AACAP Telepsychiatry Committee
Proposal for an Extended Workshop

Telepsychiatry: How to do it right
Statement of Need

The integration of high-quality telehealth into healthcare has begun. It is imperative that current and future psychiatrists learn how to provide patient care via telehealth, or risk being left behind. Without proper training, many will hesitate or stumble. As healthcare educators we must ensure telehealth elevates healthcare access and standards while preventing it from becoming substandard venue for patient care.

Telehealth has the potential to break down the physical barriers that impede access to care. Not only does it extend the reach of specialists to rural and remote areas, but it also potentiates patient-centered and collaborative care with unprecedented ease and practicality. Telehealth patients receive the care they need, when and where they need it – a medical model congruent with our increasingly on-demand world.

Telehealth researchers have established an excellent evidence-base for the utility and efficacy of telehealth. Numerous scientific studies have established that trained telehealth providers deliver healthcare services that meet or exceed the standard of care in face-to-face venues like clinics and hospitals. The questions of “Is it allowable”, “Is it possible?” and “Is it effective?” have been definitively answered. The question now facing healthcare providers and educators is, “How is telehealth done well?”

Our telehealth training program teaches psychiatrists how to do telehealth well and avoid common mistakes. We identified the core competencies through our research and over eight years and 20,000 telehealth sessions of experience. Psychiatrists who complete this training can engage patients and colleagues well, build strong provider-patient relationships, create a private and comfortable treatment setting, demonstrate compassion and good “web-side” manners, and communicate clearly despite technological limitations. Workshop graduates will also have the technical competency to respond to routine challenges and flexibly facilitate telehealth sessions for other providers in a variety of clinical settings including homes, schools, and clinics. Their comfort with the technology and ability to assume this supportive role, regardless of their clinical specialty will promote the rapid expansion of telehealth as a venue for consultations, supervision, teaching, and direct care.

Variations of this workshop have been presented at several local and national venues including the Hawai‘i Telehealth Summit in 2017, the University of Maryland School of Medicine’s Telemedicine Conference in 2017, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry’s Annual Conferences in 2014, 2015, and 2016, and the American Telemedicine Association’s Annual Meeting in 2015 and 2016.
Goals and Objectives

1. Participants will work together to learn the telehealth skills. Working towards this common goal will foster collaboration and collegial relationships.

2. Participants will learn and practice how to present themselves as a genuine, competent, and caring professionals despite the challenges of communicating through a microphone and camera.

3. Participants will learn and practice the fundamentals of professional-looking origination and destination site staging and arrangement. These include room selection, room arrangement, participant arrangement, lighting, sound engineering, camera positioning, and how to prevent and deal with common problems.

4. Participants will learn and practice monitoring and using verbal and nonverbal communication skills and strategies to effectively build and maintain therapeutic relationships. These include the structure and flow of the session, opening and closing strategies, and how to use specific gestures, body language, and movements that communicate feelings well on camera.

5. Participants will learn how to overcome the limitations and explore the advantages of providing consultations and care to patients in a home, school, office, and other treatment facilities. Participants will practice delivering a variety of healthcare services in the interactive breakout sessions. The primary purpose of these sessions is to practice various telehealth techniques. The secondary purpose is to foster collaboration and new friendships. The tertiary purpose is to make them more comfortable training, supervising and mentoring more junior telepsychiatrists.

6. Participants will learn about applicable federal laws and reimbursement restrictions.
Activities and Services

This extended telehealth training workshop teaches psychiatrists how to effectively use telehealth technologies to establish physician-patient relationships and deliver excellent healthcare. Participants will develop the core competencies of patient engagement, room staging, camera skills, session management, and nonverbal communication. Participants will also learn how to adapt to different types of direct services and consultation and handle common technical and communication problems. Breakout groups will rotate through a professionally staged telehealth suite where they will work on the assigned task with the added benefit of advanced staging, lighting, monitors and camera equipment under the guidance of an award-winning television cameraman and producer.

Upon completion of this course the participants will have the knowledge and skills necessary to begin using telehealth as an effective venue for healthcare delivery, education, supervision, and collaboration.

Program Outline

- Introductions of lead instructors and facilitators. Overview of program expectations and agenda.
- Pre-test examination
- Presentation: Overview slide show with two-person photo exercise. Participants will use their own phones as the camera.
- Presentation: Web-side manner -- why bedside manner must be modified to create rapport and maintain patient engagement in telehealth sessions.
- Presentation: Staging the origination and destination sites
  - Skill-building breakout session. Two person photo exercises to practice staging skills.
  - Q/A, feedback, and discussion of staging exercise and lessons learned
- Presentation: Nonverbal communication skills and communicating well on camera
  - Skill-building breakout session. Small groups of 4-6 participants. Film a variety of scenarios designed to integrate nonverbal communication. Scenarios will include primary care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and community health worker tasks.
  - Q/A, feedback, and discussion of nonverbal exercise and lessons learned
- Presentation: Structure and flow of sessions
  - Skill-building breakout session. Small groups of 4-6 participants. Film a variety of scenarios designed to improve structure and flow with an emphasis on good closing. Scenarios will include primary care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and community health worker tasks.
  - Q/A, feedback, and discussion of structure and flow exercise and lessons learned
- Presentation: Surviving common technical difficulties
  - Skill-building breakout sessions. Small groups of 4-6 participants. Film a variety of scenarios designed to practice resolving technical difficulties. Scenarios will include primary care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and community health worker tasks.
  - Q/A, feedback, and discussion of technical difficulties exercise and lessons learned
- Putting it all together: Identify the good or bad techniques, interactive slideshow examination
• Presentation on laws, regulation, and billing issues related to telehealth
• Presentation on telehealth program administration. Highlight differences between different purposes, populations, and locations (consultations to providers vs. direct services provided to home, school, and various treatment facilities)
• Presentation: Principles and questions to consider when designing a telehealth program or practice.
  o Skill-building breakout session: Small groups of 3-4 participants. Design an idealized telehealth program to meet a need. Each group has to solve a challenge. Challenges include facilitating a recurring infectious disease specialist consultation program to primary care [many commercial insurance and Medicaid], physical therapy delivery to nursing home [commercial insurance], occupational therapy delivery [grant-funded], speech delivery [school-based], community health worker visits [federally qualified health center program], substance abuse support group [volunteer], group supervision of trainees [graduate school], individual supervision of trainee working in remote/rural site [graduate school], multispecialty developmental evaluation (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, and pediatrics) of patient at remote site [training hospital].
• Post-test examination and program evaluation collection

Staff and Materials

This extended workshop for 40 participants requires expert staff, a suitable facility, and instructional materials. Three lead instructors, three small group facilitators, telemedicine equipment, television production equipment, PowerPoint projector with remote and sound, large PowerPoint screen, handouts, testing materials, and evaluation materials are necessary.