

TELE-MENTAL HEALTH: Stay Connected!

An Introduction



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Course Description & Objectives

1. Brief description of biblical counseling.
2. Define tele-mental health counseling.
3. Identify telehealth the benefits, drawbacks, research, history, settings, and locations.
4. Identify major ethical and legal guidelines for tele-mental health counseling in the US.
5. Identify HIPPA compliance issues for mental health professionals.
6. Offer resources for tele-mental health clinicians.

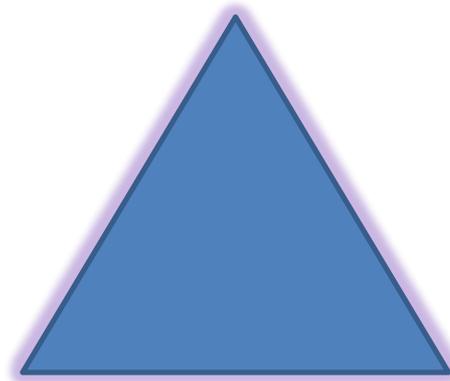


A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

Who is God?

FATHER

SON



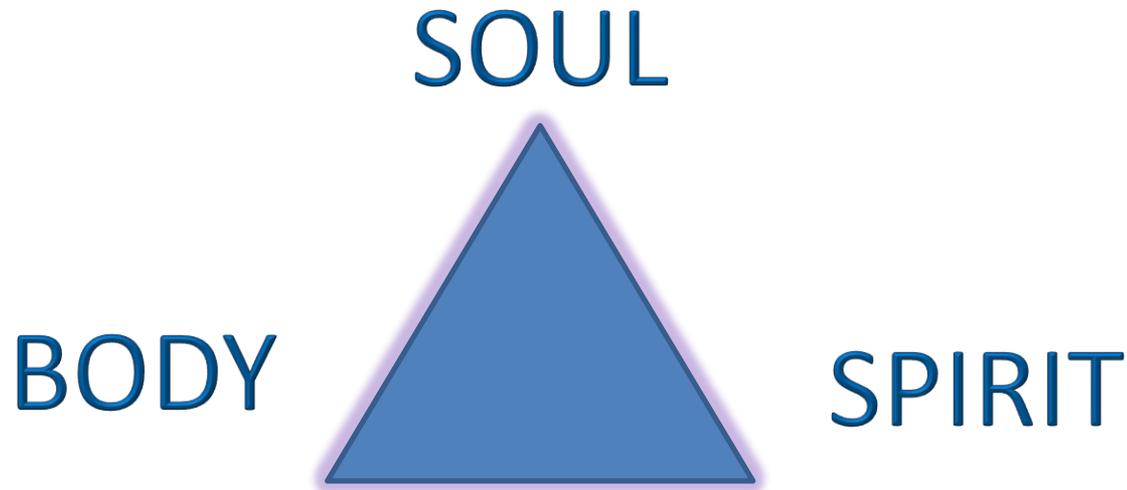
SPIRIT

Genesis 1:1–3 In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth. ² ...And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.



A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

What is Man?



Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.



A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

נֶפֶשׁ (*nephish*)
ψυχή (*psuchē*)

SOUL

רוּחַ (*ruwach*)
πνεῦμα (*pneúma*)

SPIRIT

מַעַלְמָה (*me'ah*)
σῶμα (*sōma*)
σὰρξ (*sárx*) } BODY
FLESH



A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

Who is Christ?

God-Man

Colossians 2:9 For in Him (Jesus Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Hebrews 1:3 (Jesus Christ) who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person...

1 Timothy 2:5 For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,



A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

Psalm 1:1–2 Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

Proverbs 1:5 *A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.*



A Brief Description of Biblical Counseling

Colossians 1:28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect (complete) in Christ Jesus.

**Biblical Counseling is the
Sanctification of the Soul!**



What is Tele-Mental Health?

- **Telehealth** is the use of digital information and communication technologies, such as computers and mobile devices, to access health care services remotely and manage your health care.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/telehealth/art-20044878>

- **Tele-Mental Health** is providing direct mental health and psychotherapeutic services when the clinician and the client/patient are not in the same location.



What is Tele-Mental Health?



“The delivery of health care services, where **distance** is a critical factor by all health care professionals using information and communication technologies for the exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health care providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individuals and their communities.”

<https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/health-sector/strategies/telehealth/en/>



What is Tele-Mental Health?

Telehealth is a collection of means or methods for enhancing health care, public health, and health education delivery and support using telecommunications technologies usually including the following four domains:

- Store-and-forward (asynchronous)
- Remote patient monitoring (RPM)
- Mobile health (mHealth)
- Live video-conferencing (synchronous)



What is Tele-Mental Health?

SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION

- **Synchronous communication** can be defined as real-time communication between two people.
- **Asynchronous communication** is transmission of data, generally without the use of an external clock signal, where data can be transmitted intermittently rather than in a steady stream.



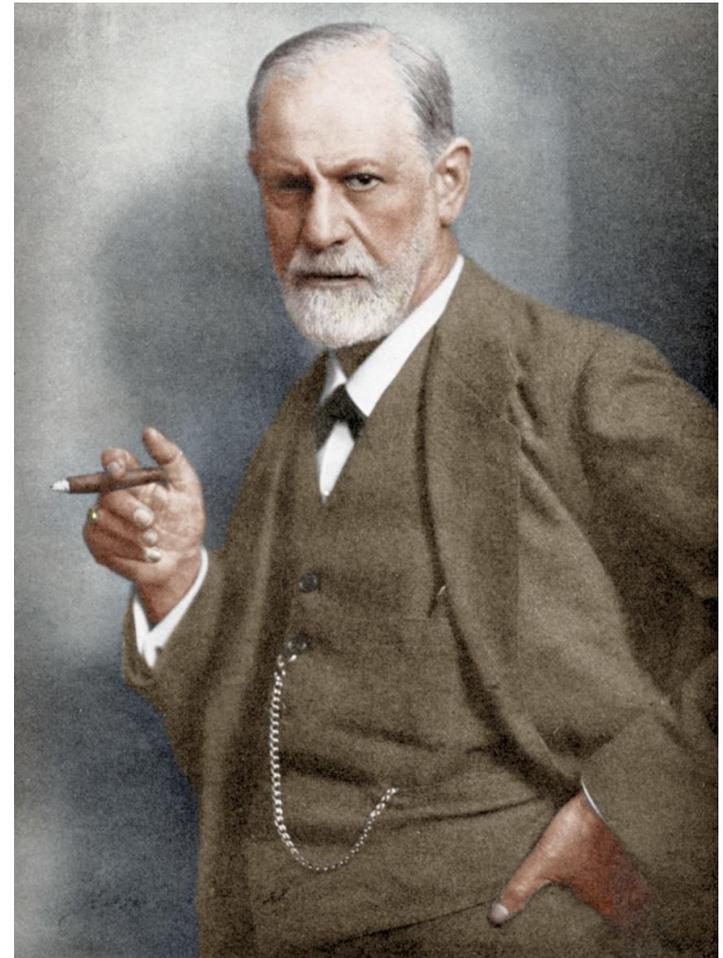
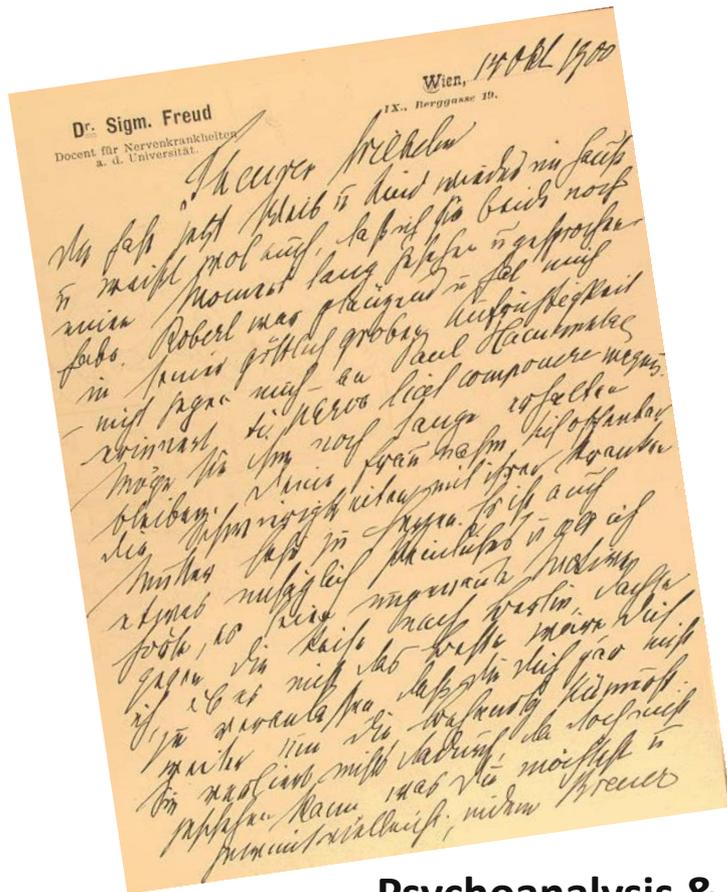
SYNCHRONOUS VS. ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION

| Synchronous | Asynchronous |
|---|---|
| Connected at the same time | Not on the line at the same time |
| Realtime | Delayed Conversations |
| Limited Participants | Unlimited Participants |
| Video Conference | Social Networking |
| Examples: Video Conferencing, Phone Calls, Web Casts, In-Person, Instant Messaging | Examples: Emails, Prerecorded Material, Text Messages, Blogs, Social Media |



Sigmund Freud

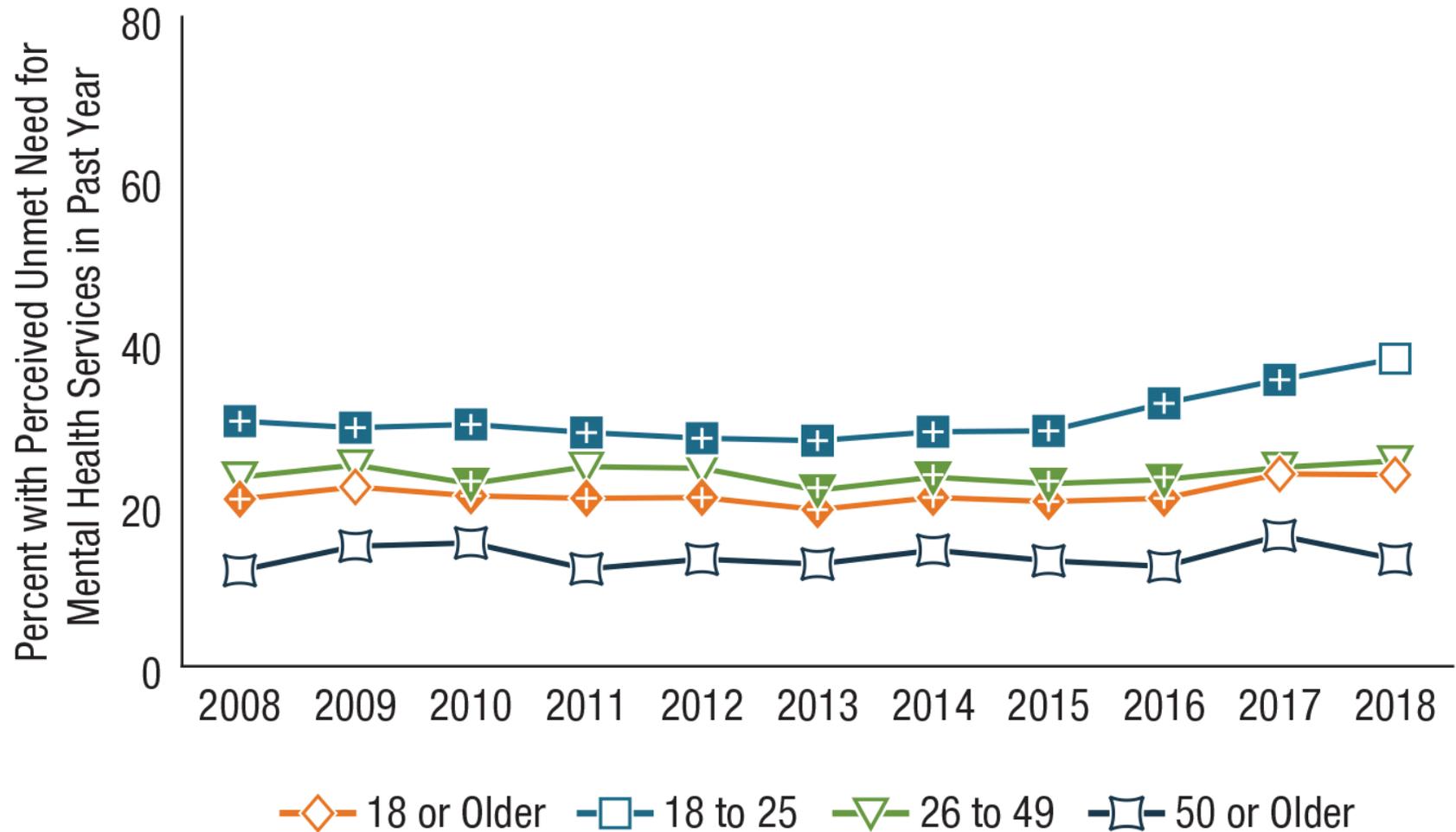
The First Tele-Mental Health Clinician?



Psychoanalysis & Psychotherapy by letter



National Survey of Drug Use & Health 2019



<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHPillImages2019.pdf>



Health Professional Shortage Areas 2019

Geographic Area

- A shortage of providers for the entire population within a defined geographic area.

Population Groups

- A shortage of providers for a specific population group(s) within a defined geographic area (e.g., low income, migrant farmworkers, and other groups)

<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/shortage-designation/hpsas>



Health Professional Shortage Areas 2019

Facilities

- **Other Facility (OFAC)**

Public or non-profit private medical facilities serving a population or geographic area designated as a HPSA with a shortage of health providers

- **Correctional Facility**

Medium to maximum security federal and state correctional institutions and youth detention facilities with a shortage of health providers

- **State Mental Hospitals**

State or county hospitals with a shortage of psychiatric professionals

<https://bhw.hrsa.gov/shortage-designation/hpsas>



Effectiveness of Tele-Mental Health:

3 Meta-Analyses

- Godleski, Darkins & Peters reported in April of 2012 that hospital utilization in mental health populations at the Veterans Administration were decreased by an average of 25% since the use of telehealth. Sample size: 98,609 patients.



<https://telehealth.org/blog/outcomes/>



Effectiveness of Tele-Mental Health:

3 Meta-Analyses

- Backhaus and colleagues reported a meta-analysis in 2012. Of 821 potential articles, 65 were selected for inclusion. They concluded that video conferencing is feasible, has been used in a variety of therapeutic formats and with diverse populations, is generally associated with good user satisfaction, and is found to have similar clinical outcomes to traditional face-to-face psychotherapy.

<https://telehealth.org/blog/outcomes/>



Effectiveness of Tele-Mental Health:

3 Meta-Analyses

- Hilty, Ferrer, Parish, Johnston, Callahan & Yellowlees (2013) reviewed 755 studies and included 85 studies in their meta-analysis. Results: "Tele-mental health is effective for diagnosis and assessment across many populations (adult, child, geriatric, and ethnic) and for disorders in many settings (emergency, home health) and appears to be comparable to in-person care."

<https://telehealth.org/blog/outcomes/>



Effectiveness of Tele-Mental Health:

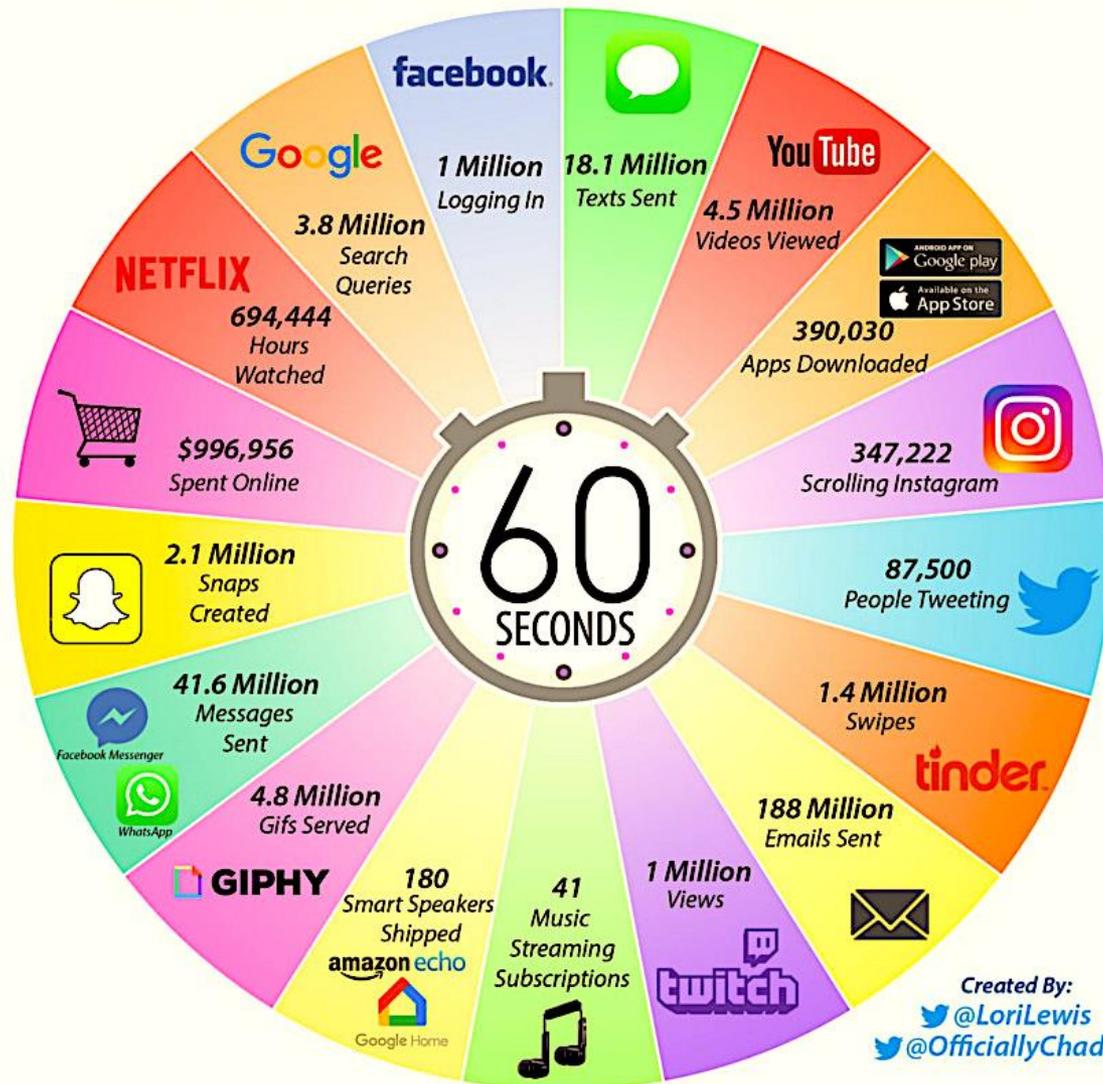
3 Meta-Analyses

Furthermore, high patient satisfaction measures across multiple dimensions have been reported by researchers, including Lindhiem and colleagues (2013); Finkelstein (2011), Hilty (2007), Frueh (2002). In fact, in a 2014 Mayo Clinic survey, 75% of patients reported that they would rather use telehealth for their health care needs than go into an office. In a survey by The Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Family Medicine and Primary Care, of the 1,500 respondents, 15% of the respondents indicated that they have already used telehealth.

<https://telehealth.org/blog/outcomes/>



2019 *This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute*



Challenges

- Technology
- Less visual cues
- Inability to physically touch patient
- Disinhibition (e.g. online bullying)
- Lazy online



Challenges

Privacy Concerns:

Tele-mental health services can be convenient, but they can also provide a gateway to security and privacy issues. From accessing patient data over the Internet to having people walking in the room during a session.

- Family member enters the room
- Client invites someone in the household to join the session
- Client records session without permission



Challenges

Responding to Crisis Situations:

How should a counselor address a client that is experiencing suicidal thoughts or has suffered a personal tragedy?

- Since online therapists are distant from the client, it is difficult to respond quickly and effectively when a crisis happens. It the ethical responsibility of the counselor to know and review crisis guidelines with the client.



Challenges

Lack of Important Information:

- Often, online therapists cannot see facial expressions, vocal signals, or body language. These signals can often be quite telling and give the therapist a clearer picture of your feelings, thoughts, moods, and behaviors.
- Some delivery methods such as voice-over-Internet technology and video chats can provide a clearer picture of the situation, but they often lack the intimacy and intricacy that real-world interactions possess.



Benefits

Greater access:

- Telehealth can make mental health services more accessible and convenient.
- Clients may also seek care earlier if they have the option to get help without leaving their homes allowing them to avoid the perceived social stigma associated with mental health care.
- Telehealth also gives rural patients and patients with limited mobility increased access to healthcare they may not have had access to otherwise.



Benefits

Flexible schedule:

- With telehealth you can have secure, real-time two-way communication with your clients anytime and anywhere.
- You can conduct sessions during times that best fit both the client and your schedule.



Benefits

Convenience:

- Services offered from any location
- Clients can easily connect long as they have an internet connection, a camera, and privacy.
- Less inhibition
- More disclosing

https://telementalhealthtraining.com/index.php?option=com_joomla&view=wrapper&moodle_page_type=course&id=389&Itemid=281&lang=en



Legal Issues

➤ State licensure laws (*prohibition of practice*)
<https://telementalhealthtraining.com/states-rules-and-regulations>

- Counselors
- Social Workers
- Marriage and Family Therapists
- Psychologists
- Medicaid Telehealth Parity Law
- Private Pay Telehealth Parity Law
- Payment Parity
- Permission for the Temporary Practice of Clinicians Licensed Outside the State



Telehealth Resource Centers by State

Resource Centers Serving All States: [National Consortium of TeleHealth Research Centers](#), [National Telehealth Policy Resource Center](#), [National Telehealth Technology Assessment Resource Center](#),

[California Telehealth Resource Center](#): California

[Great Plains Telehealth Resource and Assistance Center](#): North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Nebraska

[Heartland Telehealth Resource Center](#): Kansas, Missouri and Oklahoma

[Mid-Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center](#): West Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Washington DC, and New Jersey [partial]

[Northeast Telehealth Resource Center](#): New England (Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey [partial])

[Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center](#): Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming and Alaska

[Pacific Basin Telehealth Resource Center](#): Hawaii and Pacific Basin

[South Central Telehealth Resource Center](#): Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee

[Southeastern Telehealth Resource Center](#): Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and Florida

[Southwest Telehealth Resource Center](#): Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah

[TexLa Telehealth Resource Center](#): Texas and Louisiana

[Upper Midwest Telehealth Resource Center](#): Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio



Legal Issues

- Federal Government
- Military



<https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/>



<https://www.healthit.gov/topic/health-it-initiatives/telemedicine-and-telehealth>



<https://www.health.mil/>



Legal Issues

- Refer to **Florida Statute 456.47**
Use of telehealth to provide services.
- Refer to the statutes for the **state the client is in when the session takes place**



If I am licensed in Florida, can I provide telehealth services to a client in another state? Not always. If a Florida licensee plans to provide telehealth services to a client outside of Florida, they must review the laws and rules of the jurisdiction where the patient is located. Not all states permit telehealth services... **even under emergency circumstances.**



Ethical Issues



- Any and ALL ethical guidelines in place for in-person counseling should be followed for telehealth counseling.
- What ethical guidelines do you follow? What do they say about telehealth/distance counseling?

Resource

Center for Connected Health Policy:

<https://www.cchpca.org/telehealth-policy/current-state-laws-and-reimbursement-policies>



Ethical Issues

Consent Form should include:

- Screening for fit
- Verification Client's identity
- Emergency Management plan
- Expectations of the client (driving, inappropriate attire, secure location, nonsecure technology, guardian onsite)
- How handle technology failures, backup plans
- Who initiates session
- How to handle interruptions
- How to handle emergencies
- Benefits, downsides or drawbacks of online therapy



Setting Up Your Office



- **Privacy:** Just like in person sessions your space for your online therapy sessions should be private and free of distractions.
- **Noise Level:** Ensure that there are no noises that could be distracting to you or the client during your session. This includes doorbells, noises from outside, TVs, radios, pets, and other conversations.
- **Visual Distractions:** Your background in the camera should be free of all clutter. Try a neutral colored wall so it does not distract your client.



Setting Up Your Office

Lighting:

- Make sure your face is fully lit during your session. It is recommended placing lights around the room.
- Try to keep windows and curtains closed if they are behind you, both to ensure you have consistent lighting and to protect the privacy of your clients.

Clothing:

- Dress professionally
- Wear clothing that is in contrast with your background.
- Avoid patterns as they can be visually distracting for your clients.



Setting Up Your Office

Eye contact:

- Maintain eye contact
- Avoid doing other work, looking at other screens, or taking notes for long periods of time.
- Be mindful of your eye contact and explain to your clients why you are looking away when it is necessary. \



Helpful Hints

Prepare for the session:

- Test out your telehealth platform before your first appointment.
- Ensure devices and connections are ready to have a smooth teletherapy session.
- Send a practice link to your client to make sure all technology equipment is working properly and work out any problems before your real appointment.



Helpful Hints

Emergency services:

- Inform your client where they can access emergency services near them.
- It is your responsibility to know this information for every virtual client you see.
- This information should be included in their charts.

Insurance Billing:

- Check with the Insurance companies telehealth policy.
- Each have their own specific requirements when it comes to accepting telehealth claims. For example, Florida Medicaid only reimburses for real time, two-way, interactive telemedicine – only while video is streaming and providers must include the GT modifier.



Documents

How to Sign required documents:

- Use a Platform Service
- DocuSign
- DocHub
- AdobeSign

TIPS

- *Practice signing documents with new software prior to client session*
- *Make sure you have a Business Associate Agreement with electronic software used for signing documents*
- *Save all documents to an external drive or a cloud*



Software Platforms

HIPAA COMPLIANCE QUESTIONS FOR PLATFORMS

- What are the services you provide?
- What is the cost of each service?
- What is the customer service offered?
- Do you offer training for providers and clients?
- Does this platform support my device?
- Do you comply with all three parts of HIPAA?



Software Platforms

Many platforms provide:

- Electronic Health Records
- Appointment scheduling
- Appointment reminders
- Chat messaging
- E-prescribing
- HIPAA compliance
- Practice Management
- Video Conferencing
- Support and training
- Forms
- Treatment Plans
- Bill insurances
- Credit card payments

Vsee

Doxy.me

TheraPlatform

WeCounsel

BetterHelp

Simple Practice

Talkspace

TheraNest

TheraSoft

TherapyNotes

GoToMeeting

MyClientsPlus





The Network of Christian Counselors includes licensed mental health professionals, pastoral counselors, life coaches, chaplains and related professions who distinctly serve as Christians. Our mission is to educate, encourage, and equip these professionals in the care of a hurting world. We invite our colleagues to join with us in Christian fellowship and grow with us as we fulfill our calling of service to others.

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