Gambling Specific Considerations

Application

References

Welcome and Introduction

Benefits and Challenges

Best Practices

PWM
Professional Wellness Management

Advanced Considerations for Telehealth in Gambling Treatment

Jessica Auslander, MA, PhD, LPCC, LICDC-G, ICGC-II, BC-TMH
National Conference on Gambling Addiction & Responsible Gambling 2025

Welcome!

About me...

- BA/BM from BGSU
- MA in Counselor Ed from Ohio State
- PhD in Addiction Psych from Capella
- Working with those affected by gambling disorder since 2013 (Maryhaven)
- Board certified in telehealth since 2005
- In private practice (hybrid) in Charlotte
- Published/presented on telehealth, gambling disorder, and treating GD via telehealth

Self-care

- Take care of yourself as needed
- Be mindful of others
- Ask questions as we go

Objectives

Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify **three best practices in telehealth**
- Participants will be able to identify **possible challenges** of using telehealth with people affected by gambling disorder
- Participants will be able to identify **aspects of telehealth that could be beneficial** to clients

Benefits and Challenges

- Access to care - already lower for GD than A/SUD
- Fewer barriers can increase motivation
- Convenience (low distress tolerance)
- Studies show that it is as good as in-person, could be more beneficial for some
- Rapid global adaptation of telehealth normalized it, increased funding, etc.

And…
- Cannot reach everyone (resources)
- May not be a good fit psychologically
- Tech issues (low distress tolerance)
- Could promote/enable isolation
- May have privacy/boundary issues

For Providers

Hybrid

What about us?

- Increased flexibility
- Challenge, learn new skills
- Increase reach to find new clients

And…

- Possible lower reimbursement
- Extra training
- Extra liability insurance
- Keeping up with changing regulations

Hybrid Approach

- Studies show that a hybrid approach has the highest rate of retention when compared to only in-person and only telehealth.
- A hybrid approach allows both client and clinician to find the best fit
- Boundaries are key - determine and communicate early
  - Which modalities will you allow (in-person individual, in-person group, phone, video, text...)?
  - When will you allow switching modalities?
  - Are there circumstances where one or the other is preferred?

Updated Best Practices

- Conduct a telehealth-specific needs assessment of your practice (patient popluation, resources, service delivery, staffing needs, safety protocols, applicable business/regulatory concerns, space or equipment requirements, training needs, evaluation frequency, etc.)
- Cultivate a list of resources
  - Training
  - Professional organization workgroups
  - Tech support
- Stay within the boundaries of competence
- Actively screen potential clients to ensure it is the most appropriate modality - do not assume it will work for everyone

Legal

Ethical

Procedural

Legal Considerations

- Liability insurance - get telehealth coverage!
- Know the laws of your state and your client's - services take place on both sides.
  - May be different for federal systems
  - Jurisdiction, scope of practice, professional disclosure/informed consent requirements
  - License vs telehealth privilege/credential
- Documentation - May need to document verbal or electronic consent, or if you need to do something against a law or rule. Document any tech issues, if client's location was unusual, if privacy was violated (other people in the room, session in a public place), etc.
- Emergency management - procedures during session, as well as between sessions
- HIPAA and HI-TECH

Ethical Considerations

- Boundaries of competence - GET TRAINED
- ACA - Section H
- NASW - Referenced throughout
- AAMFT - Standard VI
- APA - APA Guidelines for the Practice of Telepsychology (2024)
- Document if an ethics decision had to be made- what information was taken into account, what codes were consulted, supervision, etc.

Procedural

- Discuss all modalities with your client
- Discuss privacy frequently, especially if there is a location change
  - portable white noise machines
  - reflective surfaces
- Devices - do not assume they are safe or compliant
  - Software BAA
  - Headset vs earbuds
  - Fax machine vs services
  - Issues with Apple
- Have a backup plan for tech failures
- Pay attention to your appearance - lighting, background, etc. Make it easier on the client.
- Watch fatigue

Accessibility

Accessibility

- Explore client needs for accessibility
- Discuss prior experiences with telehealth
- If telehealth is not the ideal fit, but the best option, document and collaborate to adjust as needed
- Vision - do not send text in image documents in case the client is using reading software. Have documents in formats that can be enlarged and simplifed. Pay attention to contrast
- Hearing - speak clearly at a normal volume, make sure your face is clearly visible to support lip-reading, client may be using BlueTooth enabled hearing aids
- Cognitive - use visual aids, provide documents if needed

Gambling Specific

- Access - May be the only option, but still have the telehealth discussion. You may have to work through barriers together.
- Have a list of resource links handy, but be aware of any ads, other links on the page, etc.
- Assessments - many are not online
- Safety - have a protocol in case of suicidality
- Multitasking
  - May have difficulty focusing
  - May be playing during session
- Relationship with technology
  - For some, using their devices for anything may be a trigger....
  - For others, this can help them recreate a healthy relationship with technology
  - Screensharing
  - AI

Application to your Practice

- Start with a needs assessment for both your practice, and you!
- Security and safety audit - if this is out of your scope, reach out for expertise
- Check regulations for every state in which you work
- Stay on top of the tech you use - EHR, devices, etc. for new features, or possible security risks
- Review your policies and professional disclosure statement regularly
- Keep resource lists current
- Have ongoing conversations with clients about tech - their needs or comfort level could change
- Get training/certfication and maintain it

Policies

A few things to consider...

- Meet all states' requirements
- Cancellation or switching modalities
- Which modalities you will use
- Texting? For what topics?
- Recording sessions - single consent state? Supervision?
- Role of AI, extra consents
- Record transmission - secure email, fax, etc.
- Backup technology
- Liability poicies related to telehealth, data breach, etc.

References

American Psychological Association (APA). (2024). APA Guidelines for the Pratice of Telepsychology. Retrieved fromhttps://www.apa.org/practice/guidelines/telepsychology-revision.pdf

Avena, N. M., Simkus, J., Lewandowski, Al, Gold, M.A., & Potenza, M. (2021). Substance use disorders and behavioral addictions during the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19 related restrictions. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.653674

Houser, S.H., Flite, C.A., Foster, S.L. (2023). Privacy and security risk factors related to telehealth services: A systematic review. *Perspect Health Inf Manag*,20(1) PMID: 37215337; PMCID: PMC9860467.

Mancheño-Velasco, C., Narváez-Camargo, M., Dacosta-Sánchez, D., de la Rosa-Cáceres, A., & Lozano, Ó. M. (2025). Impact of COVID-19 on substance use disorder treatment: Examining the influence of in-person and telehealth intervention on outcomes using real-world data. *Healthcare,* 13(1), 84. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare13010084

Mid Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center (MATRC). https://matrc.org/explore-telehealth/telehealth-disabilities/

Shore, J. H., Yellowlees, P., Caudill, R., Johnston, B., Turvey, C., Mishkind, M., Krupinski, E., Myers, K., Shore, P., Kaftarian, E., & Hilty, D. (2018). Best practices in videoconferencing-based telemental health. *Telemedicine and e-health*. https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/tmj.2018.0237

Gambling Specific Considerations

Application

References

Welcome and Introduction

Benefits and Challenges

Best Practices

Advanced Considerations for Telehealth in Gambling Treatment

Jessica Auslander, MA, PhD, LPCC, LICDC-G, ICGC-II, BC-TMH
National Conference on Gambling Addiction & Responsible Gambling 2025

PWM
Professional Wellness Management