
PSYCHOLOGY FOR ALL

Inclusion and Diversity in Telehealth

Research:

Research about how individuals from African American/Latinx backgrounds and low-income communities feel about telehealth indicates:

- 36% express self-consciousness around the camera.
- Pre-experience perceptions are important to the success of telehealth adoption since they shape a patient's initial decision.
- Individuals from minority backgrounds do not perceive telehealth as preferable to seeing a doctor in person.

To explain telehealth to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, consider doing the following:

Highlight Advantages for Families:

1. *Reduced waiting time*

Tips:

- Comment on waiting time for current appointment, and that we want to ensure your child gets seen as scheduled.
- Emphasize the elimination of commute time to medical center (less stressful/time for other tasks/activities).
- Emphasize if patient is being rescheduled for earlier appointment date.

2. *Immediate feedback as to diagnosis and recommendations*

Tips:

- Clarify the goal of the appointment. For example, explain that the session is part of the original appointment (e.g., diagnostic interview is part of a neuropsychological assessment and we are aiming to start the process and not delay it).
- Share that impressions and recommendations will be provided at the end of the encounter.
- Emphasize that placement of necessary referrals to other specialists can be done.

3. *Access to professionals*

Tips:

- Explain the "novel" way of service provision where you have the provider in front of you, but you won't have to go to their office.

4. *Convenience for Children*

Tips:

- Patients will have the opportunity to share items from home or drawings on camera.
- Have some toys and drawings that you can share on screen. Some families may have limited toys at home.
- Providers may engage using interactive online features that the patient enjoys (e.g., online games).
- Use different functions to increase engagement (e.g., share screen or chat).

Address Concerns with Families:

1. *Confidentiality/Privacy*

Includes technical difficulties (computer or system failure), or that personal information obtained by individuals other than those involved in encounter.

Tips:

- Transparency is key - consent form informs caregivers of this possibility.
- Invite and manage any questions about telehealth.
- Share the role of TCH security.
- Provide alternative options for appointment (phone or wait list).
- Identify contact plan in event of disconnection.

2. *Physical absence of provider*

Tips:

- Acknowledge that the novel modality of service provision where you have the provider in front of you, but you will not have to go to their office is unfamiliar.
- Ensure that the family will have the provider's undivided attention.
- Provide an appropriately professional and distraction-free telehealth environment.
- Invite patient/family comments about the telehealth experience.
- Explain that a hospital provided interpreter will be on the telehealth encounter.

3. *Ability to monitor the provider's qualifications*

Tips:

- Wear your badge and make sure it is visible to family during Vidyo visits.
- Introduce yourself by saying 'My name is X and I am a Licensed Psychologist/Doctoral Intern/Fellow with expertise in XX'.
- Allow parent to ask questions about your training/experience.

4. *Barriers to use of telehealth*

Tips:

- Recognize differing cultural attitudes toward technology.
- Be aware that not everyone has access to technology or may have limited minutes on their cellphones and/or Wi-Fi access.
- Be patient in explaining how to access the technology and download the software.
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How to Prepare as a Provider?

There are no specific competencies developed at this time for telehealth with culturally and linguistically diverse individuals.

1. *Increase competencies for culturally appropriate telehealth interactions*

Nuggets:

- “Culturally appropriate care has been defined as the delivery of mental health services that are responsive to the cultural and linguistic concerns of all racial or ethnic minority groups and nonminority groups, including their psychosocial issues, characteristic styles of problem presentation, family and immigration histories, traditions, beliefs and values.”

- Cultural differences may be more salient during electronic consultations via any form of telehealth.
 - Review legal and ethical aspects to consider, including consent, confidentiality and protection of data, malpractice and liability, laws and regulations of telehealth in your state.
 - Review APA and other guidelines from your professional organizations.
2. *Concepts to know when providing culturally informed and responsive telehealth or individualized personal care via telehealth*

Nuggets:

- Use generalizations as a framework for working with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, rather than stereotypes.
- Consider the value of family/culture when planning telehealth interventions.
- Learn about the family's attitudes toward health and illness and technology.
- Adopt a relativist and flexible approach to providing telehealth to individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Learn about the culture and location (e.g., rural versus urban) of the individual/family and consider these sociocultural factors during telehealth visits.

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