Telemental Health 101: Through the Tiers

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Introductions

Please type in chat box

Name
Role
Organization
Rate Your Familiarity with Telemental Health in Schools

• Please type in the chat box

• On a scale of 1-10, how comfortable are you with using telemental health services (0 is the lowest comfort, 10 the highest)
Presenters

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National Center for School Mental Health

MISSION:

Strengthen policies and programs in school mental health to improve learning and promote success for America's youth

- Focus on advancing school mental health policy, research, practice, and training
- Shared family-schools-community mental health agenda

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www.schoolmentalhealth.org
www.theshapesystem.com

Funded in part by the Health Resources and Services Administration
National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

NCSMH provides training and technical assistance to support school mental health nationwide.

Connect With Us
COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, is a global pandemic that has shut down much of society, including many schools. The stress associated with this virus may understandably increase worry and anxiety in our students, staff, families, and communities. At the National Center for School Mental Health, we want to support you as you protect your health and the health of those around you. To that end, we have accumulated resources and tips for you to use and share with others in your networks. We will continue to update these resources as we learn more.

- Crisis Response
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- General Resources
- Guidance for School Staff & Administrators
- Stress Management & Self Care
- Students & Families
- Technology to Support School Mental Health

Hosted on the NCSMH website: schoolmentalhealth.org
What Is Telemental Health?

Telemental health, or teletherapy, is the use of video teleconferencing to deliver mental healthcare or education at a distance:

• Interactions using live audio/video
• E.g., a clinician and a student having an online session in real time, group sessions, family sessions, consultation with a specialist
Student/Family

Mental Health Provider
Telemental Health Lingo!

- **Originating site:** The client's location
- **Distant site:** The therapist's location
Why Telemental Health?

- Improves access to care (especially now)
  - Timely access to locally unavailable services
  - Spared burden/cost of transportation
  - Addresses workforce shortages
- Convenience
- Cost
- Students and families like it!
  - High satisfaction ratings
  - Some prefer Telemental Health – youth, anxiety, ASD
- Multidisciplinary team can be in multiple settings and come together at once
  - Collaboration better than in-person

Exceptions: Safety concerns, student refusal
What is the Evidence?

• Services delivered through Telemental Health are feasible, acceptable, have been delivered across developmental status, and to youth with varied disorders

• Early work suggests that outcomes are comparable to services delivered in-person
What is the Evidence?

• Satisfaction
  • High patient satisfaction ratings

• Rapport/Therapeutic alliance
  • High satisfaction suggests that a solid therapeutic alliance develops

• Safety
  • *Traditional outpatient model* – on-site staff assist with safety issues, SOPs
  • *Home-based* – Safety plan, high risk patients may be inappropriate, patient location must be known

*Elford et al., 2001; Greenberg et al., 2006; Luxton et al., 2012; Myers et al., 2007, 2008*
University of Maryland School Mental Health Program -- Satisfaction Data

• Telehealth since 2014!
• Children and caregivers satisfied with telepsychiatry services
• Clinicians and psychiatrists were satisfied, but less satisfied than families
  • Compared with face-to-face visits, expressed less satisfaction mostly with their own performance

“This is a very good and great idea.”
– Anonymous Student
Some practical pointers…

…to help you feel more confident, and become more competent Telemental Health practitioners!
Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Tier 3
Targeted interventions for students with serious concerns that impact daily functioning

Tier 2
Supports and early intervention for students identified through needs assessments as at-risk for mental health concerns

Tier 1
Promotion of positive social, emotional, and behavioral skills and overall wellness for all students

Professional development and support for a healthy school workforce

Family-School-Community partnerships
Selecting a Telehealth Platform

Tips for Individual Sessions

(Keep in mind, many of these tips can be use for all tiers!)
Selecting a Telehealth Platform

Considerations
• Cost
• Technology offered
• User-friendly
• App or web-based
• HIPAA Compliance
• Ease of setting up Business Associate Agreement (BAA)
• Compliance with specific regulations from professional boards, agencies, and organizations
Preparing for Teletherapy

• Use an approved platform
• Plugs/chargers
• Clear plan for the session
• Resources or websites that you will need
• Appropriate background
• Routine consistent with in-person session
• Family resources for sessions (e.g., pen, paper, crayons)
• Water
• Provider appearance (professional, consider color and try to wear solid colors)
Physical Location

- Privacy: visual and auditory
- Adequate lighting: variety of light sources
- Minimize environmental distractions (e.g., noise, distracting backgrounds)
  - Give feedback to family (at originating site) on the above and make modifications as needed
Establishing a Therapeutic Space

• Determine all persons present as part of the student’s session (i.e., who is in the room and/or can hear the content of the session?)
• Inform and show students if there is anyone else joining the session (e.g., supervisors, psychiatrist, trainees)
• Have all persons on camera, if possible
• Allow time for a tour of your space
Establishing a Therapeutic Space

• Have age-appropriate toys/resources available
  • Avoid distracting toys (e.g., Legos, a lot of pieces, wind-ups) and resources that will be hard to view on camera
  • Consider how to best integrate online tools and resources to engage students

• Establish eye contact by alternating gaze between screen and camera

• Keep your image on the screen to monitor your body language and affect
Staging Matters

- Background objects and colors
- Frame participants
- Participant arrangement
- Apparent eye contact
- Lighting and sound
- Eyes 1/3 from the top of the screen
- Eliminate distractions
- Plug into network whenever possible
- Wear clothing with solid colors
Staging Matters
Self-Monitor, Use Nonverbal Gestures More Intentionally & More Often

Rapport, particularly the therapist’s “affective availability,” may require greater animation than during in-person care.

Be 110% of yourself
- Virtual high fives
- Give a tour of your “office”
- Share artwork
- Check frequently for understanding and eye contact
Avoid “Technique Face”
Take Tips From Pros

What do you notice?
Bring It!

You set the tone for the teletherapy session!

• If you are excited and interested, the student will be as well
• Bring some extra “umph”!
• Speak clearly and slowly
• Use humor when appropriate
• Repeat lines you want students to internalize
• Model non-verbal cues and active listening
• Creatively engage the student
• Ride the wave of distraction – use breaks as needed
• Use praise throughout and at end of session
Tips for the Therapist

Before the Session:

- Turn off all smart devices
- Close all other browsers
- Use wired or wireless headphones
- Have a phone ready as a backup
- Plug directly into the internet if possible
- Set up space and use routines that are familiar to students who have had in-person sessions
- Use the same space each time (if possible)
- Have websites, resources or tools available
- Plan for the participation of the caregiver
Tips for the Therapist

During the Session:
• Allow time for a tour of your space
• Help student/family establish privacy
• Use names as much as possible
• Explain where to look - eye contact is not as obvious
• Use time checks
• Invite a caregiver to help with transition, homework, and planning for next session
• Check in about technology
• Use screen share to convey messages in a PowerPoint and/or to share resources/tools
• Be aware of the volume of your voice
• Allow child to create a bin or pile of things they may want to show you (similar to parking lot)
Building Rapport

- Playful greeting with student (high five/dance)
- Ice breaker activity (charades/tic tac toe)
- Use interactive elements such as drawing/coloring/video
- Allow child to create a bin or pile of things they may want to show you (similar to a “parking lot”)
Free Online Games

• Checkers, Chess, Connect Four  https://skillgamesboard.com/
• Mancala  https://mancala.playdrift.com/
• Battleship, Tic-Tac-Toe, Connect Four  https://papergames.io/
• Mad Libs  https://www.glowwordbooks.com/blog/category/kids-online-mad-libs/
• Mad Libs  https://www.squiglysplayhouse.com/WritingCorner/StoryBuilder/
• Uno  https://play.unofreak.com/
• Scattergories  https://swellgarfo.com/scattergories/
Tips for Students & Caregivers

• Make sure you have plug/charger available
• Have a stand or create a stand—a tissue box is great!
• Turn off all smart devices
• Close all other browsers
• Observe how eye contact works when using tele

• Use wired or wireless headphones
• Let therapist know if did not understand/hear
• Have a phone ready as a backup
• Plug directly into the internet if possible
Student Privacy and Confidentiality

- Review standard confidentiality guidelines
- Who is in the home?
- Does the family/people in the home know about services?
- Does the student (or you) have a noise machine?
- Be respectful that you are entering a child’s home
Informed Consent and Confidentiality

• Discuss potential risks, benefits, and limitations of teletherapy
• Cover the student’s/caregiver’s rights to refuse or withdraw
• Determine 1-2 emergency contacts and create a plan in case of emergencies
• Discuss alternatives if there are technology issues
• Obtain and document assent and consent
Student Safety

• Emergency information
  • emergency contacts (email/phone)
  • At least 2 contacts recommend

• Develop a safety plan
  • Review existing plan (if applicable)—adapt accordingly
  • Create a new plan if needed
  • Identify local hotlines/emergency resources
  • Refer to ER/Police

• Build toolbox of coping strategies and supports for student and caregivers
Starting Your Session

• Remind student and family that not recorded
• Find out who is in the room or nearby who can hear
• Orient students to your space
• Let students orient you to their space
• Determine a special signal if not private in their space or need to stop
• Use an ice breaker or rapport building activity
Introduce Tele Mental Health

• Explain what teletherapy is and how it works

• Describe benefits of teletherapy
  • Access to services
  • Students --as satisfied or more satisfied with tele compared to in-person

• Be confident, with no anxiety when explaining teletherapy

• Ask if teletherapy is a strategy caregiver/guardian a student will agree to
During the Session

• Pay attention to non-verbal cues
• Clarify with students if you notice something “off”
• Make sure to look for your special signal
• If there are technical issues stop and address them
• Use online resources as appropriate
  • TF–CBT Online Resources
    • https://telehealthfortrauma.com/resources/
Ending the Session

• Make sure to leave time to transition
• Include caregiver to discuss actions/plan recommended
• Ask for feedback for next time
  • What did they like/not like?
  • How can it be improved?
• Plan for next time
  • When is your next session?
  • What materials do you need?
  • Who will attend next time?
• End on a positive activity or statement!
Supervision

• Support trainees through training, supervision, and coaching
• Seek peer-to-peer supervision from other clinicians
• Seek additional trainings
• Increase your comfort through practice
Review Federal, State and Board regulations frequently!

Telemental Health is evolving quickly and so are the regulations for therapists and trainees!
What is a BAA?

- Business Associate Agreement
- Confirm that this is approved as well by your organization or school system
Tier 2/3 Strategies

- Maintain routines where can from in-person therapy
- Consider how to best adapt structure
- Web-platform interactive features
- Confidentiality
Lessons

https://wedolisten.org/Lessons

MY CHILD/STUDENTS NEED TO WORK ON...

- Being a better listener
  - Follow your heart and do your best
  - How to deal with bullying
  - Making the most of things
  - Managing anger

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen

Be a better listener (with captions)
Tier 1 Strategies

- Wellness Newsletters for school staff and families
- Integrating SEL curriculum into online classes
- Create or find SEL related videos that can be used in a clinical session
- Holding office hours for school staff
- Using other school platforms to connecting with families
- Training/Informing Staff of new referral mechanisms
Establishing a Routine and Schedule

- Schedules and routines need to be taught
- Visual cues for young children can help to teach the routine
- Disruptions to the schedule should be reflected whenever possible in advance of the change
- Choice should be provided whenever possible to foster greater engagement (when, what, and how)
- Students know how to seek help
Tier 1 in the Classroom

• Many online SEL platforms are currently free to educators, including:
  • Closegap
  • EVERFI
  • PATHS
  • RethinkEd

• WeDoListen.org – Lessons, books, videos on SEL skills

• Teaching Tolerance to Students
  https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/film-kits

• Be creative! Colorado school psychologist Adam Parker uploads videos to his YouTube channel with engaging SEL stories and songs for children.
Closegap: Daily Check-Ins (Closegap.org)

Students do a daily emotional check-in

Teachers and Parents get Info in Real Time

Students connect with an adult or participate in self-guided activities
Headspace (available free to educators) is committed to addressing needs of educators such as:

- Reducing stress
- Increasing resilience
- Improving sleep

**MHTTC Tools for Educators During a Public Health Crisis**

- Taking care of yourself
- Staying informed without stressing out
- What stress looks like
- Strategies for teaching during Covid-19

**WISE Teacher Well-Being Workbook**

Georgetown University and NCSMH

- Workbook for teachers to assess and enhance own well-being
Guidance, Scripts, Strategies & Resources for Supporting Students and Educators
School-Family-Community Partnerships

- School-family-community abilities and services
  - Know what is out there
- Know your resources
  - Promote school-family-community services through school and agency webpages
- Hotlines
- Crisis Response
Family Resources

• One-Minute YouTube Parent Training
  • University of Utah is creating daily, short (less than 1 minute) videos with remote learning behavior tips designed for parents.
  • The videos are available in four different languages, and feature skills related to behavior specific praise, emotion identification, transitions, etc.
  • See their YouTube channel here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxkGHLVqVpni8rpWfK9p_g/featured

• Behavior Checker
  • https://behaviorchecker.org/
Hotlines

• **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 24/7, 365-day-a-year hotline for people experiencing suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
  • Call 1-800-273-8255 or [click here](#) to chat.

• **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
  • Call 800-799-SAFE (7233)

• **National Sexual Assault Hotline**
  • Call 800-656-HOPE (4673)

• **SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline:** 24/7, 365-day-a-year crisis counseling and support for people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters.
  • Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.
Additional Telehealth Resources

- SAMHSA
  Telebehavioral Health Training and Technical Assistance
- American Telemedicine Association
  Practical Guidelines for Video-based Online Mental Health Services
- American Medical Association – Telemedicine: Connect to Specialists and Facilitate Better Access to Care for Your Patients
- National Consortium of TeleHealth Research Centers
  COVID-19 Telehealth Toolkit
- National Telehealth Technology Assessment Resource Center
  Home Telehealth
- National Telehealth Technology Assessment Resource Center
  Clinician’s Guide to Video Platforms
- American Psychological Association
  Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology
- Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation
  Using Telehealth for Addiction Treatment
Recommended Resources

- **Telemental Health 101**
  National Center on School Mental Health, (YouTube video, 47 minutes)

- **Telepsychology**
  American Psychological Association (telepsychology tips and resources)

- **Rural Telehealth Toolkit**
  Rural Health Information Hub, U.S. DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration (2020)

- **Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology**
  American Psychological Association (APA) Standards and Guidelines

- **Headspace** for Educators

- **Closegap.org** for Educators, and for Parents
References


Case scenario and accompanying questions adapted from:


*Introduction to Tele-Play Therapy: Considerations and Preparations*, Rachel Altvater, Creative Psychological Health Services, https://www.creativepsychological.com
Thank You!