

# PRO BONO COUNSELING PROJECT

March 19, 2020

## **Resources for Teletherapy During the COVID-19 Outbreak**

*Please note: This is an evolving situation, and information is frequently changing. We will make every effort to update this resource as we are able, but, it is prudent to check with your licensing board, the US Department of Health and Human Services, your professional organizations, the Centers for Disease Control, and other trusted information sources for the most up-to-date information. This information is provided as a resource, and is not intended as an endorsement of any specific program or product.*

As always, it is important to remain ethical and compliant when practicing your mental health discipline, and that remains so even during these uncertain times. Make sure to familiarize yourself with state laws regarding informed consent, record-keeping, your responsibilities, and your client responsibilities.

### **Getting Started**

- Simple Practice is offering a free 1-CEU course for a “quick start” on Teletherapy: <https://www.simplepracticelearning.com/courses/telehealth-legal-ethical>
- Person Centered Technology is offering an 8 CEU course at a discount: <https://personcenteredtech.com/tmh/starter/>
- Person Centered Technology also has a 17 CEU certification: <https://personcenteredtech.com/tmh/>
- SAMHSA issued “TIP 60: Using Technology-Based Therapeutic Tools in Behavioral Health Services.” The guide may be found at: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-60-Using-Technology-Based-Therapeutic-Tools-in-Behavioral-Health-Services/SMA15-4924>
- PESI is offering a 12 hour Teletherapy training for free with the code: TELEFREE. <https://catalog.pesi.com/item/52191/>

### **Business Associate Agreements (BAA)**

- VSee offers a free BAA to solo practitioners. <https://vsee.com>

### **Teletherapy Platforms**

*Note: we are hearing reports that some platforms (especially ones that are free) are having difficulty keeping up with the increased demand).*

- [Doxy.me](https://www.doxy.me/): Free, offers a BAA with basic package
- THERA-Link: <https://www.thera-link.com/>
- Simple Practice: <https://www.simplepractice.com/>
- Google Suite: Offers a BAA for use with “Google Hangouts” if you pay for [GSuite for Business](https://www.google.com/a/business/)
- Zoom for Telehealth requires a minimum of 10 host licenses to offer a BAA. <https://zoom.us/healthcare>

## New Changes in Regulations

- The US Department of Health and Human Services is using discretion in enforcement of HIPAA requirements related to telehealth. While we continue to advise the use of HIPAA compliant platforms, this guidance is helpful to understand in this emerging situation: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html>
- Medicare and Medicaid are now allowing providers to bill for teletherapy:
  - Medicare: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>
  - Medicaid: <https://mmcp.health.maryland.gov/Pages/telehealth.aspx>

## Additional Resources:

- Telehealth Resource Centers: Provide assistance, education, and information to organizations and individuals who are actively providing or interested in providing health care at a distance. Their purpose is to assist in expanding the availability of health care to rural and underserved populations. And because they are federally funded, the assistance they provide is generally free of charge. <https://www.telehealthresourcecenter.org/>
  - Mid Atlantic Telehealth Resource Center: <https://www.matrc.org/>
- The Maryland Health Care Commission provides links to general questions regarding providing telemedicine including a readiness assessment guide: [https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit\\_telemedicine/hit\\_telemedicine.aspx](https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/hit_telemedicine.aspx)

## Discipline Specific Guidance

- American Psychiatric Association: The American Psychiatric Association (APA) along with the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), issued "Best Practices in Videoconferencing Based Telemental Health" a guide for behavioral health providers who want to do telemental health, including telepsychiatry. The guide may be found at: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/telepsychiatry/blog/apa-and-ata-release-new-telemental-health-guide>
- Social Work: A guide titled "Technology in Social Work Practice" can be found at: <https://www.aswb.org/news/technology-standards-in-social-work-practice/>
- Association of American Marriage and Family Therapists best practices for online therapy: [https://www.aamft.org/Documents/Products/AAMFT\\_Best\\_Practices\\_for\\_Online\\_MFT.pdf](https://www.aamft.org/Documents/Products/AAMFT_Best_Practices_for_Online_MFT.pdf)
- National Board for Certified Counselors Policy on Distance Counseling: <https://www.nbcc.org/Assets/Ethics/NBCCPolicyRegardingPracticeofDistanceCounselingBoard.pdf>
- Maryland regulations for Social Workers: <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=10.42.10>
- Maryland regulations for Professional Counselors: <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=10.58.06>
- Maryland regulations for Physicians: <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/COMAR/SubtitleSearch.aspx?search=10.32.05>