



# **Introduction to Tele-Behavioral Health**

Elana M. Parker Merriweather, Ed.S, BC-TBH  
Director of Behavioral Health  
Medical Advocacy and Outreach/Copeland Clinic

# Objectives

Provide an overview of the administrative, technological, programmatic and clinical considerations of tele-behavioral health

Discuss common terminology used when providing distance services through multiple medians

List risk management considerations to assure privacy, confidentiality and compliance with HIPAA

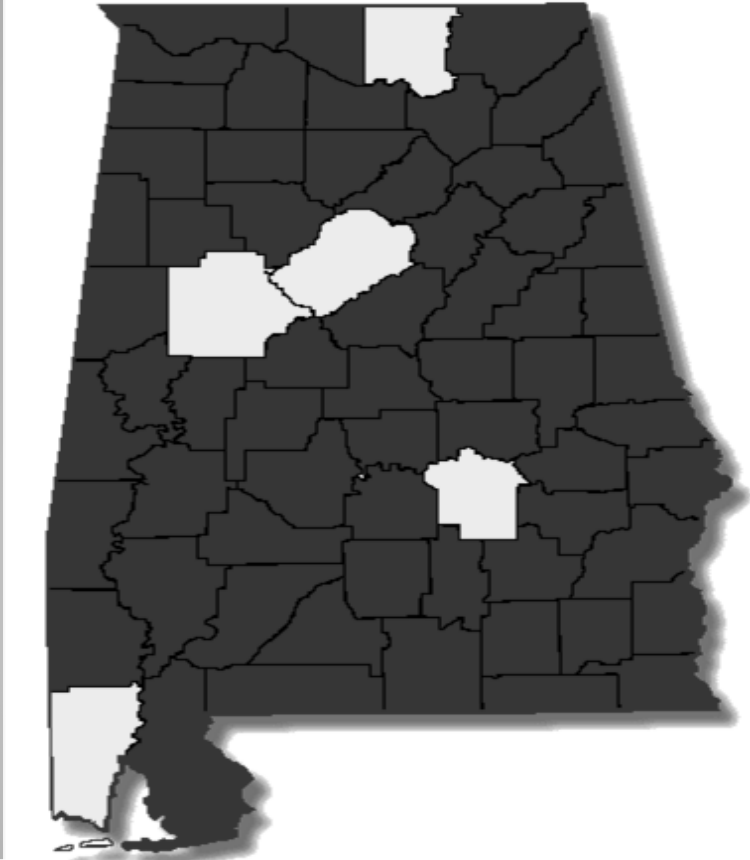
Explain how to assess patients and providers for fitness prior to utilizing tele-behavioral health medians

**Why Tele-behavioral Health?**

**Hospital Closings in Rural  
Communities**

**Mental Health Disparity in  
Minority Populations**

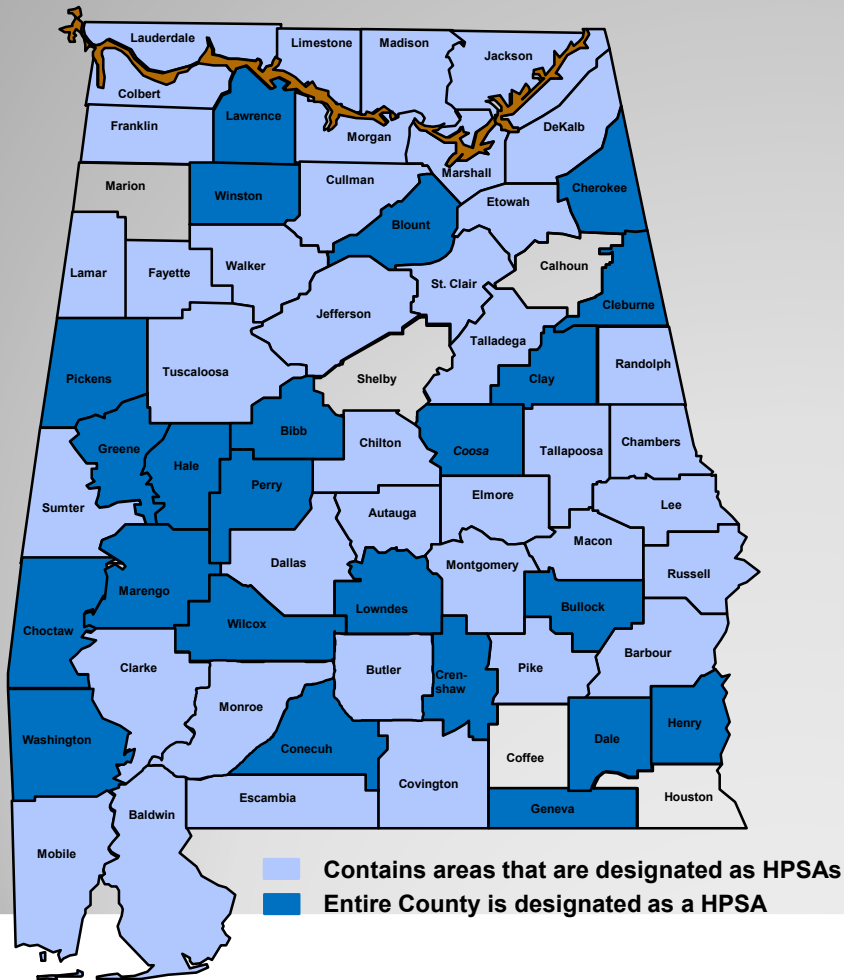
# Limited Public Transportation



Only 5 of Alabama's 67 counties have a full time public transportation system.

Other transportation systems offer limited coverage.

# Health Professional Shortage Areas



**62 of Alabama's 67 counties are HPSAs**

**Specialty care is even more limited.**

Source:  
[ADPH.org/ruralhealth](http://ADPH.org/ruralhealth)

# Other Challenges

- High rates of uninsured people in rural communities
- Stigma and perceptions about substance abuse and mental health in rural communities
- Access to technology and bandwidth capabilities/limitations in rural communities

# Possible Solutions



# The Evolution of Tele-Services

- Telehealth
- Telepsychiatry
- Telehealth (Primary Care)
- Telepharmacy
- ***Tele-Behavioral Health***



# What is Telehealth?

- Telehealth is used by healthcare professionals to provide healthcare services at a distance via telecommunication technologies. Telehealth includes a growing variety of applications and services using two-way video, email, wireless tools and other forms of telecommunications technology. Telehealth is not a separate medical specialty. It is a delivery tool or system.

# **What is Tele-behavioral Health?**

The remote delivery of behavioral health services, such as substance use and mental health screening assessments or consultations, over a telecommunication infrastructure. It allows providers to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients without the need for an in-person visit.

# Tele-behavioral Health Competencies

- The goal is to help clients! We meet them where they are and empower them to thrive and grow.
- Support the behavioral health profession by implementing evidence based practices, maintaining clinical professionalism, and being compliant with the law.

# Tele-behavioral Health Competencies

- Learn how to choose the medium of counseling which will best serve the needs of the client.
- Have a full understanding of the HIPAA, legal, and ethical concerns regarding effective use of tele-therapy and how to be compliant.

# **Tele-behavioral Health Competencies**

- Learn how to protect client information on all electronic equipment used during tele-behavioral health encounter
- Integration of the clients in-session healing and their out-of-session life.

# Type of Tele-behavioral Health Encounters

- Home Based Therapy: Allows patients/clients with behavioral health problems to receive consultations and psychotherapy in their homes through the use of secure technology equipment.
- Interactive Tele-behavioral Health: Allows tele-behavioral health providers and patients/clients to communicate in real time.

# Type of Tele-behavioral Health Encounters

- Community/agency setting, correctional institution, military installation, community health center, school, detention center, rural clinic, or hospital setting

# Terms in Tele-behavioral Health

- Hub Clinical Site - Predominantly urban telehealth setting where one health care provider is seeing the patient/client at a distance while consulting with a collaborating provider onsite
- Satellite Clinic Site - Predominantly rural telehealth site where the patient/client interacts with the health care provider at a hub clinic site



# Terms in Tele-behavioral Health

- Telehealth Behavioral Health Support Specialist- is a staff member that is onsite with the patient who coordinates tasks such as facilitating equipment connectivity, ensuring privacy and security measures, completing screening documents.

# Tele-behavioral Health Medians

- Desktop
- Laptop
- Tablet
- Cell Phone

# Type of Tele-behavioral Health Modalities

- Email
- Video Conferencing
- Chat
- Navigator/Consultant
- Self Help Information Line



**24/7 Helpline**  
**844-307-1760**

Are you, or a family member, struggling with addiction or in need of support?  
Do you prefer chat? Live chat is available through our website: [www.rosshelpline-tx.org](http://www.rosshelpline-tx.org)  
Want to send an email? Send us a message: [helpline-tx.als@gmail.com](mailto:helpline-tx.als@gmail.com)  
Every call, live chat and email is answered by a person in recovery at:  
**RECOVERY ORGANIZATION OF SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**  
**R.O.S.S.**

**Addiction is a disease, not a moral failing.**  
All services are confidential and free, made possible through funding from ADWA and SAMHSA.



# **Tele-behavioral Health Technology**

# Equipment



# Technology Considerations

- HIPAA
- Encryption
- Bandwidth
- Firewalls
- Camera and Microphone
- Computer Security
- Equipment Error vs. User Error

# **Administrative and Programmatic Considerations**

- Service needs of patients/clients
- Agency capability and infrastructure
- Staffing training and competency level
- Outreach capacity

# Administrative and Programmatic Considerations

- Staff training
- Existing Services
- Performance monitoring
- Program planning and development
- *Special program needs and adaptability*



# Behavioral Health Integration

Screenings/Assessments Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Initial Intake Screenings

Comprehensive and Individualized Assessments

Patient/Client Consultations

Individual and Group Psychotherapy

Interactive Training

Clinical Case Staffing's/Treatment Team

**Provider Considerations:  
Assessing Patients and  
Providers for Fit**

# **The Role of the Tele-behavioral Health Provider**

- Screen individuals seeking tele-behavioral health services for appropriateness to receive services through distance methods
- Document the initial assessment and any online interactions

# **The Role of the Tele-behavioral Health Provider**

- Consider delivering services face to face first for screening, assessment and security purposes
- Refer and recommend the individual to another provider who can accommodate the delivery method

# **The Role of the Tele-behavioral Health Provider**

- Assess where and when distance counseling should not be done
- Anywhere that does not allow for privacy or manageable distractions
- Recommend to not use any unsecure networks or devices
- Anywhere the client would not be able to access emergency services if needed

# **Technological Standards Assessing for Fit**

- Ensure that any electronic means that are used are in compliance with current regulatory standards
- Use encryption security for all digital technology communications for therapeutic services

# Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Is there a mutual understanding around compliance with HIPAA standards for privacy and confidentiality
- Availability of secure back-up communications resulting from potential connectivity issues or disconnect possibilities

# **Provider Standards: Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines**

- Assess whether the provider has been trained to provide distance services
- Does the provider and patient/client know how to use the preferred method of technology



# Assessing for Fit Across Disciplines

- Warnings around the potential compromises of entering private information with a public computer that is on a shared network
- Warnings around the use of auto-remember user names and passwords

# Assessing for Therapeutic Fit

- Location Appropriateness
  - Safety and Security
  - Privacy and Confidentiality
  - Access to Support Services
  - Access to Emergency Resources

# **Benefits of Tele-behavioral Health**

- Every patient/client has the option, and right, to see the provider in person
- Most patients found the technology non-disruptive and not significantly different than traditional face to face office visits

# **Benefits of Tele-behavioral Health**

- Patients/Clients did not view telemedicine as negatively impacting the therapeutic relationship
- Improve access to behavioral health services including substance abuse and mental health treatment services

# Tele-behavioral Health Takeaway#1:

- Organize your internal planning team
  - Administration
  - Program
  - Information Technology
  - Clinical
  - Support Staff

Ongoing planning and monitoring

# Tele-behavioral Health Takeaway#2:

- *Social media, avatar programs, and automated programs are intentionally not encouraged due to the lack of PHI security using online methods*
- “Lay eyes” on the client at least once prior to exclusively using distance methods

# **Tele-behavioral Health Takeaway#3:**

- Linkages to community behavioral health providers
- Offer options for assistance to vetted self-help resources and hotlines



# The Final Tele-behavioral Health Session



# DIAL 211

## Need Help? Want to Help?

Food, Shelter, Clothing & More  
or visit [www.211ConnectsAlabama.org](http://www.211ConnectsAlabama.org)



Are you, or a family member, struggling with addiction or in need of support?

Do you prefer chat? Live chat is available through our website: [www.rosshelpline-tu.org](http://www.rosshelpline-tu.org)

Want to send an email? Send us a message: [helpline4u.als@gmail.com](mailto:helpline4u.als@gmail.com)

Every call, live chat and email is answered by a person in recovery at:

RECOVERY ORGANIZATION OF SUPPORT SPECIALISTS  
R.O.S.S.

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# References and Acknowledgements

- <http://maoi.org/get-connected/telehealth-resource-center/>
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- <https://telehealth.org/>

# Contact Us



**Elana M. Parker Merriweather,  
Director of Behavioral Health**

[emerriweather@maoi.org](mailto:emerriweather@maoi.org)

**Sharonda Bonner, Tele-  
behavioral Health Support  
Specialist**

[sbonner@maoi.org](mailto:sbonner@maoi.org)



**Billy Sample, Program Manager  
MAO Telehealth Resource Center**

[bsample@maoi.org](mailto:bsample@maoi.org)