Telehealth:
What You Need to Know to Get Started

MUSC Health
Medical University of South Carolina
Changing What's Possible

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What is telemental health?

- The use of interactive real-time (synchronous) technologies such as videoconferencing to deliver mental health care to patients (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2019)

Telehealth equipment
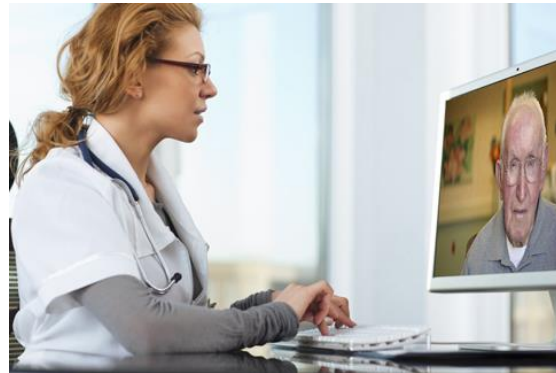
Research Supporting Telemental Health

- Effective across various populations and disorders[1,2]
  - Depression, PTSD, anxiety disorders, substance use, and others
- Effective for adults and children[1-3]
- Effective across racial/ethnic groups[2,3]

1. Hilty, D.M., Ferrer, C., Burke Parish, M., Johnston, B., Callahan, E., & Yellowlees, P. (2013). The effectiveness of telemental health: A 2013 Review. *Telemedicine & e-Health,* 444-454.
2. Gloff, N., LeNoue, S., Novins, K., & Myers, K. (2015) Telemental health for children and adolescents, International Review of Psychiatry, 27, 513-524
3. Stewart, R.W., Orengo-Aguayo, R., Gilmore, A.K., & de Arellano, M. (2017). Addressing barriers to care among Hispanic youth: Telehealth delivery of Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). *The Behavior Therapist, 40*, 112-118.

Research Supporting Telemental Health

- Effective in U.S. and globally[1]
- As effective as in-person treatment[2]
- High satisfaction[2,3]
- Standard of care is the same as in-person treatment[4]

<u>Bottom Line: Telehealth is an effective therapeutic modality</u>

1. Acharibasam, J. & Wynn, R. (2018). Telemental Health in Low-and Middle Income Countries: A systematic review. International Journal of Telemedicine and Applications, 1-10.
2. Barshur, R., Shannon, G., Barshur, N., & Yellowlees, P. (2016). The empirical evidence for telemedicine interventions in mental disorders. Telemedicine and e-Health, 22, 1-27.
3. Whealin, J., King, L., Shore, P., & Spira, J. (2017). Diverse veterans' pre-and post-intervention perceptions of home telemental health for posttraumatic stress disorder delivered via tablet. International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine, 52, 3-20.
4. American Psychological Associations. (2013). Guidelines for the practice of telepsychology. American Psychologist, 68, 791-800.

Which patients should utilize telehealth?

- Assess level of risk (suicidal ideation, self-injury, etc.)

- Physical safety (externalizing disorders, ADHD, etc.)

- Standard of care for telehealth is the same as in person treatment.

  - Same treatment protocols, same supervision of trainees, effective emergency protocols, etc.

- If a clinician cannot provide the same standard of care, he/she should not provide telehealth services.
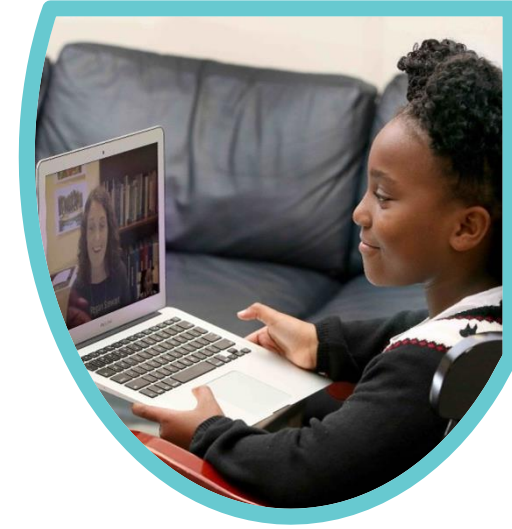
Videoconference Platform

- HIPAA Compliant
- Easy to use for clinician and patient
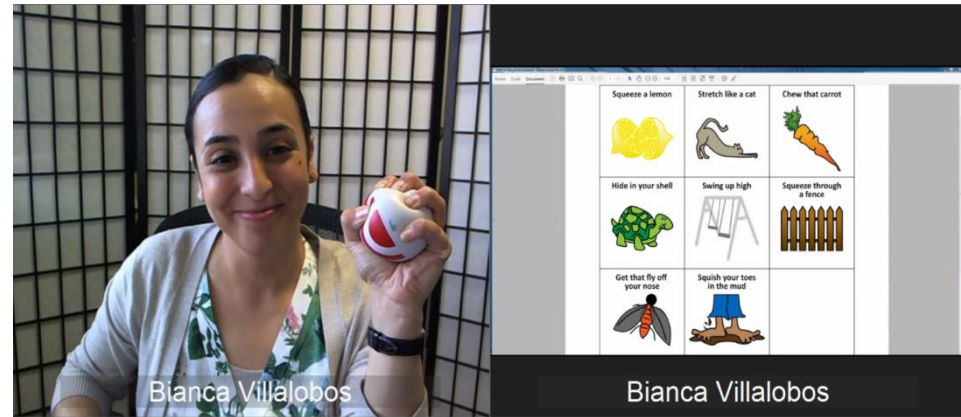- Examples
  - Zoom
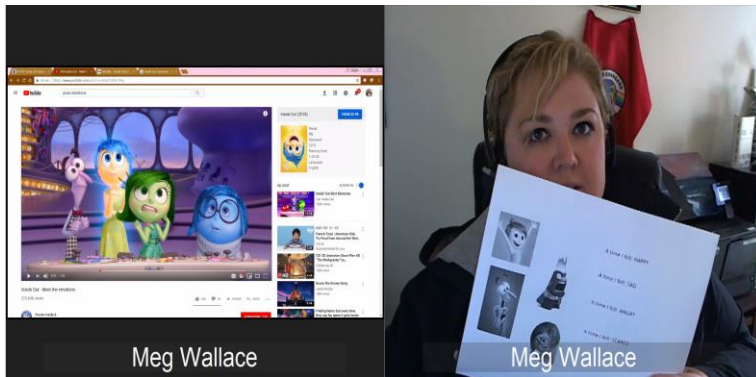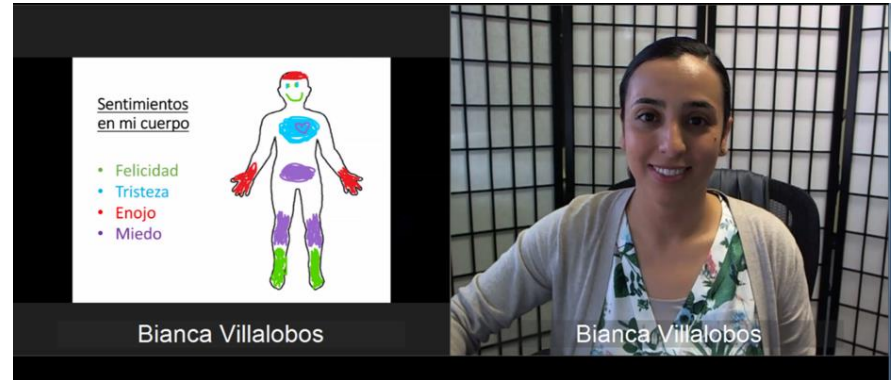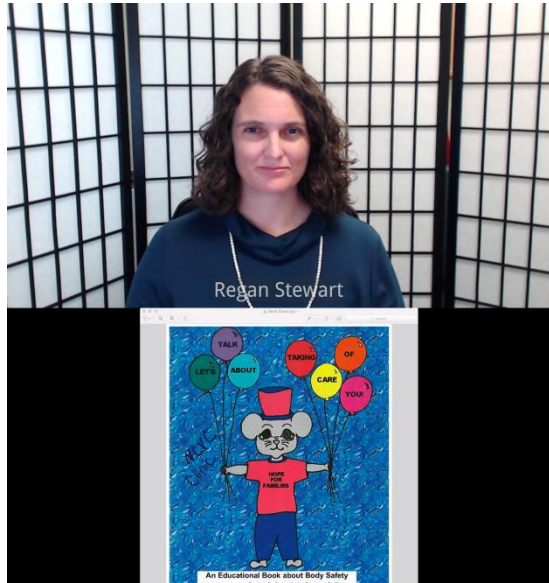 - VidyoConnect
  - VSee
  - Doxy.me

Equipment Needed

- Clinician
    - Computer (desktop or laptop)
    - Web camera
    - Headset with microphone (recommended)
    - Reliable internet connection
- Patient
    - Computer, tablet, or smart phone
    - Reliable internet connection

How does it work?

Review Relevant Telehealth Guidelines

- **State telehealth guidelines and regulations**
- American Telemedicine Association
  - https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/telepsychiatry/blog/apa-and-ata-release-new-telemental-health-guide
  - https://www.americantelemed.org/resource_categories/practice-guidelines/
- American Psychological Association
  - https://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/telepsychology
- American Psychiatric Association
  - https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/telepsychiatry/toolkit/practice-guidelines
- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
  - https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Clinical_Practice_Center/Business_of_Practice/Telepsychiatry/Telepsych_Home.aspx

Are telemental health services billable/reimbursable?

- Check with your billing department or state regulatory bodies to determine if telemental health is reimbursable and by which types of providers.
- Utilize correct modifiers and codes to indicate telehealth delivery modality
- Include telehealth specific information in therapy billing notes
  - Location of clinician and patient
  - Videoconference platform utilized

Considerations for Clinicians & Patients

- Clinicians
  - Private location
  - Background
  - Ensuring identity and location of patient
  - Emergency procedures
- Patients
  - Private location
  - For children, caregiver at the home location
  - Do's and don't for telehealth (not in bedroom, fully dressed, etc.)

Informed Consent/Consent for Treatment

- Do you have existing consent for treatment?
- Do you need specific telehealth consent?
  - You may or may not have to have written consent for tele treatment. Check with your local licensing board.
- Consider electronic consent options (e.g., Docusign)
  - Always consult with your local regulatory bodies

Next Steps

› Contact your local licensing board for updated regulations and approvals regarding telehealth

› Review telehealth guidelines

› Assess technology (clinician & patient)

› Determine informed consent protocol

› Determine safety protocol

› Determine platform & help patients navigate (downloading app or clicking link, etc.)

› Pilot with 1-2 patients to work out the kinks and then expand

Questions?

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