Telepractice:

What Therapists Need to Know to Get Started

E-Therapy

Your Presenters

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COVID-19 and Telepractice

- E-Therapy has more than a decade of experience providing teletherapy services, & we are here for you!
- Given the current pandemic, telepractice is becoming an essential model of service delivery.
- Many practitioners who have never considered working with clients online are needing to adopt a telepractice model.
- Telepractice is likely to become much more of the norm in the fields of healthcare and education moving forward.

Outline

1. Overview of telepractice and guiding principles
2. Tech requirements and how to get started
3. Completing therapist responsibilities via telepractice
4. Teletherapy techniques and practical examples

Learner Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- List at least 3 reasons why telepractice is being implemented in the field of special ed related services.
- Identify the basic tech set up requirements for engaging in telepractice.
- Describe examples of online activities that can be utilized in telepractice sessions.

What is Telepractice?

Telepractice or Teletherapy involves the delivery of Speech, Social Work/Counseling, Occupational and Physical Therapy services online via two-way video conferencing (or video chat). Teletherapy links live, licensed therapists to schools and students who may otherwise have difficulty receiving services. Teletherapy is being used in the assessment and treatment of a wide range of disorders.

Why Telepractice?

- There is an increasing problem of a lack of special ed service providers across the country

- Therapists can connect to students in need despite location

- Creates the ability to reach more clients (such as those who may not have reliable transportation/alternative school programs)

Why Telepractice?

- Emerging research shows that Teletherapy can be just as effective as onsite therapy
- Connects practitioners with specific experience to students with certain speech/language disorders
- Allows the therapist to have more flexibility, no commute time, and better use of time

Common Questions

? Is the tech set up really complicated for telepractice?

? Do students respond well to online therapy, and do they make as much progress as in on-site therapy?

? Are you able to complete various SLP responsibilities via telepractice(attending IEP meetings, supervision, evaluations, etc.)?

? What kinds of activities can you use in online sessions?

A Brief History of Telepractice in Our Field

1970's studies looked at the efficacy of treatment via telephone

Late 1980's researchers explored use of telephone and television technology for use with clients in remote areas

Early 2000's beginnings of Internet videoconferencing for consultations

2008 ASHA produced guiding document "Professional Issues in Telepractice for Speech-Language Pathologists"

2005 ASHA approved telepractice as a service delivery model

ASHA and Telepractice

- Approved Telepractice in 2005

- "The use of telepractice **does not remove any existing responsibilities** in delivering services, including adherence to the Code of Ethics, Scope of Practice, state and federal laws (e.g., licensure, HIPAA, etc.), and ASHA policy documents on professional practices. Therefore, the quality of services delivered via **telepractice must be consistent with the quality of services delivered face-to-face.**"

Cason, J. and Cohn, E. R. (2014). Telepractice: An Overview and Best Practices. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups, 23*(SIG 18), 4-17.

ASHA and Telepractice

- ASHA has determined telepractice is appropriate for the application and is **helpful in overcoming barriers of access** caused by distance, unavailability of specialists and/or sub specialists, and impaired mobility.

- Furthermore, telepractice can **extend clinical services** to remote, rural, and underserved populations and to culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Cason, J. and Cohn, E. R. (2014). Telepractice: An Overview and Best Practices. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups, 23*(SIG 18), 4-17.

Evidence Based Practice

"The goal of EBP is the integration of: (a) clinical expertise/expert opinion, (b) external scientific evidence, and (c) client/patient/ caregiver perspectives to provide high-quality services reflecting the interests, values, needs, and choices of the individuals we serve. Conceptually, the trilateral principles forming the bases for EBP can be represented through a simple figure"

Definition from ASHA

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2004). *Report of the Evidence-Based Practice Coordinating Committee*. Retrieved from https://www.asha.org/Research/EBP/ Introduction-to-Evidence-Based-Practice/

Telepractice and EBP

- EBP is only possible when direct therapy services are administered by a licensed, professional Speech Therapist, which is made possible through the use consistent telepractice services

- The study, Systematic Review of Virtual Speech Therapists for Speech Disorders "…reported the **effectiveness of computers** as a **more engaging type of intervention** with more tools to enrich the intervention programs, particularly when it comes to children"
    - It was emphasized the SLP should be the one providing the intervention and teletherapy is simply the modality to provide the service

Chen, Y. -P. P., Johnson, C., et al. (2016). Systematic review of virtual speech therapists for speech disorders. *Computer Speech & Language*, *37*, 98-128. doi:10.1016/j.csl.2015.08.005

Evidence to Support Telepractice

International Journal of Tele-Rehabilitation, 3 Year Study

Outcomes 2009 – 2012 Waldo County General Hospital (WCGH) Traditional Table Top Therapy Vs. Telepractice

Key Finding

- Children who received speech therapy via telepractice achieved the best outcomes, even out-performing the national benchmarks for children from similar diagnostic and demographic backgrounds.

ToweyM. P. (2012). Speech telepractice: installing a speech therapy upgrade for the 21st century. *International journal of telerehabilitation*, 4(2), 73–78. doi:10.5195/IJT.2012.6112

Evidence to Support Telepractice

ASHA Survey Study of Clinical Insights into SLP Telepractice
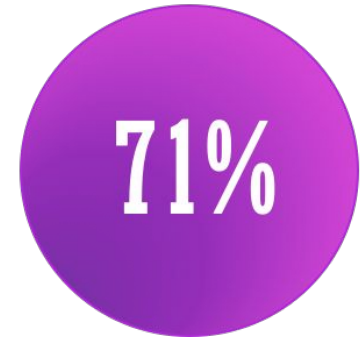
Background:

- In 2016 ASHA administered a survey to SLPs engaged in telepractice

- The survey explored various telepractice issues and therapist/client attitudes toward telepractice

Key Findings

96% of respondents reported that clients were satisfied with telepractice

71% of respondents said telepractice improved their ability to work with clients

96%

71%

Grillo, E. U. (2017). Results of a Survey Offering Clinical Insights into Speech-Language Pathology Telepractice Methods. *International Journal of Telerehabilitation, 9*(2), 25-30. doi:10.5195/ijt.2017.6230
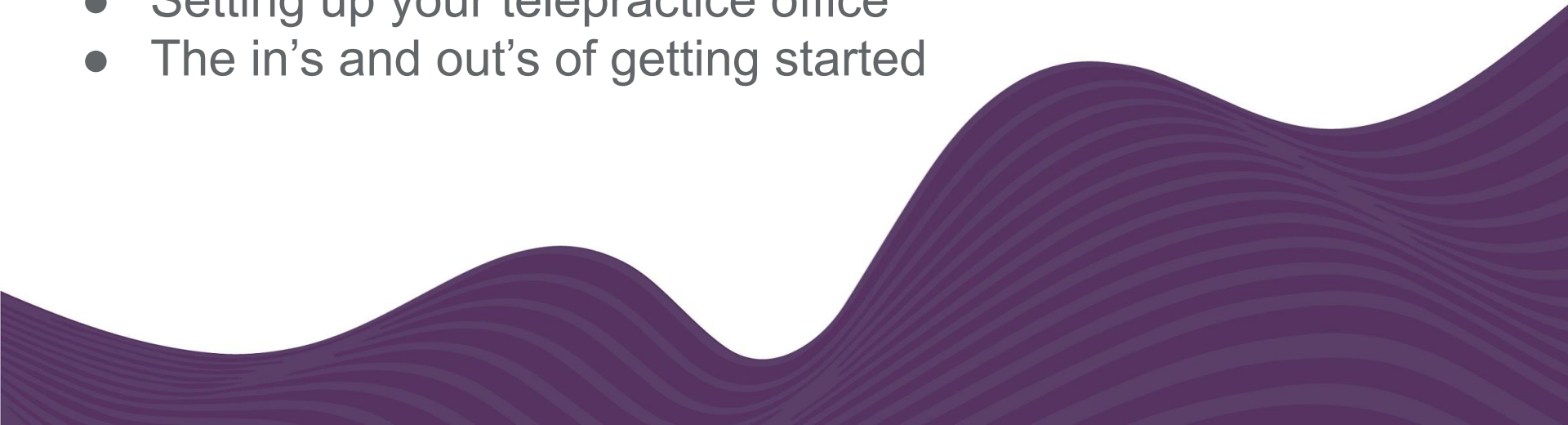
The Field is Evolving

- Trends toward technology in healthcare and education
- Telepractice/teletherapy makes sense for many in today's fast-paced technological environment
- People are more comfortable now with technology (streaming services, Face Time, etc.)
- The field of Speech Pathology is evolving and we must evolve with it!

Tech Set Up & Getting Started

In this next section we will review:

- Tech requirements for telepractice
- Setting up your telepractice office
- The in's and out's of getting started

Tech Set up

- **Computer**- laptop or desktop
- **Webcam**- utilize one that is built in to the computer or use an external camera
- **Headset**- some therapists use, some do not (depending on sound quality from the computer)
- **Good internet connection**
- Same set up on the student's end
  - Students and teachers/parents are becoming increasingly comfortable with technology because it is a part of everyday life
  - Students are digital natives and are especially at ease with technology

Tech Set up

Need to use a platform that is:

- HIPAA compliant (private/secure/password protected sessions, meets standards of encryption for HIPAA compliance) *typically free online video conference platforms do not have this level of security*
- Easy to use (for therapist and client/student)
- Conducive to your needs (including specific features, such as an online whiteboard, on-screen pen tool, etc.)

Setting up Your Telepractice Office

- Private space is required
- Computer at a table or desk (not in your lap or on an unsteady surface)
- Non-distracting/professional or plain background
- Adequate lighting
- Comfortable chair/desk that supports good posture (standing desk is a good option for some)
- Present yourself in a professional way with your attire (can still wear your comfy slippers though!)

Type of Settings and Clients

In Telepractice you can work with all ages, early childhood to geriatrics. For the purposes of this presentation we will focus on pediatrics:

- **Early Childhood**
  - In Home
  - Early Intervention Programs
- **School Age**
  - Brick and Mortar Schools
  - Virtual Academy/Home Schooled Students

Typically students are referred through a school program, where you set up a contract with the school, but you can also see private students where you contract directly with the parent or guardian.

How to Get Started

- Add telepractice to your existing practice
- Create your own private practice:
  - Set up your own business/LLC
  - Promote yourself/your company
  - Attend workshops and conferences to drum up business
  - Set up your own billing and documentation process
  - Make sure to dot your I's and cross your T's for any professional assistance you may need in setting up your business
- Work with an established telepractice company

Important Questions

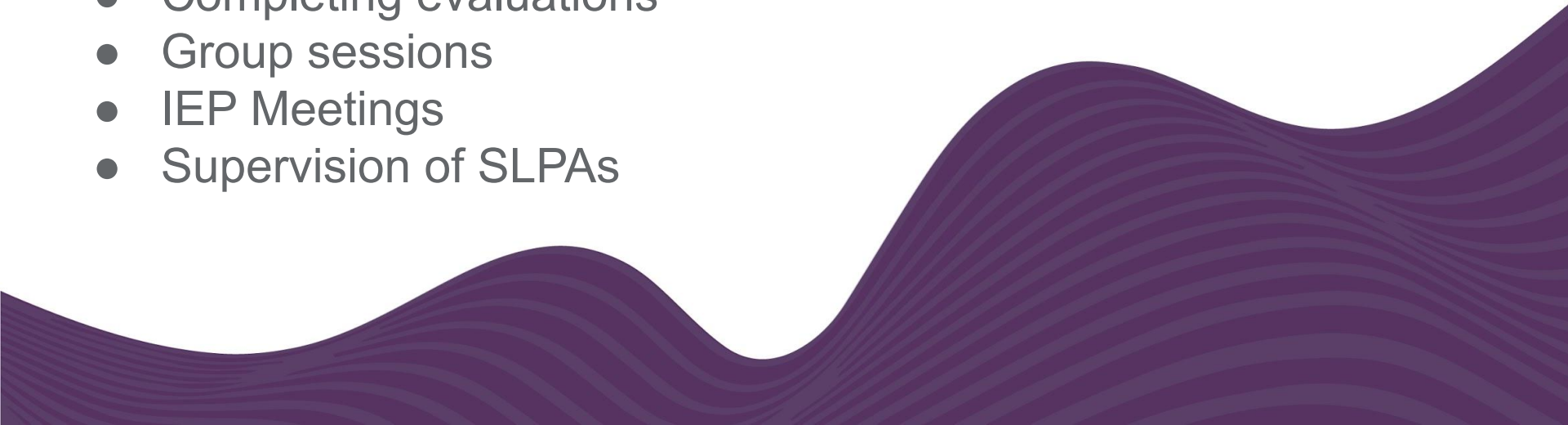**What to ask when signing on with a telepractice company?**

- What is the company's process for documentation and billing?
- Do they have a system that tracks billing/session info for you or do you keep track of it yourself?
- Do you seek out the referrals or does the company find the referrals and bring them to you?
- Does the company have an online contact log for communication with schools and families?

Important Questions

- Is there a system in place for secure transmission of student documents?
- Does the company onboard new schools (get them set up with the therapy platform) or are you responsible for onboarding new schools?
- Is there adequate support from the company to help you work with your students/clients?
- Does the company require you to use specific therapy materials, is there a library of activities, and/or training in how to work with your students? Does the company's approach to therapy feel like a good fit for you?

Addressing Various SLP Responsibilities Via Telepractice

In this section we will review:

- Maintaining appropriate licensure
- Completing evaluations
- Group sessions
- IEP Meetings
- Supervision of SLPAs

State Licensure

- The therapist must be licensed in the state where she/he is located as well as the state where the student is located

- Most teletherapists are licensed in multiple states to take advantage of referral opportunities

State Licensure

Licensure process:

- Simple for some states, simply provide proof of current state license and ASHA certification and pay a fee
- More complicated for others that require many steps, additional fingerprinting, etc.
- See the state board website for information on the licensing process for each particular state
- ASHA provides comprehensive information on state licensure requirements

Completing Evaluations

- **From ASHA:** **"**Telepractice is the application of telecommunications technology to the delivery of speech language pathology and audiology professional services at a distance by linking clinician to client or clinician to clinician for **assessment**, intervention, and/or consultation."
- **Clinical judgement** should be utilized in determining if a particular case warrants an on-site evaluation
- Be sure to **adhere to all standardized procedures** (insuring that any onsite caregivers who may be present are not providing cueing, etc.)
- **Follow all state guidelines** regarding administration of online evaluations

American Speech-Hearing-Language Association. (2015). *Telepractice Overview* [Professional Issues]. Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Telepractice/.

Completing Evaluations

Various methods for administering evaluations via telepractice:

- Online subscription based assessment program (such as Q-Global through Pearson)
- Purchased digital materials (formal assessment measures that are displayed onscreen)
- Hard copy testing materials you can show on-screen via a document camera (be sure to follow copyright rules and regulations regarding your testing materials)

*Be sure to state in your evaluation report that the assessment was completed via telepractice and any other relevant information regarding the student's participation

Group Sessions

- Most often students are seen individually in telepractice, but you can absolutely see groups of students online
- It works best to see small groups (such as two students) for a session
- Flexibility between you and the client will dictate the appropriate group size

Group Sessions

Methods:

- Students are in the same location (such as at a brick and mortar school) and are sitting side by side at one computer

- Students log on from different locations (different campuses or from their individual homes)

Attending IEP Meetings

Telepractitioners working in the schools typically:

- Complete their portion of the IEP paperwork in the school's online IEP system
- Attend IEP meetings via conference call/virtually

Attending IEP Meetings

- Calling in/conference call
  - In brick and mortar schools, the team would be sitting around a table and would call the therapist to attend via phone
  - In virtual academies/home schools, the admin. typically has a conference line system in place where everyone calls in to the meeting, may involve logging in to an online classroom where IEP documents can be displayed on the screen

- Attending virtually on-screen
  - Typically seen in brick and mortar schools, the team would have a computer there at the table and the therapist can be on-screen to attend in real time face-to-face

Supervision of SLPAs

From ASHA regarding Distance Supervision:

Direct supervision of SLPAs "…can include the supervising SLP viewing and communicating with the SLPA via telecommunication technology as the SLPA provides clinical services, because this allows the SLP to provide ongoing immediate feedback. Direct supervision does not include reviewing a taped session at a later time."

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2013). *Clinical Education and Supervision* [Professional Issues]. Retrieved from https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Professional-Issues/Clinical-Education-and-Supervision/.

Supervision of SLPAs

- Therapists can complete direct observation in real time
- SLPA sets up computer in the therapy room and logs on with the SLP
- The supervisor observes while the SLPA engages in treatment and can speak up to intervene/offer immediate assistance or feedback if needed

Supervision of SLPAs

- The SLP and SLPA meet face-to-face online to review therapy plans, screenings, progress toward goals, feedback on sessions, etc.

- Documents such as IEP paperwork can be shared on the screen for the SLPA and supervisor to review together

- The SLP can attend IEP meetings via phone or face-to-face on the computer screen and can meet with other school staff or parents to provide support as needed

Supervision of SLPAs

SLPA Supervision video demo

- SLP providing feedback to SLPA
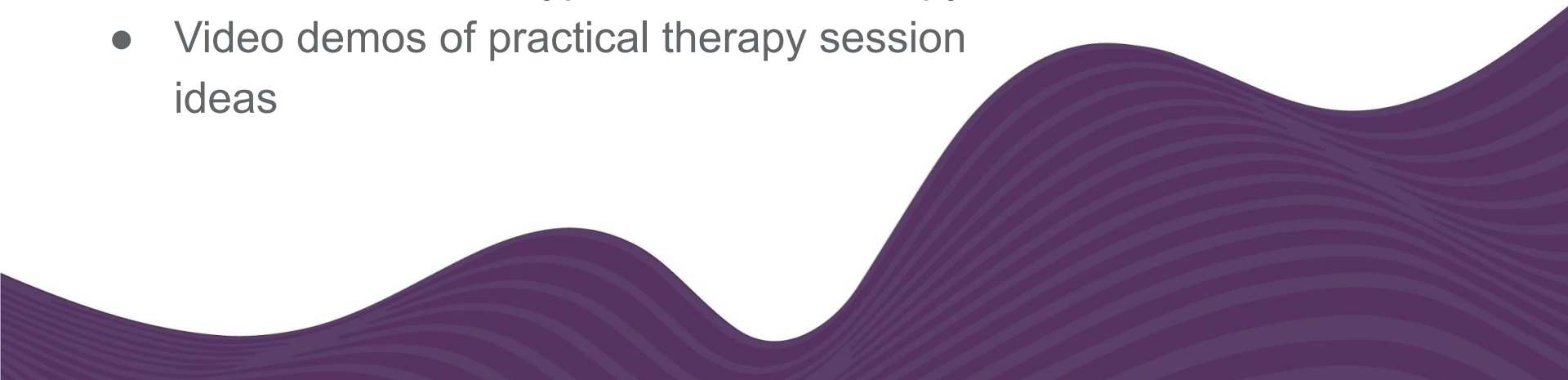
Communication in the Virtual World

- Maintain HIPAA / FERPA compliance
- Do not use full student names in email
- Ensure privacy when sending documents with student information
  - Password protect docs if sent as an attachment in an email
  - Or work with a company that has a secure online system in place for private transmission of documents

Communication in the Virtual World

- Connect with caregivers and the IEP team by phone/email/face to face online
- You can send materials electronically to parents/teachers for home practice and carry over
- Keep a written communication log (for phone/text/conversation) so that you have documentation for reference if needed
- You may have to take some extra time to establish rapport and get "buy in" from caregivers

Teletherapy Techniques and Strategies

In this section we will review:

- Strategies and approach to teletherapy sessions
- Overview of basic types of online therapy activities
- Video demos of practical therapy session ideas

Approach to Online Sessions

Not a different service, just a different model of service delivery!

Early Childhood

- Coaching with use of natural environment/caregivers
- Using tangible onsite materials
- Getting involved in circle time, group activities, etc.
- Utilizing on-screen games

Approach to Online Sessions

School Age

- Younger students: on-screen games/activities
- Older students: on-screen games/activities on their level as well as conversational style, incorporating academic materials where appropriate (collaboration with school)

Limited Verbal

- Guidance for device programming
- Coaching for use in daily routines
- On-screen activities to teach and reinforce functional vocabulary

Student Response

- Taps into their love of computer activities and intuitive ability with technology (digital natives)
- Some younger students that are difficult to engage onsite participate better because they are highly motivated by the computer activities
- Anecdotally- we have seen that older students are more willing to participate because the stigma is lessened, there is an increased comfort level, talking to others via the computer is the norm for students

Therapy Activities in Telepractice

Overview of Basic Activity Types

- **Static**: such as worksheets or word/sentence lists displayed on the screen
- **Dynamic**: interactive games to target speech and language goals
- **Videos**: can utilize social skills videos or story videos
- **Online whiteboard**: use a free online whiteboard or whiteboard option that may be built in to your meeting platform
- You don't have to be tied to the desk, you can **include movement activities** if appropriate

Therapy Activities in Telepractice

You can use your online meeting platform to increase the interactive nature of the sessions. Most meeting platforms have features that can be utilized to help your student engage in the activities on the screen.

Therapy Activities in Telepractice

Features might include:

- Allowing the client/student to have control of the mouse, so that he/she can click to engage in the game you are displaying on-screen

- Sharing the keyboard, which allows the student to type on the shared screen (you could bring up a Word doc and the student can type on the document on your computer)
- Pen tools that provide options for the therapist and student to draw or highlight items directly on the shared screen

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 1

- Small group session in the brick & mortar setting

- Use of basic static materials to target speech therapy goals

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 2

- Interactive materials (student is able to engage by clicking on the screen)

- Pictured example includes:
  - Boom Learning: "Outdoor Fun, Noun-Verb-Object Sentences" by the author Looks Like Language on boomlearning.com

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 3

- Webcam can be utilized for visual feedback

- Use of online whiteboard to create your own games that target goals and incorporate student interests

*There are free online whiteboards available on the web, or your meeting platform may include a whiteboard feature

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 4

- Interactive sessions, motivating games where the student is actively involved

- Incorporation of movement activities as appropriate
  - Activities shown are from the "My Articulation" app series by Sara Smith on iTunes

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 5

- Use of on screen writing tools (included in most all online meeting platforms)

- Pictured example includes:
  - Word and paragraph articulation lists from Home-Speech-Home.com

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 6

- Personalized story templates that you can individualize for your client/student

- Pictured example includes:
  - Personalized story templates from AutismSpeaks.org

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 7

- Use of videos in telepractice sessions

- Pictured example includes:
  - Social skills video from EverydaySpeech.com

- Use to target development of pragmatic language skills

Session Activity Examples

Example Video 8

- Use of videos in telepractice sessions

- Pictured example includes:
  - Story video from Literacyshed.com

- Use to target a variety of goals such as, language comprehension, story retell, generalization of artic skills, fluency, and so much more!
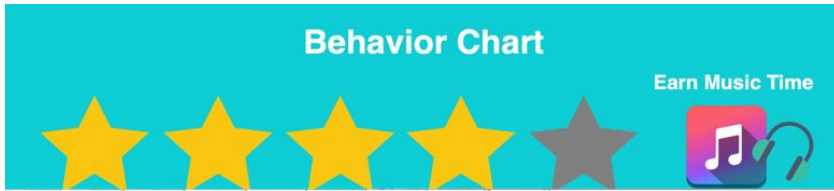
Telepractice Intervention Strategies

- Utilize the webcam as visual feedback, much like a mirror you might use onsite
- Include a variety of learning modalities: visual, audio, video, movement (if appropriate)
- Incorporate the caregiver when possible to provide guidance on prompting and carryover

Telepractice Intervention Strategies

Be strategic about the order of activities/what type of activities:

- May need to save a rewarding activity for the end of the session

- Might need to use a highly motivating activity at the onset to get the student participating

- Include "brain breaks", movement activities, etc. to keep the student engaged if needed

- Individualize your treatment approach based on the student's abilities just like you would if working onsite
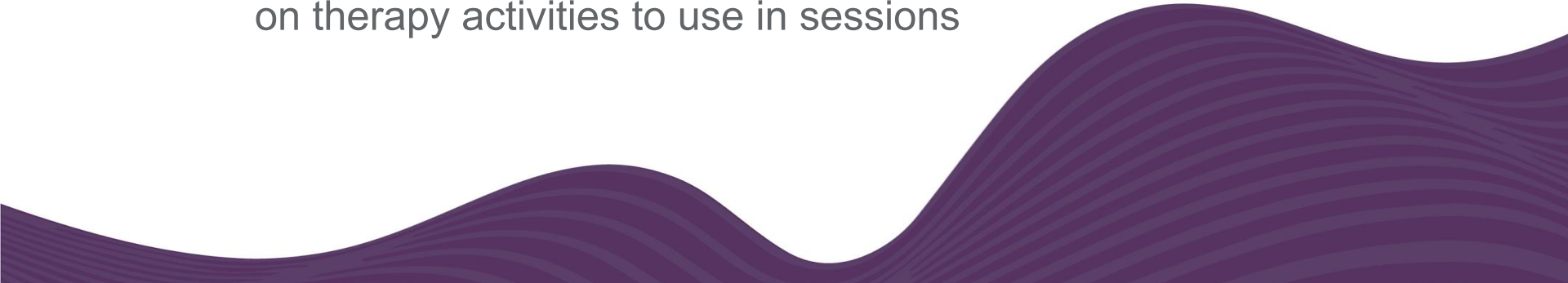
Telepractice Intervention Strategies

Behavior Chart

Earn Music Time

- Use of on-screen positive behavior strategies, behavior charts (such as use of a free online chart or create your own with an online whiteboard)

- Tailor activities to age and functional level- just because it's the computer does not mean you need to include child like games for every student

Telepractice Intervention Strategies

How do I find materials?

- You can discover activities on your own, there are so many speech therapy websites and game sites out there with useful materials
- Or you can work with a company that has an established library of resources and/or training and guidance on therapy activities to use in sessions

Common Questions

? Is the tech set up really complicated for telepractice?

? Do students respond well to online therapy, and do they make as much progress as in on-site therapy?

? Are you able to complete various SLP responsibilities via telepractice(attending IEP meetings, supervision, evaluations, etc.)?

? What kinds of activities can you use in online sessions?

Final Take-Aways

- Privacy, security, and connectivity are vital in establishing telepractice intervention

- With a proper foundation, telepractice can be an engaging and effective service delivery model

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www.electronic-therapy.com

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About Us

- Experts in special education related services
- Innovators in technology
- Pioneers of teletherapy
- Proudly changing lives and shaping futures as a teletherapy market leader

Diana Parafiniuk, M.S., CCC-SLP
Founder/Chief Marketing Officer

Harris Larney
Chief Executive Officer

Teletherapy Pioneers

E-Therapy has 20 Years of Teletherapy Experience

- E-Therapy is a national leader in Teletherapy.
- Providing Related Services since 2009, including:
  - Speech Therapy
  - Counseling/Social Work
  - Occupational Therapy
  - Physical Therapy
- E-Therapy has many years of experience providing intervention and related services for students (early education to 12th grade) throughout the United States.
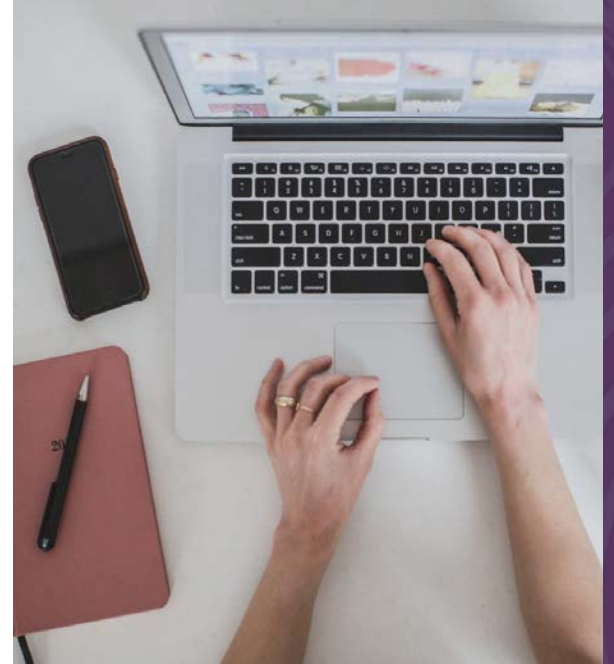
What is it like to work with E-Therapy?

E-Therapy offers therapists:

- Direct, ongoing support
- Easy to use online system
- Private and secure meetings
- Our one-of-a-kind STAR platform

E-Therapy

Our proprietary STAR platform is your virtual assistant!

- Document services
- Track student progress
- Automatic invoicing
- Helpful videos
- Therapist tutorials
- Library of digital resources
- and more!

E-Therapy

- E-Therapy provides a dedicated manager for each school
- We find the referrals for you
- Therapists can work the range of hours that makes sense for them
- E-Therapy has an innovative and responsive tech team
- We listen to therapist feedback and suggestions

Our Therapists

E-Therapy values you and the important work that you do with students every day. **We support you** so that you can be the hero therapist you were meant to be!

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