ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR TELEThERAPY

ELLEN BELLUOMINI MSW, PHD

CONTACT INFORMATION:

EMAIL: EMBELLUOMINI@GMAIL.COM

TWITTER: @EBELLUOMINI

LINKEDIN: WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/ELLEN-BELLUOMINI-PHD-MSW-6540681B

BLOG: BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE
HTTPS://SOCIALWORKSDIGITALDIVIDE.BLOGSPOT.COM/
**OUTCOMES FOR TODAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify</th>
<th>Identify areas of deficiency in risk management strategies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluate the need for ethical technology policies and practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine</td>
<td>Determine best practices to effectively engage online with clients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Develop appropriate online options for different age groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>Explore options for marginalized clients experiencing the impact of a digital divide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ZOOM POLL

1. How many of you have a personal social media policy?
2. Who has an organization with an agency-wide social media policy?
3. What position is the expert on technology in your organization (place answer in chat)
ETHICAL PRACTICES, POLICY AND PROCEDURES, AND RISK MANAGEMENT WITH TELEThERAPY
TELEThERAPY

• Any type of communication through a third party vendor including phone, email, texts, Zoom, Facetime, etc.

• This does not include asynchronous platforms such as Snapchat or Marco Polo
HOW IS PRACTICE DIFFERENT NOW?

• Informed Consent
• Confidentiality
• Competence to Practice
• Documentation
INFORMED CONSENT: SETTING THE STAGE

- Scheduling
- Privacy/security measures (no recording by either party)
- Benefits and potential risks
- Mandatory reporting requirements
- Storage of client information
- Identification of in-state therapy only*
- Explicit emergency plan (especially screen for DV, depression, and suicidal ideation in light of stay at home order)
- Potential for technical failure and back up plan
- Protocols for contact between visits
- Conditions where teletherapy should be terminated for in-person care
- How to obtain informed consent online (English, Spanish, etc.)
- Use of technology in session and reasons for use
Who has an agency which includes these elements of technology information in their informed consent?
CONFIDENTIALITY

• Discuss limits to confidentiality
• Explain potential risks of Teletherapy
• Discuss risks of being in public or using public internet access for session
• Review confidentiality for social media
ZOOM POLL

WHO DISCUSSES TELEThERAPy CONFIDENTIALITY RISKS WITH THEIR CLIENTS?
• Know the software you are using
• Use unique session identifiers
• Assess the technological literacy of the client
• Assess any access problems
• Identify cultural implications
• Evaluate ADA/HIPPA compliance
• Understand how to problem solve technology issues with the client
Closing the loop between intake and first session

Client Location (each time)

Client record

Progress notes

Homework

Texting and emails

Confidentiality
TELEThERAPY ETIQUETTE: BEFORE EACH SESSION

• Test your equipment before starting the day
• Have tech assistance ready (websites or YouTube videos)
• Have contact information and emergency numbers available
• Check surroundings within the cameras field of view
TELEThERAPY ETIQUETTE: VIDEO

- Wear solid neutral colors, check how you look in the mirror before each session
- Check your background (and filters!)
- Turn off noise from phone, fans, or alarms etc.
- Be in a room with a door which closes for privacy
- Make sure lighting and sound are appropriate
- Ask the client for feedback on sound
- If you hear something on the client’s end of the conversation, it is okay to ask
- Beginning and end of session
FEDERAL ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR TELEHEALTH

• The Privacy Act; HIPAA; Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH), Act; 42 CFR Part 2 (Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorders Patient Records); and FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act;

ZOOM POLL

WHO HAS READ THE TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL WORK?
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

• Standard 2.10: Social Media Policy Social workers who use social media shall develop a social media policy that they share with clients. Interpretation Social media policies inform clients regarding their social worker’s professional use of social networking sites, e-mail, text messaging, electronic search engines, smartphone applications, blogs, business review sites, and other forms of electronic communication. A carefully constructed social media policy that social workers share with clients can enhance protection of private information and maintain clear boundaries. The social media policy should be reviewed with clients during the initial interview in the social worker–client relationship and revisited and updated as needed.
WHAT IF?
WHAT IF?

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU DO IF YOU SEE THIS ON CAMERA?
QUESTIONS?
ASSESSMENT DIFFERENCES WITH TELEThERAPy
DIFFERENCES IN TELETHERAPY FOR VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

• Therapists were unprepared for Teletherapy
• Clients are having a difficult time locating Therapists of Color
• Limited access to high-speed internet (In 2019, 1/3 of US households lack Broadband)
• Limited access to smartphones/tablets/computers
• Payment platforms vary (PayPal, Venmo, CashApp, Zelle, etc.)
• Telehealth access may be compromised in rural areas
• Those who struggled getting help before are entering an overwhelmed mental health system
• Unreadiness was more common in patients who were older, unmarried, men, Black or Hispanic, lived in rural areas, and who had less education, lower income and worse self-reported health

### Differences in Teletherapy for Vulnerable and Marginalized Populations

Of patients 85 years and older, 72% met criteria for unreadiness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing difficulty</td>
<td>Had difficulty hearing well enough to use a telephone—even with hearing aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech difficulty</td>
<td>Had problems speaking or making oneself understood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision difficulty</td>
<td>Had difficulty seeing well enough to read a newspaper or watch television—even with glasses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access</td>
<td>Did not own an internet-enabled device or were unaware of how to use one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet usage</td>
<td>Did not use email, texting, or internet in the past month.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BEST PRACTICES FOR THERAPY ONLINE WITH ADULTS AND CHILDREN
CREATING A TRAUMA INFORMED SAFE SPACE FOR CHILDREN

- Discuss emergency/crisis plan with parents/adult client
- Have parent and child together when talking about safe space boundaries
- Discuss where in the house is comfortable and private for the session
- Low noise
- Lighting
- “Give me a tour of what makes this space safe for you”
- For teenagers, discuss using the Zoom Chat function if they don’t feel they can speak freely
- Boundaries in session and out of session
- Using transference objects
- Tech difficulties plan

INTENTIONAL SYSTEMS MENTORING, INC.
THERAPIST PRESENCE

- Exaggerate Body Language
  - Facial expressions
  - Tone of voice
  - Eye contact
- Child friendly elements
  - Colorful clothes
  - Child friendly backdrop
  - Toys
- Turn off notifications on computer and phone
TELEThERAPY ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN

- Screen sharing with children
- Using the child’s toys as a resource
- Use of home art materials, drawing, sculpting
- Card Games
- Online Books
  - PBS Kids Feelings Games https://pbskids.org/daniel/stories/neighborhood-clean-up/ (some books in Spanish)
- Online games
  - Poki Board Games https://poki.com/en/board
  - Safe Kid Games https://www.safekidgames.com/board-games/
  - Jeopardy Labs https://jeopardylabs.com/browse/?q=friendship+skills&sort_by=&submit=Search
- Active sessions engaging the child physically
  - Feelings charades
  - Scavenger Hunt
  - Simon Says
  - Show and Tell
  - Emotions Hokey Pokey https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH57vCdBeus
TELEThERAPY CONSIDERATIONS WITH ADOLESCENTS

• Technology Assessment for adolescent/family
• Continuous assessment for behaviors indicating depression, anxiety, PTSD
• Eating disorders, high risk behavior, and substance use issues
• Flexibility with computer/tablet/phone
• A social space/an anxious space
• Engagement, assessment, intervention through digital behavior
TELEThERAPy OPTIONS WITH ADULTS

• What are the digital strengths/weaknesses of your client?
• Emailing worksheets vs. Mailing worksheets
  • 25 CBT Technique and Worksheets for CBT https://positivepsychology.com/cbt-cognitive-behavioral-therapy-techniques-worksheets/
• Taking pictures of the final product
• Interactive Therapy Tools (Adults and Children) https://www.therapistaid.com/interactive-therapy-tools
• Online CBT https://www.aacbt.org.au/useful-links/online-resources/
• Screen Sharing
• 100 Art Therapy Exercises https://intuitivecreativity.typepad.com/expressiveartinspirations/100-art-therapy-exercises.html
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY EXAMPLES

• Sample Social Media Policy (Employee focused)

• Stuck on Social Work: Social Media Policy
  https://stuckonsocialwork.com/social-media-policy/
REFERENCES


• University of Buffalo’s School of Social Work. (n.d.) Additional Resources on Social Media and Social Work. Retrieved from: https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/social-mediaguide/resources.html

ONLINE TRAINING FOR TELEThERAPY

• The Therapist’s Telehealth Guide for COVID-19

• Telebehavioral Health Training and Technical Assistance
  https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/operations-administration/telebehavioral-health

• Telehealth Continuing Education Resources APA
  https://www.apa.org/ed/ce/telehealth
BLOGS ON TECHNOLOGY, ETHICS, AND SOCIAL WORK

• Bridging the Digital Divide in Social Work Practice: Ellen Belluomini MSW, PhD  
  https://socialworksdigitaldivide.blogspot.com/

• Ellen’s Ethical Lens: Ellen Fink-Samnick ACSW LCSW CCM CCTP CMHIMP CRP, DBH(c)  
  https://www.linkedin.com/in/ellenfinksamnick/ (On LinkedIn, but posts up to date information on ethics)

• Social Work Tech: Ignacio Pacheco LCSW  
  http://socialworktech.com/

• Stuck on Social Work: Sean Erreger LCSW  
  https://stuckonsocialwork.com/

• Teaching and Learning in Social Work: Laura Iverson Hitchcock PhD  
RESOURCES FOR TELEThERAPY WITH CHILDREN

• Introduction to Tele-Play Therapy: Considerations and Preparations
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmZJdC0eTbc&fbclid=IwAR03zdzOKwrR0BT-CO3rV-eINeT2mBhoaM_6bxdQOHGiBcLguIQKiYaBqk

• Telemental Health and children :20 Free Minimal Supply Activities

• Does Teletherapy Work in Play Therapy?