counseling Agreements

Operation PAR Outpatient group members created these agreements so recovery can happen in a safe space. I agree to follow these agreements, so group therapy is a safe and confidential place for growth and healing.

- Confidentiality is everyone's responsibility. If a group member states the safe word, we all pause.
- Group starts on time
- Stand up if you are sleepy
- Keep group safe: emotionally – physically – behaviorally
- One person speaks at a time

Group Counseling Agreements

- Respect other people's feelings when giving feedback
- Use "I" statements when speaking
- Come to group sober
- Please do not move around the house or go to the bathroom with your device.
- Please keep your device muted unless you are speaking
- Silence cell phones/Smart Devices
- Everyone participates in group
- Follow Operation PAR dress code (dress as you would if you were being seen in the office)
- Group Safe word is _____

Session-Check Sheet

- Orientation
- Technology check
- Phone number
- Location
- ICE

YouTube instructions



Groups

Call ahead (day before or day of) safety check with client:

- Where will you be when you attend group (address/location)? If we should get disconnected during group, what number can we use to reach you? Emergency Contact?
- Is anyone else going to be there with you during the group session?
- Are you able to be in a private space?
- If someone was to come into your space, we will use the safe word _____. If a group member states the safe word, we all pause.

CBT

Group-based CBT adolescents and young adults with cancer

“The potential benefits of telepsychology for vulnerable populations can outweigh additional challenges of delivering psychological care online.”

Sansom-Daly et al., 2015



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Culture and Diversity within Group Therapy

- Cultural comfort
- Microaggressions
- Culturally corrective experience

“The relationship between members’ experiences of racial microaggressions and their perceptions of group cohesion significantly varied as a function of the members’ perceptions of their group’s cultural comfort.”

Kivlighan et al., 2020

***Because the client is not within
the walls of an office –
the client could increase
verbalization of negativity or
be more easily distracted, etc.***

Expect the Unexpected Case Scenarios



Zoom Chat Rooms

- Able to reach out for assistance in real time
- Supervisor can join session if needed
- Program specific chat rooms - maintaining connections

Tips

SAFE WORD

We all know to develop a safe word for each telehealth session in case a person enters the room and the conversation needs to end, or some other situation arises where confidentiality or safety is at stake and the session needs to pause. However,...

... have you thought of using a Safety Gesture?

One suggestion is to have the client/patient hold up a pen to their face or a cell phone to their chin. This way, no words are needed, the client/patient doesn't need to try to fit the word into a sentence and safety/privacy can be maintained.

Tips

CHAT AND WAITING ROOM

We all must remember to pay attention to the chat and waiting room features both while facilitating a group.

How do you do that?

One way is to have the chat feature side by side with the video images. If you share your screen, you can adjust the size so you can see all at once. You can also adjust the size so you can view your Zoom icon in the bottom of screen tool bar. Examine the image above where participants and chat is open on the right and the tool bar is visible at the bottom of the screen.

With practice, this task becomes easier.

Tips

Suggested Telehealth Group Therapy Guidelines

- Distraction-free, private space
- No recording of sessions in any way
- Prevent anyone in the environment from hearing or seeing group interactions
- Log in with own ID – legal name, pre-agreed nickname, initials, etc.
- Do NOT use anyone else's ID upon entry or during interactions
- Alone & able to speak freely
- Do not disturb sign on door
- Seated but not on bed or with bed in view
- Sit close enough to camera to have their face be seen clearly (if facial expression is important to tx model)
- Clear background from distractions
- Turn off text-messaging and/or email

<https://telehealth.org/blog/telehealth-group-therapy/>

Tips

- Wear appropriate clothing
- Secure their device's position
- Camera at eye level
- Phones/devices on airplane mode
- Wear earbuds or headphones
- Keep microphone close to their mouth
- Keep speakers low enough so sound doesn't come back through their microphone to create feedback
- Dial in by phone if Internet signal degrades but keep video connection alive
- Turn sound from computer off when using telephone to replace audio signal
- If video platform fails and connection is lost, exit and return to the virtual meeting room if possible. Stay off your telephone and wait for directions by [email, text, or telephone].

<https://telehealth.org/blog/telehealth-group-therapy/>



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Tips

Start sessions by asking if everyone:

- Can everyone hear me. Sound check for all.
- Can everyone see me. I can see.
- Is everyone at the address we have on file? If not, please private chat the co-facilitator your location and address.
- Does anyone need to be reached at another phone number than what is on file? If yes, please private chat the co-facilitator the number.
- Agrees to abide by posted group rules **(See group rules shared now)**
- Sign on the door stating in a Zoom session from this time to this time

Tips

SOUND

- Do not place papers or objects near the microphone. Rustling papers, typing, taping on desk, etc. are all distracting.
- Do not be apprehensive asking a client about background noise including voices.
- Mute your microphone when not speaking.
- Consider using air pods or a headset.

Tips

ZOOM FATIGUE/WELLNESS

- Have you noticed the intense feel of the telehealth sessions?
- Do you feel more worn out at the end of the day?
- If yes, you are not alone. Telehealth is very different from face to face sessions.

Tips

WORKSPACE AT HOME

- Create a dedicated space for work
- Make your workspace inviting
- Keep it light - have the sun shine in

Tips

VIRTUAL IN-HOME

- Counselors are hearing and seeing things in their client's home they typically would not see, AND clients are now seeing in counselors homes.
- Boundaries are important. Remember clients may ask more questions about you as they recognize you are in your home. Speak with your supervisor and be prepared to set boundaries.

For some patients, services delivered via telebehavioral health provide

- Feelings of safety and control (those with trauma- or anxiety-related diagnoses)
- While for others, the sense of ‘emotional or virtual distance’ experienced with telebehavioral health can at times be off-putting

Shore, 2020

Satisfaction

Online groups enable engagement and social support

- 21 rural survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault reported statistically significant reductions in posttraumatic stress symptoms and depressive symptoms along with high levels of satisfaction with their therapy delivered via videoconferencing technology. (Gray et al., 2015)
- Satisfaction with therapy for depression was found in a sample of 17 rural women who reported high levels of perceived empathy after therapy and high levels of satisfaction with their therapy. (Openshaw, 2012)

Telebehavioral Health:

Is equivalent to in-person care

- Research base on mental health services is extensive
- Research base for SUD treatment is growing – OUD treatment
- Patients express satisfaction with it – they like it
- National Guidelines exist
- Clinicians may be initially reluctant
- Clinician training & practice may reduce reluctance
- Telehealth tips can inform practice
- Platforms should provide end-to-end encryption
- Resources for training/TA and products are available
- Status of telebehavioral health post-pandemic is undecided



Providers are also awaiting how the post-pandemic regulatory and policy landscape shakes out.

- What emergency measures will expire, and what actions will state and federal regulators take to make sure telehealth continues to advance and expand?
- Will CMS continue to support RPM programs by allowing the patient's home to serve as a telehealth site?
- Will privacy and security guidelines – most notably HIPAA – be revised to allow providers and patients to connect on more platforms, including the audio-only phone?
 - As of July 23, all 50 state Medicaid agencies and Washington D.C. have issued guidance to allow a form of audio-only telehealth services
- Will reliable broadband become a reality?

<https://mhealthintelligence.com/features/covid-19-gives-providers-a-blueprint-for-new-telehealth-strategies>



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Blended Therapy

Combination of face to face and online therapy

- 2 studies examined parents of autistic children and Hoarding Disorder
- Blended therapy shows promise, especially for aftercare following face-to-face services.

Lodder et al., 2020; Fitzpatrick et al., 2018

Thoughts from a Videoconferencing Expert...

- The longer the pandemic and associated quarantines continue...
 - the more likely current changes become solidified and routinized into the practice of behavioral health.
- What if the pandemic is controlled...
 - will current regulatory and structural changes stay in place or revert back?
- What if the pandemic becomes episodic, resulting in a series of sporadic and regional quarantines...
 - will the regulatory/structural changes be state or region specific?
- What will the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic be...
 - what services should be done in-person, through telehealth or other technologies?

Shore et al., 2020



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Home // Practice // Legal Issues // Health Information Technology &... // How to do group therapy using telehealth

How to do group therapy using telehealth

Group therapists are responding to COVID-19 by rapidly transitioning from in-person to online therapies.

By Martyn Whittingham, PhD, and Jennifer Martin, PhD Date created: April 10, 2020



Related Resources

- [Telemental Health Laws App](#)
- [Group Circle: Couch to Screen, Online Group Therapy](#)
- [American Group Psychotherapy Association](#)

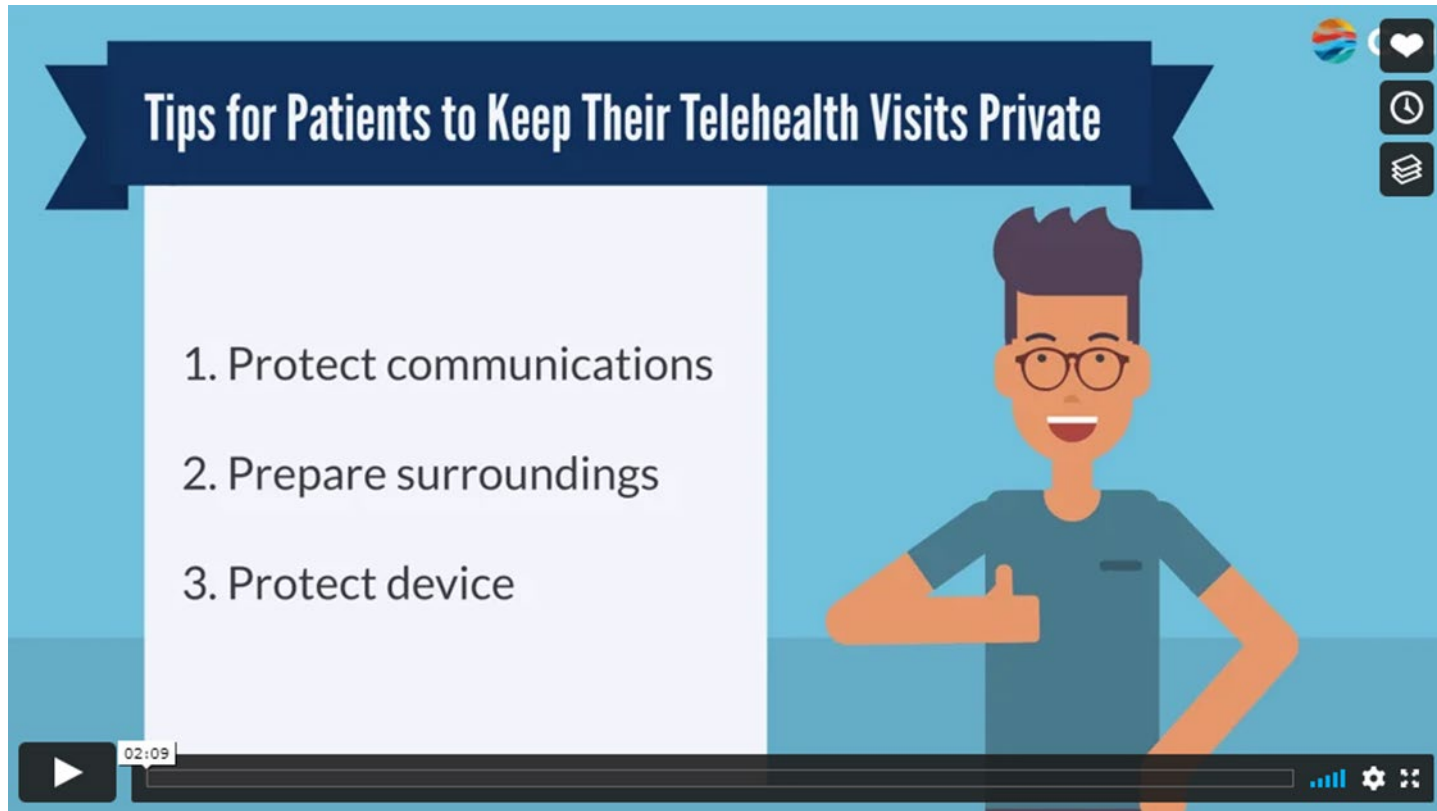
[CONTACT APA SERVICES](#)


<https://www.apaservices.org/practice/legal/technology/group-therapy-telehealth-covid-19>



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Watch the video below regarding client privacy





Focus:PHI TIPS
The Center of Excellence for Protected Health Information

TO KEEP YOUR TELEHEALTH VISIT PRIVATE

Seek Treatment and Support with Confidence

Understand your rights and responsibilities for protecting your personal health information.

PRIVACY IS IMPORTANT!

There are a few steps you can take to maintain your privacy when receiving mental health or substance use disorder services through telehealth.

PROTECT YOUR COMMUNICATIONS:


- ✓ If your provider gives you a choice between video apps (for example: Zoom, WhatsApp, or Facebook Messenger), use the most private option available.
 - If you're not sure, ask your provider.
 - Do NOT use apps like TikTok, Twitch, or Facebook Live, where posts can be viewed by more people.
- ✓ Make sure you adjust your privacy settings for the telehealth app (for example: turn on encryption and turn off location services).
- ✓ If you have to use someone else's device to receive treatment and you don't want them to have access to your treatment information, you should:
 - Inform your treatment provider that it is NOT your device so they don't send confidential treatment information to the device.
 - After using another's device, delete any history of communication about your treatment from the device. You can also set the device's browser to "incognito" mode to prevent it from storing history.

PREPARE YOUR SURROUNDINGS:

- ✓ Make sure your roommates, friends, or family can't overhear you during a confidential telehealth session with your provider.
- ✓ Use headphones and find a quiet, private space for your visit to help protect your privacy.
- ✓ Use a "Safe Word" with your provider to alert them when someone enters your private space, so that private information isn't shared in their presence.
- ✓ Think about the privacy of others if participating in group telehealth sessions. Be aware that people in your surroundings may overhear other patients and take steps to protect their confidentiality.

PROTECT YOUR DEVICE (PHONE, TABLET, COMPUTER):

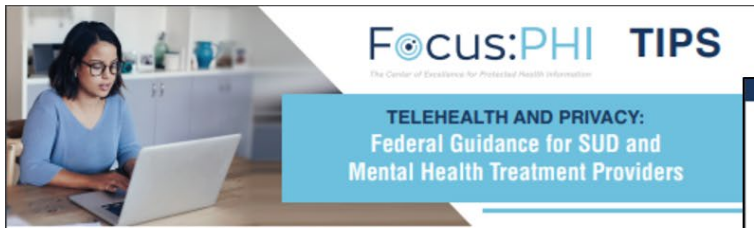
- ✓ Make sure your device is password protected.
- ✓ If using wireless internet, make sure your wi-fi is password protected and avoid using public wi-fi.
- ✓ Who else knows your password? If others know your password and you don't want them to have access to your treatment information, you may consider changing it now.

 Partnership

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Tips for Patients on How to Keep your Telehealth Visit Private

<https://coephi.org/sites/default/files/tips-individuals.pdf>



TELEHEALTH AND PRIVACY: Federal Guidance for SUD and Mental Health Treatment Providers

Providers of SUD and mental health services are working rapidly to make sure their patients have access to the care they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This includes working to recreate the treatment experience in a virtual setting through telehealth. As part of this rapid transition providers are concerned about maintaining patient privacy when sharing protected health information in accordance with federal health privacy laws.

HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KEEP IN MIND:

- 1 You Should Still Take Action to Protect Client Confidential Information
2 You Can Use Widely Available Apps to Support Service Delivery
3 Key Points for Part 2 Consent Forms
4 You Can Share Patient Information for Treatment Purposes When a Medical Emergency Exists

1. AKA authorization or Release of Information (ROI)
2. 42 CFR §2.51

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- 5 Document How Consent to Share Information was Obtained in Patient's Chart
6 Develop an Agency-specific Written Protocol for Obtaining Consent Via Telehealth
7 Share with Clients Ways They Can Protect Their Information
8 Check Your State Laws



UNDERSTANDING PRIVACY PROTECTIONS HELPS THE CARE TEAM PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE CARE

NOTICE:

The preceding tips refer to consent to sharing or disclosing protected health information rather than consent to treatment (i.e., the patient's agreement to receive services) Please check with your state agency for guidance about how requirements may have changed for consent to treatment.



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https://www.coephi.org/sites/default/files/provider_telehealth_and_privacy.pdf

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