Skills-based Videoconferencing

ENHANCED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SERIES

Mountain Plains ATTC (HHS Region 8)

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

Ethics in Behavioral Tele-Health

Week 2

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Digital Etiquette

Remember to...

✓ Turn off phones

✓ Clear area of distractions

✓ Check for good lighting

✓ Check equipment – i.e. microphone, webcam, internet

✓ Center self with head/shoulders in camera view

✓ Be ready to connect with folks

✓ Allow more time for responses, there can be a delay due to the technology

✓ Have fun, actively engage, and participate!

Ethics

- George Stricker, former head of APA Ethics Committee, discussed "Psychotherapy in Cyberspace" in 1996:

  - Therapeutic relationship and responsibilities
  - Identity of the client
  - In case of emergency
  - Consider in-office care
  - Privacy of online communication
  - Limits of text-based communications
  - Dispute resolutions

High Ethics Alliance

- An ethical code of conduct was created in 1999 by health care law and mental health professionals

- Created a set of ethical standards for health care organizations.

- The "High Ethics Alliance" (health internet ethics alliance} was made up of several online health providers such as WebMD.

- Created a consensus in 2000 on a code of ethics for the medical "E health sector".

- While these guidelines were initially created with medical providers in mind, their ethical standards were applicable to mental health and substance abuse treatment.
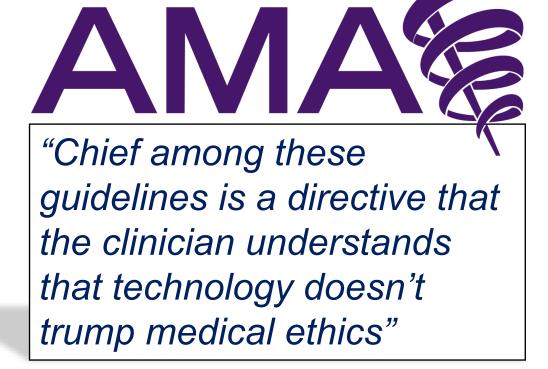
Social Work

Santhiveeran (2009) reviewed the compliance of social workers' online therapy Websites according to the *NASW Code of Ethics* standards and found that:

- Less than half of the sites studied (44%) provided information to clients about how to safeguard their privacy while engaging in the online mental health services;

- Barely half (49%) provided statements about the duty to maintain confidentiality;

- Only one-third (32%) included specific emergency protocols (beyond a bare reference to 911)

Telemedicine

June 2016 AMA approved a set of guidelines for the ethical practice of telemedicine guidelines

AMA

"*Chief among these guidelines is a directive that the clinician understands that technology doesn't trump medical ethics*"

Code of Ethics for Telehelth Services

- Social Work
- Mental Health Counseling
- Psychology
- Marriage and Family Therapy
- Others

Ethical Dilemmas

- You finish a behavioral Tele-health session and thought you logged off. You hear your client and partner in what could be a Domestic Violence incident. What do you do?

Ethical Dilemmas

Your client logs on for their telehealth session and they are smoking a vape.

Ethical Dilemmas

Your patient logs on while driving and says "I didn't want to miss our session.

She insists she is comfortable talking and doesn't see privacy as an issue.

Ethical Dilemmas

You are working with an adolescent whose parent keeps "checking in" during the telehealth session?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/SHUTTERSTOCK

In Conclusion…

1. Follow all requirements for ethical conduct from your profession's code of ethics.

2. Assess for client appropriateness (will cover next week)

3. Utilize HIPAA compliant video conferencing platforms

4. Practice within your scope of practice

5. Document all services as you would F to F services

6. Confirm your malpractice insurance covers Behavioral Tele-health

Ethics – Industry Self-Regulation

- Guidelines for Mental Health and Healthcare Practice online

- International Society for Mental Health Online

- Internet Healthcare Coalition

- 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)

Sneak Peek at next week ….

Legal Issues

To research your own state laws on telehealth or telemedicine; as well as rules, policies, regulations by your state licensing board – Be ready to discuss at length next week !

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