

AdvancedMD

Mental Health



3 Things
MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS
need to know about
TELEMEDICINE

A GAME CHANGER
FOR MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES



Teletherapy is a game changer for mental health services. This emerging teletherapy technology offers big opportunities for mental health providers. Find out how you can expand your availability and reach – regardless of geography – making it easier to provide quality, consistent care to your patients.

Rising healthcare costs, government-mandated access to healthcare, and a shortage of mental health professionals are driving demand for teletherapy. As a result, current trends suggest that virtual home visits will be routine in a few short years.

As a behavioral health professional, you know that mental health conditions are more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease. The stats are worth repeating. Nearly 1 in 5 American adults – about 43 million – face a mental illness each year.¹ Yet, there's only one mental health provider for every 566 people in the country, according to a report from Mental Health America.²

Increasingly, the healthcare industry, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), and state Medicaid programs are looking to teletherapy fix that gap. Virtual home visits just may be what the doctor ordered. (Sorry, we couldn't help it!)



1 The forecast for teletherapy is hot, and even hotter for mental health services.

How hot, exactly? Teletherapy is expected to be commonplace within the next few years, especially with the shift toward value-based care. By the end of 2020, teletherapy is forecasted to be worth \$34 billion globally.³

The industry predicts that as patients become more proactive in their healthcare delivery choices, use of teletherapy solutions will increase from an estimated 250,000 patients in 2013 to an estimated 3.2 million in 2018.⁴

Recent surveys by Cisco already show that 74% of U.S. consumers would use teletherapy services, 70% are comfortable communicating

with their healthcare providers online, and 80% have no qualms about submitting their medical information online.

Now you may be thinking that only millennials would be comfortable with mental health services delivered via video conference. Nope. PwC's Health Research Institute found that 72% of patients ages 18 to 44 and 43% of patients 45 and older would be willing to consult with a mental health provider virtually instead of in person.⁶

It makes sense. After all, how many grandparents do you know who FaceTime or Skype with grandchildren as much as

they can? While certainly not as amusing, your patients also likely use video conferencing at work instead of traveling for business or even commuting to the office. Two-way video is becoming increasingly common.

Patients will want that same convenience for their healthcare too. From any computer or tablet, patients can easily join an AdvancedTelemedicine appointment by entering the session ID that is automatically emailed during scheduling. It's like a virtual housecall.

“ 72% of patients ages 18 to 44 and 43% of patients 45 and older would opt for a virtual mental health visit over an in-office appointment. ”



2 Teletherapy makes it easier for patients to receive mental health services.

Teletherapy can help you expand your care to rural, housebound, and elderly patients with limited mobility. However, it can also provide valuable assistance for patients who may forgo mental health care instead of using precious paid time off (PTO) from work.

Another way teletherapy makes a real difference is continuity of care, particularly for depression and other chronic conditions. As a mental health provider, you know firsthand the challenges patients face in coming in for weekly or other regularly scheduled sessions. In turn, you may only offer a handful of evening or Saturday appointments, which get booked in a snap.

For some patients, scheduling PTO for regular visits can be awkward, especially given the stigma around mental health. And rural, housebound, and elderly patients or their caregivers may not be able to get to office appointments.

These same reasons are why the Department of Veterans Affairs, which runs one of the biggest teletherapy programs worldwide, uses teletherapy for mental health services extensively. The VA plans to expand these virtual home visits because they work. Therapy delivered through video conference to U.S. veterans with depression was as effective as in-office talk therapy, according to a study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*. Other studies demonstrate similar results for depression (including children and teenagers), PTSD, dementia, and substance use.

Research consistently shows that patients give high marks for their virtual mental health visits. With the limitations of location removed, patient experience improves. Patients can skip the hassles of traveling to your office and sitting in a waiting room where they feel like just another number. Instead, they can talk from the comfort of home.

With two-way HD video, AdvancedTelemedicine promotes a feeling of close, personalized care for patients. Compared to a phone consultation, the video conferencing

technology creates a personal and collaborative patient experience.

AdvancedTelemedicine makes it easier for patients to get quality care, regardless of geography. Virtual home visits provide faster time to care and faster time to diagnosis and treatment, which both improves health outcomes and lowers treatment costs. It's care without boundaries.



“ Compared to a phone consultation, AdvancedTelemedicine creates a highly personal and collaborative patient experience. ”

3 Teletherapy offers another revenue stream for mental health professionals.

It's never been a better time to add teletherapy to your mental health practice. In fact, CMS and private insurers are recognizing that teletherapy can address mental health provider shortages – especially in rural areas – and benefit the bottom line.

Right now, 49 states cover Medicaid for mental health teletherapy services while 30 states and the District of Columbia require private insurers to provide coverage under teletherapy

parity laws, according to a recent report from the American Telemedicine Association.

Even if your state doesn't have the teletherapy parity law for mental health services, the big guys — Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, Humana, and UnitedHealthcare — often cover teletherapy because it makes dollars and sense.

After an analysis of state policies, the American Telemedicine Association found that the most covered mental health services under state Medicaid programs are assessments, individual therapy, psychiatric diagnostic interview exam, and medication management.

CMS typically covers teletherapy for rural areas. Now CMS also allows Medicare Advantage (managed care) and Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) to use teletherapy services regardless of geography.

Another revenue benefit of teletherapy is a reduction in cancellations. The convenience of teletherapy means fewer cancellations and no-shows for patients can't get to the office because of a big snowstorm, an inability to get a ride, a sick child, and more. In fact, the VA found that patients who received PTSD therapy through teletherapy had fewer cancellations and no-shows than patients with in-office appointments.

After-hour calls can be turned into virtual teletherapy visits so you can bill for your time. Because AdvancedTelemedicine is cloud accessible, you can be anywhere you need to be, at anytime. A computer or tablet is all you need.



Attract & engage patients with virtual healthcare, especially in rural areas with our simple & integrated telehealth technology.

Physically
distant.
Remarkably
close.

Conclusion

The best telemedicine systems act like a virtual clinic and are integrated into a cloud-based electronic health records (EHR) system. All you need is a computer with a webcam and an internet connection.

And because telemedicine is cloud-based, you won't rack up expenses on costly software, servers, or IT services. This HIPAA-compliant system works seamlessly with AdvancedMD EHR.

The telemedicine appointment dashboard is intuitive, so there's no dreaded learning curve. You enjoy a single location to review the status of all your telemedicine appointments. It just takes a click to launch and end two-way HD video sessions. It's that easy.

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