Telehealth: Strategies for Effective Supervision

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The Current Crisis: The COVID-19 Pandemic

• Airborne virus that affects lungs
• White House officials have predicted up to 240,000 people in the US will die from COVID-19

• Safety Measures
  • Quarantine if sick
  • Refrain from non-essential activities/Stay home
  • Move education online
  • Practice social distancing
  • Wash hands and sanitize surfaces
  • Wear face masks

Image from https://images.app.goo.gl/GsQ3Z4U77hJtaVtu8
COVID-19 Has Made Behavior Analytic Practitioners Ask

1. Is ABA an essential service?
   • No universal decision to continue or to stop services
   • [A Proposed Process for Risk Mitigation During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://example.com) (Cox, Plavnick, & Brodhead, 2020)

2. How can we deliver care from a distance, effectively?
   • [Maintaining Treatment Integrity in the Face of Crisis](https://example.com): A Treatment Selection Model for Transitioning Direct ABA Services to Telehealth (Rodriguez, 2020)
   • Find crash courses on effective telehealth practices
Best Practices and Considerations for Effective Service Provision via Remote Technology

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Teleconsultation is a method of providing services using remote technology. In rural areas, it can be the solution to close the gap in service provision. In this paper, we detailed the technical factors that individuals who are attempting to engage in teleconsultation should consider. In addition, we provided some recommendations based on current trends and best practices and discussed implications for future use of such technologies.

Keywords: teleconsultation, telehealth, supervision, remote, training

Services based on applied behavior analysis (ABA), provided by board-certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), are in high demand because of the well-documented effectiveness of behavior-analytic interventions in mitigating skill deficits and addressing problem behaviors of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (Eldevik et al., 2009, Mueller & Nkou, 2007, National Autism Center, 2015). Presently, there is a national shortage of BCBAs, which hinders access to behavioral treatments provided by qualified individuals for children with learning and behavioral challenges (Wacker et al., 2013a). The shortage of most credentialed professionals in human-care services is exacerbated in geographically isolated areas (World Health Organization, 2011), where distance introduces various challenges in providing appropriate clinical services to families in need (e.g., Barretto, Wacker, Hunding, Lee, & Berg, 2006; Boisvert, Lang, Andrianopulos, & Boscardin, 2009; Frieder, Peterson, Woodward, Crain, & Ganzer, 2009; Machleidt et al., 2009; Wacker et al., 2013a, 2013b). Barriers such as travel time and costs for travel alone when providing services in remote locations. These barriers also extend to the supervision and training of staff. Thus, long distance between providers and consumers of their services is a real challenge that affects service cost, efficiency, and quality. One cost-effective and practical solution for the current barriers in service provision is teleconsultation, which involves the application of communication technologies to consult and deliver services in real-time across long distances (Boisvert et al., 2010). Teleconsultation consists of real-time sharing of video and audio information and has been shown to be an effective and cost-efficient service-delivery method (Albeny, Wallace, Simmons, & Barry, 2015; Barretto et al., 2006; Fendel et al., 2000; Gibson, Pennington, Stenhoff, & Hopper, 2010; Machleidt et al., 2009; Machleidt et al., 2010; Wacker et al., 2013a, 2013b). Other professionals have used telehealth for human-service delivery for many years (Boisvert, Lang, Andrianopulos, & Boscardin, 2009). For example, the United States military has used telehealth to deliver services to deployed soldiers (Boisvert et al., 2010). In addition, physicians have used...
Who Are You Supervising?

- Parents or caregiver(s)
- Direct care staff (e.g., RBT)
- Middle tier supervisory level staff (e.g., obtaining hrs to sit for the BCBA)
Parent Training/Coaching Model

• Telehealth: Clinical Applications to Cases
• Guidelines
  • Council of Autism Service Providers (CASP)
• Empirical Support
  • Lerman et al., (2020)
• Videos
  • Dr. Amanda Kelly
  • Emily McCulough
  • Dr. Megan Miller
  • Dr. Brit Farley
Who Are You Supervising?

- Parents or caregiver(s)
- Direct care staff (e.g., RBT)
- Middle tier supervisory level staff (e.g., obtaining hrs to sit for the BCBA)
## COVID-19 FAQs for ABA Providers

**How can I assess employees?**
You cannot ask any questions about medical conditions that may place the employee at risk. If you have any health concerns provided by the ABA, you should go to your doctor and you can assess the employee and their abilities.

**Pre-Pandemic Employee Rights**
If a pandemic occurs for any reason:
- If schools or daycares are closed
- If other care or support is unavailable
- If public transport is unavailable
- If you or a member of your household advise that you should stay home due to cancer or being over 65.

Workers may answer questions like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I tell employees if a co-worker has tested positive for the coronavirus or other communicable disease?</td>
<td>You cannot tell employees if a co-worker has tested positive for the coronavirus or other communicable disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I require an employee to go home (or stay home) if he or she is sick?</td>
<td>You cannot require an employee to go home (or stay home) if he or she is sick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can an employee refuse to report to work due to fear of contracting the coronavirus?</td>
<td>An employee may refuse to report to work due to fear of contracting the coronavirus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company that I work for insisted that I visit patients in their homes. I live with an at-risk family member and cannot risk bringing the virus into the household. Because of this, my employer has notified me that I am being laid off. Do I have any options?</td>
<td>You may have options to change your role or work remotely if possible. Talk to your employer about your rights and options.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Set Supervisee(s) for Success

• Hold the tough conversations about transitions with clients
• Get buy in from families and set the right expectations
  • Include supervisee in conversations
Determine How Services Will Be Delivered

In-Home

Telehealth

https://images.app.goo.gl/uo2cGtuWjGsW48Nw9
https://images.app.goo.gl/iTbTzUCkbdmkPfaKA
What Are You Supervising Direct Care Staff Do?

• Meet organization’s professional expectations
  • (e.g., paperwork, timeliness)
• Help conduct risk assessment
  • Determine if client, context, and resources are suitable for telehealth
• Help conduct behavior assessment and intervention
• Collect, interpret, and graph data
• Build rapport and maintain strong relationships with clients and their families
• Use “situational awareness”
  • Detect when key environmental variables affecting treatment are changed
    • Identify current and predict the near-future disposition of individuals who influence treatment
• Communicate with you as a supervisor
• Communicate with other professionals (e.g., administrative support, HR)
What Are You Supervising Middle Tier Staff Do?

• Explain what service delivery will look like and what the client and caregivers can expect
• Troubleshoot if intervention is not working
• Develop empirically validated, clinically sound assessment and intervention plans
• Create easy to follow protocols
• Relay outcomes of assessment and treatment in written reports
• Detect and troubleshoot solutions for ethical dilemma
• Manage conflict or crisis
How Can You Supervise Effectively from a Distance?

• Set clear expectations (provide checklists)
• Review existing guidelines and protocols with supervisee(s)
  • Answer any questions they may have
  • Ask them exactly how they can apply the information to your client(s)
• Use technology to facilitate process
  • E.g., Use phone scanners to scan billing and paperwork
• Use Behavior Skills Training
• Observe and record supervisee performance using checklists
• Provide helpful feedback that facilitates change
• Build a strong relationship with supervisee and demonstrate care for their growth and well-being
Why Would Anyone do What you Ask?

• Refrain from citing policy to evoke change in behavior
• Everyone is exhausted, stressed, and in new territory
  • Be empathic
• Build a strong relationship
  • Provide rationale for your requests
• Show you are dialed in during tele-sessions
  • Provide differential reinforcement
  • Provide on-site support and coach supervisee through tough times
  • Find useful information (e.g., music to play as reinforcer) and provide in-the-moment
• Leave time at end of sessions to check in
  • During session, you are giving short directives
  • End sessions with holistic views and be sure supervisee feels motivated to try again
• Information about performance that allows a person to change behavior (Daniels & Bailey, 2014)
• Feedback is meant to benefit the receiver of it
• For procedural integrity
  • Use checklists and be willing to model
• For professionalism, communication, bedside manners, etc.
  • Yield into the discomfort
  • State your observation, not interpretation
  • Be quick, not doing anyone favors by elongating
  • Set expectation for change
  • Be willing to problem solve if needed
  • Show you believe in them
What Do You Train?

• New skills (see Rodriguez, 2020)
  • Implement assessment protocols supervisor would usually do
  • Implement new procedures
  • Transfer of stimulus control from in-person to telehealth
  • Implement less intrusive prompting
  • Use schedules of reinforcement, thinning, and self-management
Remote Behavior Skills Training

• Review/instruct on the procedure
• Model or show videos
• Rehearse
  • With you as simulated client OR
  • Remote simulated client
• Provide feedback using a performance tool
Preliminary findings of a randomized clinical trial of a virtual training program for applied behavior analysis technicians

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The University of Nebraska Medical Center’s Monroe-Meyer Institute, United States

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Early intensive behavioral interventions
Teaching
Virtual care

ABSTRACT

As the demand for applied behavior analysis (ABA) services for children with an autism spectrum disorder continues to grow, it is critical to develop efficient, effective, and widely accessible procedures for training technicians to implement ABA interventions. One approach would be to develop efficacious training programs that could be delivered over the Internet via a virtual private network (VPN). In the current study, we developed a 40-h virtual training program in which participants completed e-learning modules and also received behavioral skills training over a VPN to implement behavior reduction and skill acquisition protocols in both discrete-trial and play-based formats. This virtual training program was evaluated in a randomized-clinical trial (RCT) using direct-observation measures on the implementation of discrete-trial training and play-based procedures as the primary dependent variables (which were also collected via a VPN). Participants in the treatment group showed robust and statistically significant improvement in their implementation of behavior reduction and acquisition programs under both discrete-trial and play-based formats, and they rated the training as highly socially acceptable. These preliminary results from an ongoing RCT suggest that this effective, convenient, and socially acceptable virtual training program has the potential to extend access to ABA services to families in rural and other underserved areas or populations.

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1. Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a disorder of the brain that involves impairments in social relatedness and language and inflexible or repetitive behaviors. Prevalence estimates have grown more than 20 fold since the 1980s, and ASD currently affects about 1 in 88 children in the United States (Burd, Fisher, & Kerkenhan, 1987; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Moreover, a recent study in South Korea used more aggressive case-ascertainment methods than most prior studies and reported a prevalence of 2.6% or about 1 in 38 children (Kim et al., 2011). These increases in the number of diagnosed cases of ASD have greatly expanded the demand for intervention services (Dave & Fernandez, 2012). This

(Also see Barretto, Wacker, Harding, Lee, & Berg, 2006; Frieder, Peterson, Woodward, Crane, & Garner; 2009; Machalicek et al., 2009)
Teach, Encourage, and Reinforce Good Communication

With family and clients

Colleagues and other professionals (e.g., admin, HR)

You, as supervisor
Giving Feedback on Graphs or Written Material via Zoom

You are viewing supervisee’s screen

- Weak paragraph transition: Although paragraphs are separate, individual steps of your paper, it is important to clearly demonstrate a logical connection between them. Generally speaking, the way your paragraphs relate to one another displays how sound your argument really is. A paragraph that begins with ‘also’ or ‘in addition’ offers a weak transition from the previous material. Even though it may seem

- Improper Citation: Misleading others regarding sources used.

- Vague: Expression is not clear or lacks precision. 

- Weak Transition: Transition between ideas or sections is unclear or weak.
How Can You Manage Crisis Remotely?

• Focus on safety
• De-escalate
• Coach supervisee through event
• Quickly communicate with designated individuals (e.g., your supervisor, stakeholders)
How Do You Engage the Caregivers?

- If offering telehealth, caregiver is present to
  - Carry out contingencies
  - Provide physical assistance
- Engage parent by asking them to
  - Observe
  - Record procedural integrity
  - Provide feedback
Tips for Supervising a Telehealth Session

• Turn camera off and observe session
• Use phone and Bluetooth Earpiece
• Be short and to the point!
Technology
Technology Concerns

• Looking for the right equipment is overwhelming!
• No time to deal with technology issues during telehealth session
• Not sure if technology is HIPAA compliant
## Technology Recommendations

- Balance cost, portability, and quality of video

- Purchase high-quality & user-friendly option that budget allows

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Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
Technology Recommendations

- Cameras with pan/tilt/zoom and wide view are the best options
  - Logitech B525 - $$
  - Logitech c920 - $$$
  - Logitech PTZ Pro 2 - $$$$$

- Bluetooth Headset – Noise Canceling
  - Plantronics Voyager Bluetooth - $$
# Loan Agreement for Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Description</th>
<th>Replacement Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Iris Live View Camera Package</strong></td>
<td>$4995.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (2) HD, RF armored rechargeable microphones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ear piece for two-way audio</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Microphone lanyard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethernet cable (30 ft.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Power cable (25 ft.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• User Guide (attached to camera)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By signing this rental agreement, I agree to return the above equipment in working order within 14 days of the completion or termination of the project, whichever comes first. If I do not return the above equipment, I understand the cost of replacing the equipment will be billed to my agency.

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Primary Administrator Signature
## Technology Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Balance cost, portability, and quality of video</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase high-quality &amp; user-friendly option that budget allows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select equipment that comes with technical support</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
Technology Systems Manager

General Job Duties

1. Assist with technology installation for all teams
2. Become person of contact between WMU Teams and Technology support teams
3. Create job aids for every day trouble shooting
4. Train WMU team members on general trouble shooting procedures
5. In charge of asking Teri to order relevant technology (e.g., Bluetooth devices, computers, cameras, etc.) needed?
6. Maintain external hard drive
7. Keep track of all technology being used
**Technology Recommendations**

- Balance cost, portability, and quality of video
- Purchase high-quality & user-friendly option that budget allows
- Select equipment that comes with technical support
- Develop protocols for troubleshooting

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
Pre-Session Checklist

- Administrator
  - Username: \PSYC-Admin
  - Password: casPSYC1903
- Update Flash Player regularly
  - Do not select to update Google toolbar or Google Chrome
- Make sure that the automatic updates are turned off
  - Go to Control Panel
  - Open Windows Update
  - Select Change settings on the left hand side
  - Select Check for updates abut let me choose whether to download and install them
- Make sure computers are fully charged
- Video file naming protocol
  - CMH name
  - Date of recording MM-DD-YY
  - Type of recording (FAI, ABC, FA, TA, CO, PA)
    - Session Number and Condition Type
  - Client codes
- Before shutting down, please check for updates and download them so they are ready for the next session
General Troubleshooting Sheet

Low Quality Video
Check internet connection
• May need to physically connect your computer to modem

Audio Not Working
Always connect to the technician/caregiver via Bluetooth their personal phone
Mute your computer on your end

Video Call Dropped
Communicate via Bluetooth to help transition to taking a break from the session or ending session
# Technology Recommendations

- Balance cost, portability, and quality of video
- Purchase high-quality & user-friendly option that budget allows
- Select equipment that comes with technical support
- Develop protocols for troubleshooting
- Provide training to all involved

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training to all involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain Business Associates Agreement and ensure HIPAA compliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
# Video Conferencing Software

## Table 2

*List of Video-Conferencing and Data-Storage Software*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software name</th>
<th>Current price</th>
<th>HIPAA-compliant</th>
<th>Encryption</th>
<th>Provider network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VSee</td>
<td>$300/month</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Hangout</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakthrough</td>
<td>$6/session</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Drive</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropbox</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iCloud</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* HIPAA = Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
BUSINESS ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT

This Business Associate Agreement (this “Agreement”) is made effective as of [Effective Date] by and between [Covered Entity] and VSee (“Business Associate”).

In consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained and intending to be legally bound hereby, the parties hereto agree as follows:

I. DEFINITIONS

A. In General. Terms used, but not otherwise defined, in this Agreement shall have the same meaning established for the purposes of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”), ARRA (as defined below), the Privacy Rule (as defined below), the Security Rule (as defined below) and the Unsecured PHI Breach Rule (as defined below), as each is amended from time to time.

B. Specific Definitions.

1. “Applicable Law” shall mean any of the following items, including any amendments to any such item as may become effective:

   a. HIPAA;

   b. the federal regulations regarding privacy and promulgated with respect to HIPAA, found at Title 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (the “Privacy Rule”);

   c. the federal regulations regarding electronic data interchange and promulgated with respect to HIPAA, found at Title 45 CFR Parts 160 and 162 (the “Transaction Rule”);

   d. the federal regulations regarding security and promulgated with respect to HIPAA, found at Title 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (the “Security Rule”);

   e. the federal regulations regarding notification in the case of breach of Unsecured PHI, found at Title 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164 (the “Unsecured PHI Breach Rule”); and

   f. ARRA.

Security Issues

- Protected Health Information being emailed and stored on online clouds
- Use of personal equipment (e.g., laptops, computers, etc.)
- Use of public networks
### Security Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop protocols for protecting documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure your hard drives and cloud storage are encrypted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptops and other electronics should be stored in locked rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If cloud storage is used, ensure host is HIPAA compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize a virtual private network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure wireless routers are encrypted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use high-speed internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure firewall settings allow external parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rios, Kazemi, & Peterson (2017)
What Have We Learned

- Can’t physically prompt or take over session
  - Be prescriptive and directive
- Put camera off
- Use blue tooth earpiece
- Watch out for prompt dependency

https://images.app.goo.gl/aeRVJTKYrYGBrkH7
Take Care of Yourself!

- Set up an ergonomic home office
- Create and stick to a work schedule
- Disperse time on computer
- Select separate environments for work versus social/play
- Take time to eat and exercise
Some Other Resources