Skills-based Videoconferencing

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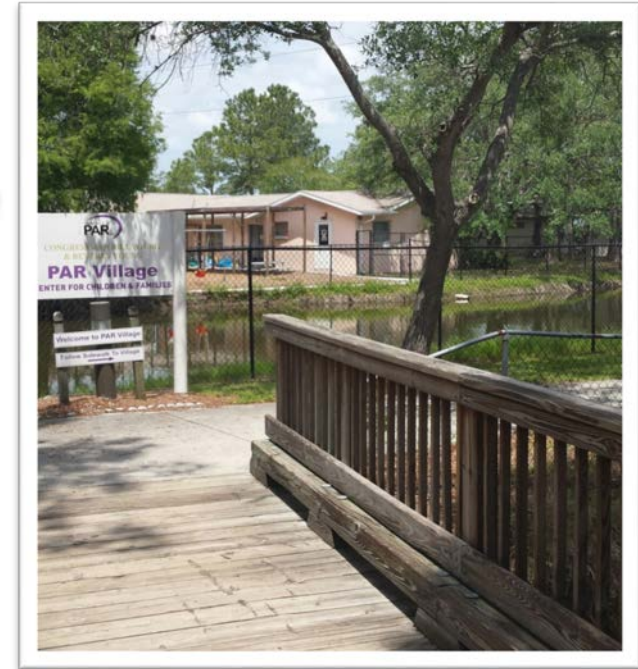Marceline Brown (Instructor in Training)

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

Professional Ethics in Tele-Behavioral Health

Week 1

Operation PAR, Inc.
Behavioral Tele-Health Innovation

Introduction

- Why it's different. What's the big deal?
  - Different from person-to-person face-to-face
  - Barriers to attending treatment overcome by Behavioral Tele-Health (Transportation/Child care/weather/disease)
  - Reducing no-show rates and increasing counselor productivity
  - Engaging new clientele familiar with technology

Behavioral Tele-Health
What is it?

A **METHOD** of service delivery

Services can include:

- Supervision
- Fidelity monitoring
- Visitation
- Staffing
- Training

Defined by SAMHSA as

- ✓ Use of electronic media and information technologies to provide services
- ✓ Used by Skilled & Knowledgeable professionals
- ✓ Services: screening, assessment, primary treatment and after-care
- ✓ More accessible modes
- ✓ Help people access treatment services
- ✓ Sole treatment modality or combination with other modalities

Ethics In Tele-Behavioral Health

Learning Objectives

- Understanding of Ethical Professional Preparation for Practice of Tele-Behavioral Health

- Gain Knowledge of Codes of Conduct

- Discern Through Practice On-line Ethical Considerations

Ethics – What Is It?

- The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation – Webster Dictionary

Ethical Considerations

Assessing Appropriateness

- Not every competent clinician is a good candidate for online practice

- Not every client with a computer should be an Behavioral Tele-Health client

Ethical Considerations (continued)

Assessing Appropriateness

- The Clinician
  - Foundation of Clinical Skills
  - Experience
  - Supervision
  - Clinicians will be called on for skills and information typically not asked in F2F treatment

Ethical Considerations (continued)

Assessing Appropriateness

- The Client
  - Their feelings about Behavioral Tele-Health
  - Computer
  - High-Speed Internet Access
  - Motivation to participate in Behavioral Tele-Health
  - Safety of self and others
  - Ability to participate

Ethics and Tele-Behavioral Health

Is Tele-Behavioral Health Ethical?

OR

Is Denying On-Line Services Unethical?

Ethics – Industry Self-Regulation

Organizations that have developed Ethical Codes and Standards:

www.EthicsCode.com (Guidelines for Mental Health and Healthcare Practice online)

www.ISMHO.org (International Society for Mental Health Online)

www.ihealthcoalition.org (Internet Healthcare Coalition)

www.ama-assn.org/ama (American Medical Association)

"Hi-Ethics Alliance" (Health-Internet Ethics Alliance)- several online health providers - such as WebMD - created consensus on code of ethics for the medical e-health sector. (2000)

Ethics – the Top 10 List

EthicsCode.com
Guidelines for Professional Practice Online

10. Understanding and Informing

(a) Online clinicians educate themselves about the uses and limits of online care, they advise potential clients about them in accordance with current research and practice.

(b) Online practitioners inform potential clients of any relevant research and available data about online therapy, including the potential effectiveness or limits for a specific problem.

9. Online and In-office Service Arrangements

- Online clinicians assess the suitability of potential clients for online care. Online care may be insufficient for clients in crisis or life threatening situations, where in-person assessment and care is the better alternative. If an online practitioner foresees that a potential client may require in-office care at some point, the practitioner informs the client of such an eventuality. The clinician accepts the client into his/her care only if:

    (a) both parties agree that the therapist is within a reasonable geographical distance of the client and can thus provide in-office care if such is needed; or

    (b) a contingency referral arrangement for such cases is mutually agreed upon by the clinician and client

8. Emergency Contact

Online clinicians verify the client's identity to the extent possible and establish some means, other than e-mail, of communicating both with clients and emergency contacts.

7. Limits of License and Insurance

- Online clinicians provide professional care only to those clients who reside in the state or province in which the practitioner is licensed or certified. Online clinicians explain the limits of out-of-state practice and lack of insurance coverage in such cases to clients who must always sign an Informed Consent form.

6. Understanding Confidentiality and Security Online

- Online clinicians educate themselves about, and advise clients of, the potential risks to confidentiality in regard to Internet transmissions.

5. Privacy Measures

- Online clinicians provide care only through "secure" web sites, using current protective procedure

4. Reimbursement and Payment for Services

- Online clinicians advise potential clients of the current limitations of online care with regard to third-party involvement, payments or reimbursement for online professional services.

3. Regulating and Supervising Entities

- Online clinicians provide links to information web sites of those bodies that license, certify or supervise the practitioner, and to whom clients have recourse in case a dispute arises between the therapist and client.

2. Professional Standards

- Online clinicians safeguard the privacy of client records using standard office procedures, e.g., of such level and detail as are required and kept in the non-virtual office.

Drum Roll Please

The NUMBER ONE Ethical Responsibility is.....

1. Mastery of the Modality

- Online clinicians seek technical consultation, or other means of understanding technical issues, prior to providing online professional services.

Ethical Discussion