

Introduction to Online Therapy and Telehealth

SexThe-Online, PLLC

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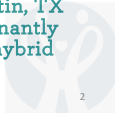


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About the Presenter



- Rhiannon Beauregard, MA, LMFT-S, CST, S-PSB, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and AASECT Certified Sex Therapist
- Licensed in five states: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Texas
- Located in Austin, TX with a predominantly online and/or hybrid online practice.



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Goals of Presentation

- Inform you on the different types of online therapy and telehealth.
- Teach you where to find the current rules and regulations of telehealth and technology-assisted services for your state and your professional organization.
- Discuss some ethical considerations of working online.
- Help you to be able to cite three possible benefits and three possible challenges to working online.



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What We Are Not Going to Cover Today

- Billing and Insurance: SimplePractice has a great webinar addressing billing that can be found here: <https://www.simplepractice.com/blog/telehealth-billing-insurance-ask-a-biller-video-2/>
- Whether something is reimbursable by insurance (Contact the Provider Relations Department of each specific insurance company for these guidelines.)



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Person Centered-Tech

- I like to approach this topic from the idea of "Person Centered-Tech"
- This is a term coined by Roy Huggins who believes that client centered care and technology can be harmonious and mutually beneficial.
- Some of this information in this presentation can be credited to his work
- Lets move away from FEAR and embrace tech as a way to ENHANCE therapy



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What is Online Therapy

Known By Many Names

- Telehealth
- Telemental Health
- Distance-Therapy
- Distance-Based
- Online Therapy
- Technology Assisted Services
- Telepsychology
- Any other terms?



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TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED THERAPY

VIDEO CONFERENCING



- Various Platforms with a variety of features:
 - Secure Video
 - Simple Practice and other EHRs have a built-in platform
 - Vsee (free and pay)
 - Doxy.me (free)
 - g-suite Google meet.google.com
 - Theralink
 - What are other people using?



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TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED THERAPY

TELEPHONE CALLS



- Many clients chose this option
- Prefer the anonymity or a good alternative to lack of internet connection for video conferencing
- Older and less tech savvy clients are often more comfortable using the phone
- Secure phone services: iPlum, Phone.com, RingRx, Spruce, 8x8, and other phone companies that will sign a BAA
- Landlines are presumed more secure than VoIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) such as Google Voice and other options and cell phones.



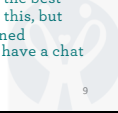
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TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED THERAPY

TEXT/ONLINE CHATS/EMAIL THERAPY



- Using a secure chat function of a telehealth platform is my best advice for this
- Many younger client prefer to work in a text based world around therapeutic issues
- This is a great inclusive alternative to meet the needs of clients with special needs (expressive/receptive language issues, deaf/hard of hearing, English as a second language)
- Signal appears to be the best independent app for this, but the previous mentioned programs often also have a chat feature.



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**TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED THERAPY
COMING VERY SOON (AND ALREADY HERE)**

- Virtual Reality Therapy
- Augmented Reality Therapy
- Artificial Intelligence and Therapy
- Online Video Gaming Therapy
- Others that people have heard of?



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Am I Doing This Right?

- Four ethical considerations to consider when doing any type of therapy, including telehealth:
 - LEGAL
 - ETHICAL
 - RISK MANAGEMENT
 - BEST PRACTICES, SCOPE OF PRACTICE, AND QUALITY OF CARE
- I believe each of those factors should be weighed EQUALLY and no one take priority over the others.



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Am I Doing This Right?

- **Legal Issues**
 - What do the jurisdictional laws say? (Where can you find these?)
- **Ethical Issues**
 - What do your ethical codes say?
- **Risk Management**
 - What does your liability insurance company say?
 - How do you plan on handling emergency issues?
- **Best Practice, Scope of Practice, and Quality of Care**
 - Is this client appropriate for online therapy?
 - Can I do my best work online?
 - Are my models suited for online work?



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Am I Doing This Right?

Texas Administrative Code, Title 22, Part 35, Chapter 801, Subchapter C, Rule 801.58

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics

- Standard VI Technology Assisted Professional Services

AAMFT Best Practices in the Online Practice of Couple and Family Therapy

AAMFT Best Practices in the Online Practice of Family Therapy Online Webinar

Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards Teletherapy Guidelines

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WHAT ARE YOUR STATES REGULATIONS?



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American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics - Standard VI Technology Assisted Professional Services

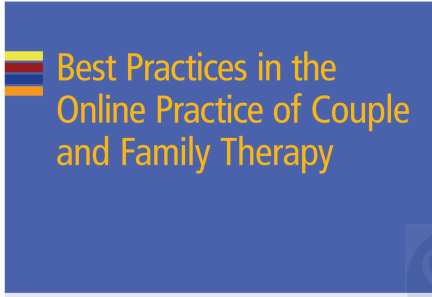
**STANDARD VI
TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**
Therapy, supervision and other professional services managed by marriage and family therapists take place over an increasing number of technological platforms. There are great benefits and responsibilities inherent in both the traditional therapeutic and supervision contexts, as well as in the utilization of technologically-assisted professional services. This standard addresses basic ethical requirements of offering therapy, supervision, and related professional services using electronic means.

- 6.1 Technology Assisted Services.
Prior to commencing therapy or supervision services through electronic means (including but not limited to phone and internet), marriage and family therapists ensure that they are compliant with all relevant laws for the delivery of such services. Additionally, marriage and family therapists must: (a) determine that technologically-assisted services or supervision are appropriate for clients or supervisees, considering professional, intellectual, emotional, and physical needs; (b) inform clients or supervisees of the potential risks and benefits associated with technologically-assisted services; (c) ensure the security of their communication medium; and (d) only commence electronic therapy or supervision after appropriate education, training, or supervised experience using the relevant technology.
- 6.2 Consent to Treat or Supervise.
Clients and supervisees, whether contracting for services as individuals, dyads, families, or groups, must be made aware of the risks and responsibilities associated with technology-assisted services. Therapists are to advise clients and supervisees in writing of these risks, and of both the therapist's and clients/supervisees' responsibilities for minimizing such risks.
- 6.3 Confidentiality and Professional Responsibilities.
It is the therapist's or supervisor's responsibility to choose technological platforms that adhere to standards of best practices related to confidentiality and quality of services, and that meet applicable laws. Clients and supervisees are to be made aware in writing of the limitations and protections offered by the therapist's or supervisor's technology.
- 6.4 Technology and Documentation.
Therapists and supervisors are to ensure that all documentation containing identifying or otherwise sensitive information which is electronically stored and/or transferred is done using technology that adheres to standards of best practices related to confidentiality and quality of services, and that meet applicable laws. Clients and supervisees are to be made aware in writing of the limitations and protections offered by the therapist's or supervisor's technology.
- 6.5 Location of Services and Practice.
Therapists and supervisors follow all applicable laws regarding location of practice and services, and do not use technologically-assisted means for practicing outside of their allowed jurisdictions.
- 6.6 Training and Use of Current Technology.
Marriage and family therapists ensure that they are well trained and competent in the use of all chosen technology-assisted professional services. Clients/supervisees of such services are made in order to optimize quality and security of services, and to adhere to standards of best practices for technology-assisted services. Furthermore, such choices of technology are to be safety advanced and current so as to best serve the professional needs of clients and supervisees.

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AAMFT Best Practices in the Online Practice of Couple and Family Therapy



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AAMFT Best Practices in the Online Practice of Family Therapy Online Webinar

Best Practices in Online Practice of Family Therapy

\$15.00 Add to Cart



CE Credits: 1.00 **Speaker(s):** Benjamin E. Caldwell, PsyD In this webinar to further explore the guidelines, Dr. Ben Caldwell will describe the work of the Online Therapy workgroup, and how the group was able to develop such clear and specific guidelines for MFTs working online. He'll review how these best practices can be used to develop or update an online practice. Finally, he will respond to member questions about online couple and family therapy. If you are working online now, are planning to start soon, or are considering the possibility for your future, this webinar will help you understand the steps that go along with working online.

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Association of Marital and Family Therapy Regulatory Boards Teletherapy Guidelines

Association of Marital and Family Therapy
Regulatory Boards

Teletherapy Guidelines

September 2016

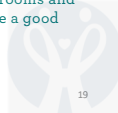


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Benefits of Technology Assisted Therapy

- Accessibility
 - Clients with special needs
 - Clients with special circumstances
 - Rural population
 - Hearing/speech impairment
- Comfortability
- Convenience
- Increase client compliance
- Flexible hours for client
- Flexible hours for therapist
- Good on the environment
- Reach more clients
- More marketing area
- Allows clients to be flexible on when they see you in office or online
- Allows you to access clients in different locations
- Some clients prefer talking about things in a more comfortable place
- Some clients can't tolerate intimacy of therapy rooms and online work might be a good stepping stone

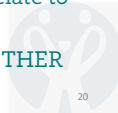


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Benefits of Technology Assisted Therapy

- Saves money
- Invest in your own office space
- Self-care can be easier
- More relaxed
- Allows you to see clients in their natural environment which might give you important information
- Accommodates for weather/travel considerations
- More in line with the way that clients communicate with each other these days
- Many issues relate to the internet
- WHAT ARE OTHER BENEFITS?

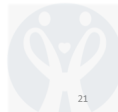


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Challenges of Technology Assisted Therapy

- Dealing with restrictive licensing laws and boards with bias towards technology
- Laws, ethics, regulations vary
- Boards are just developing rules and regulations, its hard to keep up
- Fear
- Lack of technology literacy
- Expensive for good technology
- New way of thinking
- Your own bias towards technology
- Other factors required to ensure confidentiality
- Rapidly evolving field
- HIPAA Compliance
- Confusion/rumors
- Poor internet connection/technology
- Client bias to in person therapy

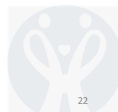


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Challenges of Technology Assisted Therapy

- Fees/Insurance/Billing
 - Liability
 - Risk Management
- WHAT ARE OTHER CHALLENGES WE FACE WITH TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED THERAPY?



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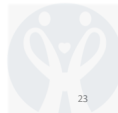
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#FetishFriday 02/09/18: #Sadism and #Masochism



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