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Mental Health Professionals' Network

WEBINAR

Tips and strategies in using technology for mental health consultations

Webinar partnership

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This webinar is produced by the Mental Health Professionals' Network, on behalf of the Victorian and Tasmanian PHN Alliance.



Panellists



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse



Professor Mark Creamer
Clinical Psychologist



Learning outcomes

Through a facilitated panel discussion at the completion of the webinar participants will have:

- Improved awareness of the opportunities, challenges and risks in conducting mental health consultations by telephone and/or videoconferencing
- Practical tips and strategies which support good outcomes (for the practitioner and the client) for telephone and/or videoconferencing mental health consultations
- Increased confidence in using telephone and/or videoconferencing to establish and/or maintain the therapeutic relationship with your client/s.



A GP's perspective



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



A GP's perspective

Opportunities and benefits

- Some patients prefer it
- Improved access – (remote, RACF, poor mobility)
- Access to GP and specialists
- Efficiency for GP and patient – GP sees only those who need to be seen
- Remunerated for all work
- Environmental – less pollution and accidents
- ‘Work from home’ benefits



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



A GP's perspective

Challenges and risks

- Patient: diagnosis, privacy, access, distress
- Clinician: zoom fatigue: e.g. 'the constant presence of each other's absence', missing information
- Technical – poor connection, not encrypted



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



A GP's perspective

Practical tips

- Send suggestions for connection and comfort, and a consent form to patient before appointment
- Keep your phone handy – in case you need to use both simultaneously
- Have a crisis plan: two contact people and phone numbers for safety
- Technical: work clothes, camera high, neutral background (not fake) (YouTube tips)



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



A GP's perspective

Apps and online resources

- Calm
- Headspace
- Insight timer
- Calm harm
- Worry time
- Head to health
- Centre for clinical interventions
- This Way Up



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



A Psychologist's perspective

For clients in regional areas

- Can have poor access to services. Services like infoxchange.org.au or local councils may help.
- Some clients experiencing social isolation or loneliness in telephone sessions can fall into a monologue.
- Clients who lack informal supports (friends etc.) tend to have difficulties negotiating relationships.



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



A Psychologist's perspective

Practical and clinical tips

- For telephone sessions, regular “yes”, “uh uh” etc. (replacing the nod) while client responds.
- For telephone sessions particularly, where possible, emphasizing intonation as you speak.
- Email any scanned material for sessions a few hours or preferably day prior to session.



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



A Psychologist's perspective

Practical and clinical tips continued ...

- More regular reviews of progress using for example K10 and reviews of therapeutic goals in the case that visual cues normally available through face to face are missed.
- If using a laptop or desktop computer, try minimizing the window and place near your camera.
- Video platforms use up more battery power than phone calls, have laptop and phone handy.



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



A Psychologist's perspective

Expectations of a telecounselling session may be different to face-to-face sessions

- Telecounselling may sometimes result in reduced work that can be covered in a given amount of time. (drop outs in connection, poor bandwidth affecting video, technical difficulties that take time to resolve etc.).
- Extra time may be required to establish therapeutic alliance e.g. Psychoeducation, socialization to treatment.

Deprived of visual information such as body language and facial expression when using a telephone, checking in more often may help e.g. “does that make sense to you?”, “how do you feel about that?”



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



A Psychologist's perspective

Possible benefits of telecounselling that may not be afforded by face-to-face counselling

- Mildly depersonalized effect on the session may result in a greater willingness of disclosure for first time clients.
- Currently and perhaps in a post pandemic world, we can begin necessary short follow ups using video?
- Telecounselling clients with agoraphobia always made sense, why not client with mobility or other issues?



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



A mental health nurse's perspective

Opportunities

- Time efficient/cost effective
- Doesn't rely on joint location - provide service, connect with and reach clients/professionals across region/state/country

Challenges

- Platform availability and connection issues
- Perception and fear (from both clients and professionals) – face-to-face is somehow better



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse



A mental health nurse's perspective

Risks

- Connection issues
- Managing a crisis

Boundary Issues

- Home is work
- Tempting to “relax”
- Clients and professionals want to know more about you



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse



A mental health nurse's perspective

Platform availability and connection issues

Always have a planned back-up that everyone has access to and knows about in advance
Mobile/landline phone as first and back-up option

Perception and fear (professionals and clients) that F2F is somehow better

It's different and it means service is delivered where it otherwise wouldn't be
We all get used to it – give it time for you and client/others to be comfortable with using it

Managing a crisis

The same as F2F – Advance safety plans
Manage in same way you would if you were physically at the location/best way you can.
Debrief for you and for client/others
Supervision



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse



A mental health nurse's perspective



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse

Boundary Issues/Home is Work

Client/Other wants to know more about you

- Be human and be professional (boundaries are the same, context is different)
- Take care of and pay attention to all the details you normally would

Working Well From Home

- Work-Space/Environment
- Tidy, organized space/area, with no or minimal interruptions/distractions
- Prepare in advance (platform is ready, phone is charged, headphones work, water on your desk, window open/fresh air, protected work time)



Questions and answers



Dr Monica Moore
GP and Psychotherapist



Mr David Xuereb
Psychologist



Ms Tessa Moriarty
Mental Health Nurse



Professor Mark Creamer
Clinical Psychologist



Supporting resources

For access to resources recommended by the panellists, you can view the supporting resources document in the documents tab at the bottom right of the screen.



Thank you

- Please ensure you complete the feedback survey before you log out.
- Click the Feedback Survey tab at the top of the screen to open the survey.
- Your Statement of Attendance will be emailed to you within four weeks.
- You will receive an email with a link to online resources associated with this webinar in the next few weeks.





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