Telehealth for Vulnerable Populations

Opportunities in Telehealth

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Benefits and Opportunities of Telehealth when working with Parents and Children with Disabilities

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Telehealth: Early predictions?
Telehealth: Introduction and Strategies

• Over the years (& recently due to the pandemic), clinicians have adopted various technological solutions to meet the needs of those who don’t need a lapse in service or to leverage the paucity of resources.

• **Telehealth** can be defined as the delivery of health-related services and/or information via technology which offers a cost-effective means to provide therapy either *in addition to or in place of face-to-face sessions* (Boisvert, Lang, Andrianopoulos, & Boscardin, 2010).

• **Telehealth** is often used to address the barriers families face such as rural and underserved communities, lack of transportation.
Telehealth is needed

- **Telehealth** can be the only means or one of many ways to reach the family.
- Without telehealth, autism service providers often find they cannot accept referred patients who live outside of their BCBAs’ travel areas.
- Alternatively, some families need to drive hours from their homes so their children can access services. By providing BCBA supervision using telehealth, patients can receive care from local behavior interventionists with the BCBA supervision provided remotely most of the time. *This is a major benefit to people who live in more isolated communities or areas underserved by BCBAs.*
More Justification...

• For patients on the Autism Spectrum, finding the right balance of treatment and social interventions can be difficult, especially for families located in rural communities or those with unreliable transportation.

• Recent studies have shown that outcomes for these patients improve when telehealth programs are implemented in both the home and clinic-based settings. By increasing this access to care, behavioral triggers can be evaluated more quickly, and family members can receive more comprehensive training on how to support their children.
An Example of a HYBRID approach
Why Telehealth?

• **Synchronized sessions – in real time**
  - A review of services in 2018 focused on observation of children in their home environment. By working with the parents and focusing on behaviors as they were happening, remote therapists were able to provide education and interventional tactics to family members that improved or resolved these behaviors.
  - The University of Iowa Stead Family and Children’s Hospital studies on telehealth usage for behavioral interventions in Autism Spectrum Disorders.
Teaching opportunity to coach the

• Teach a new skill
  • Direct Instruction
  • Incidental Teaching
  • Naturalistic Teaching
  • FCT
Capture Behavior in Real Time

• Allows the clinician to observe or capture a behavior or event in real time in the natural setting that may not be present in clinic.
Synchronous or Asynchronous recordings. Sibling sharing?
Through Direct Observation.....

- We want to see the behavior in the actual environment.
- It may confirm or disconfirm our hypothesis.
- Select the dimension of the response you will measure (frequency, duration, etc.).
- Select a technique (Time Sampling, Event Recording, etc.)
- Determine the function—attention, escape, access to tangible, or automatic
The ABCs...Three Term Contingency..In real time or recorded

• To describe the context of behavior, we use the Three Term Contingency.
• We look at events that reliably occur immediately before and after the behavior to understand why it is happening.
• Seeing the behaviors in real time can assist us with developing the best intervention and coaching the parent.
Familiar? What if we could intervene?

• Consider this in terms of the three term contingency.

Antecedent → Response → Reinforcer
Shifting the focus.....to the Parent through Coaching

• While the patient was the center of all ABA treatment and common interventions, the focus on family allowed the practitioners to reinforce behavioral modification techniques by educating the family on how to implement them.

• By watching the patient in his or her natural environment while remaining remote, therapists were able to observe behaviors as the family experienced them and educated on methods to redirect and intervene.
Summary

• By increasing the frequency of supervision and communication with patients and caregivers via telehealth, BCBAs
  • See behaviors in real time
  • Observe recordings
  • Modify treatment plans and interventions more frequently and on the go
  • Reach more clients
  • Regularly conduct trainings with direct-support professionals and staff

• As a result of telehealth, the pace of treatment and progress may accelerate, with patient outcomes and satisfaction improved.
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Methods of Telehealth for Practitioners

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Types of Delivery Methods

• Synchronous- occurring at the same time, “live”
• Asynchronous- recording and viewing occur at different times, “recorded”
Various Methods for Teletherapy

• Synchronous direct therapy
• Synchronous Parent Coaching
• Synchronous Parent Training
• Asynchronous Parent Training
• Asynchronous Observation
Synchronous Direct Therapy

- Best for learners with instructional control
- Long-term clients
- Modeling for parents

(Kelly, 2020b)
Synchronous Parent Coaching

- FGRBI
- Loudspeaker or bug-in-ear

(Francis, 2020)
Synchronous Parent Training

- Planning
- Teaching
- Problem solving
- Reviewing

(Kelly, 2020a)
Asynchronous Parent Training

- Filling in knowledge gaps
- Rationale
- Explaining technical terms
- Illustrating programs

(Wiley, 2012)
Asynchronous Review for FBA

- In-the-moment observations
- Can observe “after business hours”
- Can observe at various locations

(dafty24776, 2009)
Example Workflow

Indirect FBA
- Interview caregivers
- Review caregiver-collected data

Direct FBA
- Observe caregiver/child interactions
  - Asynchronous
  - Synchronous

Asynchronous Parent Training
- Assign online lessons or create videos for parent to watch when they can

Direct Therapy
- Model for parent how to run intervention using teleconference software

Synchronous Parent Training
- Provide in-situ feedback
Other Resources

• Autism Navigator – https://www.autismnavigator.com
• Transition to Telehealth Series – Dr. Rachel Taylor on YouTube
• Vanderbilt Kennedy Center TRIAD – https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc
• Autism Speaks – https://www.autismspeaks.org
• UC Davis ADEPT Parent Training Modules – https://health.ucdavis.edu/mindinstitute/centers/cedd/cedd_adept.html
• Autism Partnership Foundation Free RBT Training Course – https://autismpartnershipfoundation.org/courses/rbt
References


Thank you!

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