[Amy] Once again, welcome to our webinar today. It's about Telepractice: What You Need to Know. Practical Application in Pediatrics. Our presenters today are Sara Smith and Diana Parafiniuk. Sara is a Speech Language Pathologist and Lead Product Manager with E-Therapy. She has worked extensively with children and adults on the autism spectrum and in a variety of settings including telepractice. Sara is an independent app developer and has several speech therapy apps available on iTunes. She currently works with e-therapy to develop new materials and to help tell therapists provide effective sessions for their students. Diana Parafiniuk is the Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer for E-Therapy. She manages E-Therapy's marketing team, oversees and supports operations and supervises contractors, aides and therapists. Diana is also a bilingual SLP with extensive experience providing speech and language services to both online and brick and mortar schools across the US. She also served as an adjunct professor at Northern Arizona University, teaching classes in SLPA childhood communication disorders and screening and treatment. And I believe that Diana is going to start us off today. So Diana, I turn over the floor to you. You can go ahead and click your mic on.

[Diana] Thank you so much. Very much appreciate the introduction. Welcome everybody. We're very glad to have you and be hosting and presenting Telepractice: What You Need to Know. Practical Application in Pediatrics. So again, thanks so much for joining our presentation today. So let's get started. We're gonna overview just a few of our learning outcomes for you today and what we will be discussing after this course, you should be able to list at least three reasons why telepractice is being implemented in the field of speech pathology, identify the basic technology set up requirements for engaging in telepractice, identify at least three examples of online activities that can be utilized in telepractice sessions. Sara Smith will be addressing most of the second part of this presentation and she'll be outlining a lot of those online
activities, which I know that you will all really enjoy. So just a brief outline. We’ll be doing an overview of telepractice and guiding principles, tech requirements for telepractice and how to get started. Completing your SLP responsibilities via telepractice and we’re gonna discuss teletherapy techniques and practical examples. We really wanted to provide an overall in depth level and a high level as well of telepractice, the experience as an SLP and participating in your professional practice of what teletherapy looks like for you and your clients. So as we dive in here, I’m sure many of you are already familiar with teletherapy or telepractice and for those of you that are new to the profession and just kind of diving in to teletherapy and telepractice. Just from the basics of what is telepractice. What does it involve? It involves the delivery of speech, social work, counseling, occupational, physical therapy services, online via two-way video conferencing or video chat.

So as we are all becoming very more comfortable in the digital space, it’s very much our experience today. Teletherapy links are licensed therapists to schools and students who otherwise have difficulty receiving services. And teletherapy is being used in the assessments and diagnostics and treatments as well of addressing a wide range of disorders. So it just does not only apply to therapy directly, but does also apply to assessments and diagnostics as well. So for all of you who are joining us today, why telepractice, which as I’m sure where your interest lies. There is an increasing problem of a lack of special ed service providers as you all know in our field across the country. There’s just not enough of us. So how do we reach the kids? How do we get to them? How do we make sure that we can get to all the underserved students? And teletherapy really does bridge that gap. It allows us to be able to connect with students in a way that otherwise, we wouldn’t be able to despite their location. It creates the ability to reach more clients as much as possible as we can that aren’t reliant on transportation and alternative school programs and things like that where we cannot reach them and we’re able to reach them, we really are able to bridge the gap through telepractice. And really necessity is the mother of invention here. And that is where this
is all stem from is how can we best solve the problems to be able to reach the students, reach the clients, reach the populations that don't have access to continued service or any services at all with continuity and professional licensed therapists. Emerging research does show that teletherapy can be just as effective as onsite therapy and as you all know in our field of speech language pathology, it's always good to have continued evidence-based practices that allow us to be able to write research that shows how our different areas of practice within our field are supported. Telepractice connects practitioners with specific experience to students with certain speech language disorders, providing you the opportunity to reach people with specific needs where your niche or your professional expertise comes into play. It allows the therapist to have more flexibility.

So no more commuting time, no more losing time during your day when you could have been able to reach more people in order to be able to provide your services. It's a better use of our time in terms of being able to provide our service instead of being lost in our commute. So some common questions just for our basic overall practices in the realm of telepractice and teletherapy. Is the text set up really complicated for telepractice? We're gonna address that a little bit later in this presentation. Do students respond well to online therapy and do they make as much progress as in onsite therapy? We will touch on that as well and provide some research base and some survey information on that. Are you able to complete various SLP responsibilities via telepractice? Are you able to attend meetings? Are you able to supervise? Are you able to conduct evaluations? We'll discuss that as well.

What kind of activities can you use in your online sessions? And we have quite a few to demonstrate for you here today. So I think you'll really enjoy those as well. So let's just kind of go back a little bit in our history here as SLPs. For those of you who are new to the field, who may not know, those of you who are just kind of getting started and want more information and those of you who already do know, this'll just be a review or
recap. But teletherapy exactly is not a new concept if you think about how we have really interacted and communicated over space and time. In the 70s, studies looked at the efficacy of doing treatment over the telephone when we weren't able to actually get to the people that we needed to reach. And what did that look like? So this has been happening for quite some time and is a natural evolution. In the late 80s, researchers in our field began to explore the use of the telephone and television, “technology” for use with clients in remote areas and what did that look like and how could we gain more data and information regarding our findings and was that a suitable way to be working with our clients? In the early 2000s is when things really began to change. We had our Internet video conferencing systems.

So before the Internet was able to keep up with us, we were working with really expensive systems of video conferencing where one side had to have a video conferencing unit and the other side had to have a video conferencing unit. We could see each other but it wasn't as it much of an interactive experience as we have today with keyboard and mouse and drawing on screens and things like that. And so it really was more of a video experience in that time and as technology evolved and as we were able to become more savvy in our tech space, we've really gotten to a better telepractice experience with using our online communication platforms of interactive experience.

And in 2005, ASHA approved telepractice as our service delivery model to be accepted and we really wanna focus in on that a little bit later. We'll discuss that even though we're doing telepractice, how it does not replace any sort of professional guidelines that we use. So we are gonna talk about that as well. They do have a guiding document, professional issues in telepractice for speech language pathologists that we always would like you to refer to and be able to outline the important pieces of telepractice in our fields and how to incorporate that in your practice. So as I mentioned a little bit earlier before, the use of telepractice does not remove any
existing responsibilities in delivering services. I do really wanna point that out. Including adherence to the code of ethics, our scope of practice, state and federal laws, our licensure, HIPAA and ASHA policy documents on professional practices. The quality of services delivered via telepractice must be consistent with the quality of services delivered onsite, physically in a location. I don’t exactly wanna say face to face because now we are able to do face to face. You can see our videos real time. We exchange our communication real time. And so just a little tweak on that from that perspective. ASHA and telepractice. What we wanna talk about a little bit here. ASHA has determined that telepractice is appropriate for application and is helpful in overcoming barriers of access, which we talked about previously.

Those barriers can be distance, unavailability of professionals in the area where students or clients need to see somebody. Impaired mobility where people really just can't get to a clinic, they can't go out, they can't be able to access their provider. It can extend clinical services to remote and rural areas, underserved populations, culturally and linguistically diverse populations as well and also inner city equally. Sometimes we think inner city doesn't need teletherapy, but in all reality, there's really just not enough providers everywhere and there's also commute time involved in that space as well which can be really bogged down in difficult for families and difficult for clients to be able to get the therapists that they need to see.

So keep that all in mind. As we move on a little bit more through this presentation, we're talking about evidence-based practice, which is targeting our functional outcomes, making sure that we have specific actions and going through the process of making sure that we are incorporating evidence-based practice within our practice, understanding how teletherapy can support our clients, being able to pull from research and data, making sure that we understand that research and data. So just the basic understanding of evidence-based practice, which is the integration of our clinical expertise and our expert paired opinion, our external scientific evidence which we
always need and our client patient caregiver perspective to provide the high quality services reflecting the interest, values and needs and choices of the individuals we serve. So very important. Hopefully you’re all able to see the Venn diagram on the screen showing where they all converge and what is evidence-based practice and why it is important to be able to incorporate these three pieces to be able to create a foundation for our fields so that we have more reliability in what it is that we’re doing and providing. So telepractice and evidence-based practice. Just a little bit more in depth on that. How has that been reviewed and discussed? Well, we have one study, the systematic review of virtual speech therapists for speech disorders.

And interestingly, they reported that the effectiveness of computers as a whole was more engaging type of intervention with more tools to enrich the intervention programs when it came to children that were working through this service delivery. What’s really important about this is even though the modality is through the computer and that they do have more tools and that they can enrich the intervention experience and the therapy experience, we always wanna remember that it’s emphasized by the SLP. The SLP is the one providing the intervention and the teletherapy and the modality is simply the telepractice. So always remember, sometimes it gets easy to kind of fall back on our haunches and think that maybe the digital experience is doing the job and at the end of the day, it’s still our clinical experience, it’s still our professional background that drives the therapy and that is engaging as well with the student. So please remember that.

So additionally, we point to the International Journal of Rehabilitation, which did a three-year study between the years of 2009 and 2012 with the Waldo County General Hospital and they are also very involved in the field of telepractice and working with their clients and children. And what they were looking at was traditional tabletop therapy versus telepractice, which is really important and in as many studies as we can collect and do and conduct over time is always good for us to refer to. And their key
findings were that children who receive speech therapy via telepractice achieve the best outcomes, even outperforming the national benchmarks for children from similar diagnostic and demographic backgrounds. So this three-year study again provides evidence-based practice to support within our field of speech language pathology. So just wanna pull in some examples of how you can incorporate EBP, how this supports your practice and how this also supports teletherapy as well. Lastly, I wanna talk about just a survey that ASHA conducted. It was a survey study of clinical insights into SLP telepractice. And the background of this was, it was done in 2016 and they administered a survey to speech language pathologists that were engaged in telepractice and they explored various telepractice issues and therapist client attitudes about their experience with telepractice. What was the attitude of the client?

And the outcomes were that 96% of the respondents reported that clients were satisfied with telepractice, which is wonderful and 71% of respondents said telepractice improved their ability to work with their clients. So as you can see, teletherapy is really prominent right now in our space and it’s really wonderful that you're participating in this presentation and that we can talk about this more extensively. So the digital age always keeps us challenged and our field is always evolving.

So just a little side note here. When I began doing teletherapy in the field of telepractice, it was so new. It took a lot of convincing people on what telepractice was. What is teletherapy? How does this look? How can you work with your students? How can you say that this is gonna support what we need? And there was so much education involved and there still is education involved in that experience. But because we are where we are in this digital space and age, that has become more accepted in space and time. And really our job now as speech language pathologists is to really make sure that we have dialed in our practice using telepractice and being able to be successful within that. And not so much a focus on just the convincing of maybe this
could be a good thing because we have moved so far ahead and we have evolved so much in this field. And so the trends are changing in healthcare and education. Our attitudes in our fields are changing in education and healthcare. It makes sense for many people today to be able to engage in this type of service delivery model. People are more comfortable now with technology as a whole. It doesn't seem as foreign, even though many of us are digital immigrants, as we say, the generations of children are all digital natives. The field of speech pathology is evolving and we must evolve with it of course and you all being here today, obviously are part of that evolution. So our tech requirements in this section, we're gonna touch on what you need for telepractice, setting up your telepractice office, the ins and outs of getting started, which I'm sure many of you are very interested in knowing. So what's the need? What should you have?

You need a computer and a laptop or a desktop, clearly. A webcam. You wanna utilize one that’s either built into the computer or you can use an external camera and a really high quality headset. It’s not completely essential, but it does blackout noise and makes a more streamlined experience for your client on the other end. You need a good Internet connection. This is key. We do not wanna experience breaks in service during our sessions. And of course what you have on your end, your student or your clients should have on their end and it should be the same. So, some important pointers, your platform of choice. What are we going to do?

So you need to use a platform that is HIPPA compliant, it’s private, secure, password protected sessions that it meets all your standards of encryption for HIPAA compliance. And I do wanna address the typically free online video conference platforms do not have that level of security. So be wary of anything free to support your practice and do your due diligence. Easy to use. It should be easy to use for you and it should be easy to use for your client or your student. If it’s too clunky, it’s not gonna work. If you can’t navigate with it, it’s not gonna work. You wanna make sure that it fits
your need and is easy for you. Some platforms might be easier for you than they are for others. So do your research and figure out which one works best for you. Is it conducive to your needs? Does it include specific features like an online whiteboard or an online screen pen tool? Can you share your screen? Does it have versatility? Are you able to use it easily? Are there other additional added features that come with your subscription? Are they easy for you to incorporate? So look at all of those things and make sure that that is conducive to what you are able to use for your practice. So this is actually important. We kind of maybe just think about this like, oh, sure, for sure. I know I can do this. I set at my office, it's fine. I'm ready to go.

But some things that you really do wanna pay attention to, which is you don't wanna get too comfy just because you’re working from a home setting or a private office setting. So please keep these important items in mind. Private space is required. This is very important. These sessions are confidential and private. Please be aware of that. That nobody’s coming in and out of your space or that it's not some sectioned off space in a bigger room. Please pay attention to that. Computer at a table or desk. So even though you're working from a laptop, it’s not on your lap and it’s not unsteady. Be aware of what your client is experiencing on their side. They can be on a roller coaster on their side if you're moving all over the place.

Make sure that your background is non-distracting, that you are professional and that you have your licenses displayed. Make sure that you have adequate lighting. They need to make sure that they can see your face. Please do not be shadowed or silhouetted. Back lighting is terrible and you will become invisible. So please make sure that you are aware of all of your lighting needs and if you are unsure, you can always do tests with people on the side. And additionally, take care of yourself as well. Sitting all day is hard. Make sure that you’re comfortable. Make sure that you have a good standing desk for some. You have some mobility and being able to move around. Even though we work remote, we’re still professionals. So please present that way. So for
those of you who might not know, we do work in all types of settings with all types of clients. We can work anywhere from early childhood to geriatrics. This particular presentation is focusing on pediatrics. So in early childhood settings, caregiving settings, in-home settings, early intervention programs, head start settings, school age settings, brick and mortar schools, virtual academy schools, cyber schools, homeschool students. Telepractice does not limit with who you can work with and who you cannot work with. But please be advised that appropriateness is another issue and your clinical expertise to determine who is and what is the best service modality for your client comes into play.

So please pay attention to that. Typically, students are referred through a school program and you can set up a system directly with that school. You can see students privately, you can contract directly with your client. So we're gonna kind of dig in to what that whole piece looks like for you here on getting started. So getting started and adding telepractice. So the question is how to get started and are you going to add telepractice to your existing practice? If so, what, and how? How are you thinking of doing this? Let’s look at that. There are a few ways. You can create your own private practice and let’s look at that. What does that entail? Setting up your own business. Your LLC is always a good idea. Completing the necessary paperwork to substantiate your LLC and your business negotiations so that you have everything in line with what you need. Promoting yourself and or your company.

So, marketing and getting yourself out there. What does that entail? Doing the necessary research of how to reach people who might need your services. Attending workshops and conferences. This is the most important part. We wanna learn as much as we can to be able to support our practice. Go to workshops that talk about teletherapy. How to incorporate it, how to access it, how to use it, what are the ins and outs, what are the dues and do nots. Collect as much data as you can and from there, you can go out and be able to talk about what telepractice is to your clients and be
able to incorporate that better within your professional practice that you're setting up. Set up your own billing and documentation process. This is very important. It is also very challenging. Do your homework. Make sure that you have good invoicing system to track all of your sessions. Make sure that your documentation is on. Make sure that you're not over-billing anybody. Please pay attention to all of those things. You're also providing therapy services, so there's a fine balance between invoicing and billing and then still being the therapist.

So pay attention to that. Make sure to dot your i’s and cross your t’s for any professional assistance you may need in setting up your business like we talked about here. This is a really important piece, this is something that you should take time and dedication and put towards. This is not something that you should do in a hurry and you wanna make sure that you're professional about it all the way through. Another option is to work with an established telepractice company which sometimes when starting out could be the easiest way for you to look at being able to begin your practice. You have to find the balance for yourself, what works for you best. Maybe it's that you do that and you gain more information and you branch off on your own. Maybe it’s that you don't need to do that and you feel confident about doing your own practice.

Either way, make sure that all of these pieces are in place for yourself so that you are covered and that you feel good about you, yourself and your abilities and providing teletherapy. So if you're working with an established company, important questions to ask. What is the company's process for documentation and billing the same as what you would do for yourself? So really do your due diligence. Are they documenting? Are they billing correctly? How does that work? What does that look like for you? Do they have a system that tracks sessions and billing? Do you have to do that aside and apart from them or are they able to do it with you? Are they able to show you how? Do you seek out the referrals or does the company provide those for you? Do you have
information beforehand? How does that look for you to be able to build your practice? Does the company have an online contact log? So if you’re communicating with your clients or with your schools, is it trackable? Are you able to provide and support your contact communication with who you’re working with and what you’re doing? Continuing. Is there a system in place for secure transmission of student documents? This is very important. We are dealing with confidential information. We wanna make sure that the transmission of this information is secure. Make sure that the company that you’re working with is making that secure.

Does the company onboard these schools and get them set up or are you left in the wind and not knowing what to do and have to do that yourself? If you are, what are you responsible for? Is there adequate support for you if you’re working with a company? Are you able to reach people and discuss? Are there materials for you to work with? Are there activities and are there trainings in place where you feel like if you don’t know something, you have the ability to access a training? Does the company’s approach to therapy feel like a good fit for you? And there are many out there. And so really take all of these questions and make a checklist for yourself. What does that look like for you? Is one better than the other? Does one have something that you enjoy more, that adds to your practice or doesn’t? How does that play out for you? These are all very important items to think about when you’re branching off into your teletherapy practice for the first time. And if you have questions, are you able to ask those questions and feel comfortable about the questions you’re asking and getting the appropriate responses that you need? And Sara, I do believe is taking over from here. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to do this presentation for you all today and Sara, I am going to hand you over the mic.

- [Sara] Next section, we’re going to talk about how we can address various SLP responsibilities via telepractice. We will look at licensure, evaluations, group sessions, IEP meetings and supervision responsibilities. So when working in telepractice, you are
not bound by location. You may be located in the same state as your client or student or you may live in different states. You just have to be licensed in the state where you reside and the state where the student is located. And most teletherapists are licensed in multiple states because it allows you the opportunity to get more student referrals. For example, I live in North Carolina and I’ve worked online with students in Texas and California. And then I was also licensed in South Carolina because I worked onsite with some students there. So it’s totally possible to be licensed in a few or even several states. The licensure process. You can go to the state board website for the site where you are looking to get licensed and they should have forms there that you can fill out to begin that licensing process. ASHA also has comprehensive information about state requirements on their site.

And of course, some states are easier than others. Some you just fill out a basic form, pay a fee, and you’re licensed within a few weeks. Others are more involved and take longer, but once you have that initial license, it’s typically pretty easy to renew and keep it active after that kind of initial hurdle of acquiring the license. Let’s look at evaluations. Assessment is part of the telepractice model as cited here by ASHA. You of course do want to use clinical judgment in determining if an onsite evaluation is warranted in special circumstances. But it works well to complete online evaluations for most students. Be sure to always adhere to all standardized procedures and in telepractice, you may have to take special consideration to make sure that there isn’t a caregiver in the room that you can’t see who might be inadvertently giving the student cues.

So be mindful of that and be sure to follow all state guidelines regarding administration of evaluations via telepractice. So how do you complete an assessment online? There are a few different methods. You can use an online subscription-based program where you pay for access to standardized online evaluation materials. So the stimulus book pages are all displayed on the screen and you administer the test just as you would on
onsite. It’s just that you’re using the screen to display the items digitally. Or instead of doing a monthly or yearly subscription to get access to materials, you can purchase a digital testing battery. So you might order the testing battery and receive it in the form of a thumb drive, for example. And in that case, you own the digital testing materials. Lastly, our other methods we’re showing here is you can also use hard copy, tangible tests that you might already own and display them on the screen using a document camera. So the idea here is that you would have the actual testing books on your desk and you would display the stimulus items on the screen through use of a document camera hooked up to your computer. Just be sure to adhere to all copyright rules and regulations regarding your testing materials. You also need to state in your evaluation report that the assessment was completed via telepractice and include any pertinent information regarding the testing administration and the student’s participation in the testing.

Many folks may be wondering, can you see groups in telepractice? Yes you can. Online sessions do tend to be individual, but teletherapists also see groups of students. Typically a small group, like a group of two is best. You can’t see groups of three, but small groups tend to work best and you can determine with your client what their appropriate group size will be depending on the particular situation. There are two main methods for seeing groups of students in telepractice. So both students could be in the same location, sitting side by side of the same computer.

So like you see here in this picture. Or students can log on from different computers. That might mean different computers at the same school or in totally different locations. Either way, they will both be together when they log in with you on the screen for the session. Next, let’s talk a bit about IEP meetings, which is a big responsibility of us as speech language pathologists when you’re working in the schools especially. So if you’re working in the schools, you would typically fill out your portion of the IEP paperwork through the school’s online IEP system before the
meeting. Then you can do that same thing through telepractice because the IEP system is all online. So telepractitioners can go online and fill out that paperwork in the same way. Then you can attend by phone or by computer. For teleconference with a brick and mortar school, the team would be sitting there around the table and as a telepractitioner you would just be on the phone, on speaker to participate. With virtual academies or cyber academies, all of the members of the team are working remotely because the school is all online. So they usually have a teleconference system all set up and you could just call in and participate with everyone via phone. You can also be there virtually on the computer screen for the meeting. So if you were working with a brick and mortar school, for example, the school admin or teacher could log in with you online and have you there via video conference to participate face-to-face during the meeting.

And we do all of these methods every day. So it’s all very possible and tends to work well if you establish those good lines of communication with your team. What about supervision? We can provide supervision via telepractice. ASHA refers to this as distance supervision and you can complete supervision of SLPAs through your teletherapy practice. You do need to follow the same guidelines for how much supervision and the percentage of direct supervision needed just as you would when supervising onsite. So direct supervision does not mean reviewing a taped session later. That’s an important thing to note here.

You can complete that direct observation in real time via telepractice. The SLPA logs in with the supervising SLP, sets up the computer so that the supervisor can observe and it's really basically just as if the SLP was sitting there in the room. She’s there observing in real time and can speak up at any time to offer guidance as needed. The supervisor and the SLPA also meet face-to-face over the computer to review therapy plans, screenings, progress toward goals, feedback on sessions, et cetera. You can display documents such as IEP paperwork on the screen so that they can be reviewed.
together with the SLPA and the supervisor can attend IEP meetings via phone or video conference and can meet with other school staff or parents to provide any support that might be needed. And let’s take a look at this next slide. We have a quick video clip here of an actual SLP providing feedback to an SLPA after she has just observed a session in real time. So if we could go ahead and play this supervision video clip.

- Nice work today. Okay. And I saw you work through three of your goals. That was really good and it seems like he is doing really well with that imitating sentences and he’s also coming along, seems like pretty quickly with that R for Carla.

- Very quickly.

- I could see him pausing and so he's already at the reading level for the AR word position is what I heard. Did he do any... Have you done any final yet?

- [Sara] Okay, and we can go back to the slides now. So that gives you an idea of how this works and how the supervisor and the SLPA can really form a positive working relationship via telepractice just as they would when working onsite together. All right. Communication and collaboration in the virtual world. Communication is always important in our field, but there are some key points related specifically to working in the virtual environment. It is of course important to maintain privacy and HIPAA and FERPA compliance. Much of your communication in telepractice is completed through email. So you need to be sure not to use a student or client full names. And if you’re sending documents with student information through email as an attachment, then you need to password protect the documents. Or if you work with a company that has a secure online system in place, then you may be able to send documents to the school or client privately and securely that way. So definitely keep student privacy in mind just as you would in any therapy setting. You can connect and collaborate with caregivers
and the IEP team if you’re working with a school district through various means in telepractice. You can speak with them face-to-face, online, over the phone or through email. It’s usually pretty easy to send materials through email for home practice and carry over and I’ve also seen a benefit to sending some brief reminders or recommendations through email. So things I might’ve just mentioned to a parent in my onsite work and then they probably forgot what I said as soon as we parted ways. When they have it in an email, they can actually refer back to the information later and that can really be useful. It’s always important in our field to document and keep a written communication log.

And this can really come into play in telepractice if you’re communicating over the phone or even through text. You want to be sure to document any information in a contact log so that you can reference it later if needed. It is especially important when working at a distance to establish open lines of communication. And Diana touched on this earlier because some folks are still reticent about telepractice. You may have to take a little extra time to establish rapport and get buy-in from teachers or parents you're working with. And in my experience, much like Diana, I've seen a change in that over the last several years. I think as technology expands into really almost every aspect of our lives, people are becoming more and more used to the idea of teletherapy.

And so I just personally have noticed that people are less and less hesitant about it. But you will still encounter some initial resistance with some folks and that just requires you as the therapist to help bring them along and have that open line of communication to help them see the benefits of the online therapy services and once they see how it works and how the students can enjoy the sessions and make progress, then they usually hop on board pretty quickly. In this next section, we will look at strategies and basic approaches to teletherapy sessions, overview and types of online therapy activities and we have several video demos of practical therapy session
ideas. In thinking about how to approach your online sessions, it’s really important to realize that telepractice is not a different service. It’s just a different model of service delivery. So you’re still doing speech therapy and really still using a lot of the same techniques and strategies you would use when working onsite. It’s just that you’re doing so through a computer screen. I have trained a lot of SLPs in the basics of how to provide teletherapy and it’s almost always the case that they have an idea initially that telepractice is something totally alien. And once they get into the flow of it and start working with students, they almost always say that providing therapy via telepractice feels like providing therapy. It’s just with new, fun and interactive tools. So as we mentioned before, you can work with clients of all ages from birth to geriatrics via telepractice.

But we’re focusing on pediatrics for purposes of this presentation. And you can take a different approach to your sessions depending on the student’s age, just like you would in any setting. So for early childhood kiddos, you might be seeing them in their natural environment. Maybe in the home with the parent or in an early childhood center. You can act as the coach to help the caregiver learn how to encourage language and cue the child for speech using play and their own toys and activities in their natural environment. You can even get involved with coaching during group activities. So if they’re in an early childhood center, head start, the teacher or aide can log onto the computer and have you on the laptop that she can place wherever needed in the room and you can be right there providing prompting and guidance during activities like circle time or other group play.

And for preschool kiddos, you can also engage them in onscreen games and activities to target speech and language skills. And sometimes you’ll find that even students who have attention difficulties might actually participate better in onscreen activities because they’re so motivated by computers. For our school age students, you can use onscreen games and activities and we’ll show you some examples, some specific
examples of that in a bit so that you can really visualize what that would look like. For those school-aged kiddos, you can also incorporate academic materials from their curriculum. I've had the experience in working with students at brick and mortar schools and virtual academies where I connected with the teacher usually through email. I let them know some things we're working on in speech and ask if there are classroom materials that she or he would like for me to incorporate into our sessions and that can make for some really rich and meaningful session material when you have that crossover between concepts that the students working on in class and then goals that you're working on in your speech sessions. We can also work with students who have limited verbal skills in telepractice.

So your approach to those sessions might be providing guidance to the caregiver for device programming if they have an AAC device and providing coaching for use of AAC in daily routines, whether that be use of a device or picture cards or whatever means of communication the child is using. It can also be really beneficial to use some simple onscreen games and activities with limited verbal students so you could get them engaged in a fun, onscreen game and use that as a means of requiring them to request more or my turn or use of some other basic vocabulary. What is the student's response to telepractice? Typically students really enjoy it because it taps into their love of computers and technology and kids are so intuitive with technology as we all know.

They are those digital natives like Diana mentioned that term before. It just means that they've grown up in a world where technology is the norm. So technology comes really easily and naturally to them. As I mentioned before, some younger students that might be difficult to engage sometimes attend better to online sessions because they're so motivated by getting to be on the computer. It's like a reward for them in and of itself. And just from my own experience, I can also say anecdotally that sometimes older students also attend and participate better in telepractice sessions than on an onsite. The stigma is lessened because they aren't having to go to the speech room. They're
just logging in online and they’re so comfortable with talking to people online that it feels really natural to them. And I’ve had older students engage and open up a lot more with me via telepractice than I ever did onsite. So that’s not research evidence. That’s just been my own personal experience of what I’ve seen. Therapy activities in telepractice. So let’s get into more here about the actual types of activities you might use in your online sessions. I’ll go over some of the basics first and then we have several video examples that will really help you to get the picture of how this can work, I think. So static materials. You can display static materials on the screen. This might be simple worksheets or word list that you’re using with the student.

So you might have these saved on your computer or there are a ton of speech therapy websites out there where you can access materials that you can then display on the screen for you and the student to view at the same time. Dynamic activities. This might be an interactive game you could use onscreen with the student to target your specific speech and language goals. So the student or you and the student can actually play a game together on the computer that you have specifically selected to address certain concepts or goals. Videos. It can be really beneficial to use social skills, videos or story videos in your telepractice sessions. You can play the video on the screen so that you and the student are watching it simultaneously. Then pause the video frequently to ask questions and you can use concepts from the videos to target a multitude of speech and language goals.

You might also want to incorporate use of an online whiteboard. There are free online whiteboards available on the Internet or the meeting platform you choose to use may have an online whiteboard built in. And this can be useful for creating your own games or activities with the student or just to make notes and review concepts during your session. It’s important to note here that you also don’t have to be tied to the desk or the computer screen. You can incorporate movement activities into the session if that’s something that’s appropriate for your student to work toward their goals or if they just
need a movement break as many of our students do during their sessions. You can and should use your meeting platform to increase the interactive nature of your sessions. So instead of the session being really one sided where you as the therapist are just displaying things on the screen while the student watches, you want the student to actually interact with the activities. That’s what is going to make for a really dynamic and motivating session for your student. There are several different types of meeting platforms out there. We’re not promoting any specific one here but there are many out there. They all have their differences but the functionality is pretty similar with most all of them.

And most all of the online meeting platforms have some built-in features that you can use during your sessions and that might include the ability to allow the client or student to share control of the mouse so that he or she can click to engage in the game you are displaying on the screen. So you can actually take turns with the game. The student takes a turn, clicking on the game on the screen, you take a turn and so on. Or if you’re working with a group of two students, they could take turns back and forth. Most platforms allow sharing of the keyboard also, which lets the student type on the shared screen. You could bring up a word document and the student can actually type on the document on your computer. And pen tools, onscreen writing tools. Most meeting platforms have a pen or writing option for the therapist and student to draw or highlight items directly on the shared screen. Now, let’s take a look at some video examples so that you can see some of this in action and get a feel for what this really looks like. In this first video, you’ll see a therapist working with a small group of two students in a brick and mortar setting. So if we could go ahead and bring up example one video.

- Can I hear you make a ch-ch sound? When you make the ch sound, our tongue has to do kind of a silly little move where it comes up on the sides of our teeth. Did you know that?
- Speech.

- Good. Your turn Delphine.

- Speech.

- Good girl. I saw your lips. Did you feel it on your tongue? Did your tongue go up to the sides of your teeth?

- Yeah.

- Good job.

- [Sara] Okay, so if we can return back to the slides. So that gives you the basic idea of what an online session might look like and how you might use simple static materials that you display on the screen to target goals with the student. In this next clip, you will see that the therapist uses more interactive onscreen materials for a specific sentence creation activity. So let's go ahead and play example video two.

- I think I know what you wanna name them. What would you like to name those little girls? Yes. So we can do that. Let's put the little girl in the first box, right? And then we're gonna put this part in there. Can you move your pictures to make your sentence? Perfect, good job.

- [Sara] All right, so we can head back to the slides. So you could see in the video that the therapist shared control of the mouse with the student so that he could actually use his mouse to manipulate items on the screen and engage directly in the game. And I'll mention here that the materials you saw there are from Boom Learning. That specific activity is called Outdoor Fun, Noun-Verb-Object Sentences and that's by the author
Looks Like Language. So you can check that out on boomlearning.com which is a great resource. All right, our next example here, I’m in this next video clip with a student and we’re using an activity here that I created with a free online whiteboard. So let’s take a look at the example video three. Let’s write that on here. That is how we make that letter. What’s that letter again? Which picture would you like to do? Oh, the light. Okay, let’s be sure we put our L on there. Remember, where does your tongue go for L? Up, light. Okay. You made it to the end.

- Yes.

- Nice work. Okay, great. So we can head back to the slides. One thing to notice in the clips from that recording that you just saw is that you can use the webcams for visual feedback. So you can demonstrate the tongue or mouth placement for speech sounds. And as the client imitates, they see you and her or himself on the screen. So it’s much like you would use a mirror in your onsite work. And in that recording, you can see that the sessions can really be interactive and fun. I am a game creator myself so I tend to go a little crazy with creating lots of games and activities. But there are also plenty of free materials out there on the Internet that you can utilize in your sessions. That’s just an activity I created with a free online whiteboard ‘cause that child really loved anything car related. So that worked well for him. We have a few more video examples here. Wanted to really give you some practical information and help you really visualize how this can all work. So this next demo is me again and I’m using more games that I’ve created. This will just give you more insight into how telepractice sessions can work and this example is coincidentally more L practice. So you’ll see that being targeted again here. So let’s go ahead and play example video four. What letter were we just talking about? What letter?

- L.
- Good. And where does our tongue go when we make the L sound? Look at me. Yeah, our tongue goes up. And does it go in front of these teeth or behind the teeth?

- Behind.

- Behind, good. So let's make the L sound again. Every time you hit an L, let me hear you say ooh.

- Ooh.

- Ooh, tongue goes up. Good job. Good. Whoa, awesome. Two in a row. Wow, good job. What letter did you... L, good. I love the way you said that. Let's see if we can get one more. Now, can you say the whole word? Listen to me. Spoon.

- Spoon.

- Yeah, and do your movement. Spoon.

- Spoon.

- Awesome. Okay, now we're gonna try a different one. We're gonna blend some sounds together again. We're gonna do spin. Let me hear you.

- Spin.

- Yes, like spin. Great. We can head back to the slides there. So with that video, once again you could see that the sessions can be really interactive. And in that demo, I gave the student control of the mouse so that he could actually click on the screen to play the game and much like you might do in your onsite sessions, you can use a
motivating game to target speech sounds or language goals. And as you saw in that video, you don’t have to be tied to the desk. You can certainly incorporate some movement activities if that’s appropriate for your client or a particular student. Next, we have a few more video examples and these recordings show just activity, but not in an actual session with a client or student. This next example is from homespeechhome.com and that site has a lot of speech therapy activities. Though one that I'll show here is a simple word list an articulation paragraph. You can find other activities like this with various sites, but the example we have here is from homespeechhome.com So let’s take a look at example video number five.

- [Instructor] As we mentioned earlier, you can use the features of your meeting platform to increase the interactive element of your online sessions. For example, pretty much all of the various online meeting platforms have some type of onscreen writing tool and you can absolutely use that to facilitate your session activities. You might display a word list or here we have some paragraph practice for the R phoning and you could use your onscreen writing tool to highlight the R words or use as a visual prompt for the student. I’ve had students where we were using specific strategies on certain types of R like initial R or vocalic R and the student and I would go through and mark up the paragraph with specific markings for certain R words. And then they could read the paragraph and have those visual cues as they went along.

- [Sara] Great. We can head back. We can head back to the slides. So that video showed how you can take a static onscreen display and turn it into something more dynamic and interactive simply by using the onscreen writing tool that will likely be a feature of whatever online meeting platform you choose to use. All right, let’s go to the next example. Video six and this shows use of some materials from autismspeaks.com So I’m gonna go ahead.
- [Instructor] You can also create personalized stories for your student or client. If you have a student who’s working on pragmatics or social concepts. This is a story template from autismspeaks and they have several different templates to choose from. You can individualize it by changing up the pictures and the wording to fit your specific student's needs and it can all be done digitally. Then you have it for use in your online sessions and you can also email it to the parent or teacher so that they can print out the materials if they like and use the story with the child in the real life context.

- [Sara] Great. And that just gives you yet another example of how you can individualize your online work with students and really provide that carryover of skills into other contexts. And once again, that was personalized story templates from autismspeaks.org which of course has great useful information. So check that out. The last activity idea we'll touch on here is the use of videos in telepractice sessions. Video can be a great teaching tool and when you're working with students online, it is really easy to seamlessly integrate video into your intervention. You can use video to target a host of speech and language goals. One specific area you can address is social skills through video modeling. And we're gonna see an example next of a social skills video with our video example number seven. So let's go ahead and play that.

- [Instructor] In conversations, we make comments back and forth. Those comments have to fit together like a puzzle. If someone talks about homework, we say something about homework. If we don’t connect our comments, other people will become confused. Let's see what happens if we don’t connect our comments.

- My soccer team has a game this weekend. We're playing the best team.

- What's your favorite type of pizza? Mine's cheese.

- Yeah, cheese is cool. As I was saying, the team is really good.
- The pizza place by my house makes the best pizza. It's my favorite.

- Oh, that's cool.

- [Instructor] How do you think Chris and Alexandra feel? Let's see what they're thinking.

- What is she talking about? I was talking about my game and then she started talking about pizza. That makes no sense.

- I'm having pizza tonight. Cheese is my favorite.

- [Instructor] Chris is confused. Alexandra's comment about pizza wasn't connected to Chris's soccer game. Those didn't fit together. Alexandra should say something that connects back to Chris's soccer game. Let's watch her try again.

- [Sara] Great. So that was a clip from a social skills video by everydayspeech.com which is a wonderful online social skills resource. So you could incorporate a video such as that into your session if you are working with a student that had pragmatics goals. You can find social skills videos online that are appropriate for very young, early childhood students all the way up to high school age. So you can really individualize it based on the student's age and needs. There are also great story videos. So a different kind of more narrative-based video out there that you can utilize to address a wide range of goals. You can find really engaging videos of books being read aloud or there were also story videos out there. They're really like short movies. You can find stories from all different genres to suit the topic you're addressing and tailor it to the students' interests and their functional level. So this is our last example and this is a fantasy short story in video form. So let's take a look at the clip of this short movie and then I'll
explain a bit more about how you might incorporate a video such as this into a session. All right, so that video was from literacyshed.com and that site has a host of video stories, some that appeal to younger students or older students. So that can be great if you’re working with some middle school or high schoolers. And it also has different genres of storytelling. So the idea is that you can play the video during your session and pause it frequently to ask targeted questions. You can then use the video as a topic for further discussion or story retell. You could target wh questions, comprehension, articulation, carryover fluency, a wide range of language concepts. So hopefully that gets your imagination going to see the wide range of possibilities and really enriching therapy activities that you can incorporate to make for very engaging and effective telepractice sessions. Telepractice intervention strategies. In this last portion of the webinar, we’ll touch on some basic strategies that should be considered for telepractice sessions.

As I mentioned earlier, and as you saw in the video demos, you can utilize the webcams for visual feedback when modeling speech sounds. Be sure to include a variety of learning modalities, visual, audio, video, movement, if that makes sense for what you’re working on. And it’s always important to incorporate the caregiver when possible so that you can provide that guidance and prompting to them on how to carry over skills into other settings. Just the same as your onsite sessions, you need to be strategic about the order of activities you present and the type of activities you include in your sessions. That may mean that you need to save a rewarding activity for the end of the session.

For those students that work well with having more of a less desirable kind of work on the front end and working toward a fun activity at the end of the session. Or you might need to use up highly motivating activity at the onsite of the session to draw the student in and get them participating. Some clients or students might just need a fun brain break type of computer game or movement activity to keep them engaged.
throughout the therapy time. Basically, you want to individualize your treatment approach based on the students' abilities just as if you would working onsite. You can incorporate visual schedules or onscreen behavior charts into your telepractice sessions. You can create one yourself with an online whiteboard or you can use a free online behavior chart that you can display on the screen to help that student stay engaged if needed, and keep in mind that you want to tailor activities to the student's age and functional level. So just because it's the computer, doesn't mean you need to include childlike games for every student. There are certainly plenty of online activities that are appropriate for older kids as well. So be sure to really tailor it to the client or students' interests and their functional level. You may be wondering if this is new to you, how do I find materials?

There are so many speech therapy websites and game sites out there with useful materials. You saw some examples in this presentation. So you can take a little time to discover activities on your own or you can work with a company that has an established library of resources and or that provides training and guidance on therapy activities to use in your sessions that might be helpful to you. Let's circle back now to those common questions that we posed at the beginning of the presentation.

And by now, you should be able to answer these pretty easily or we hope that you can. So is the tech setup really complicated? No. You just need a basic laptop or desktop computer with a webcam and usually that's actually built into the computer, but if you need to, you can get an external webcam. And you can use a headset if needed. Some folks find that the audio is good enough without using a headset. But a headset can help to really make for clear audio. Do students respond well to online therapy? Yes, firsthand. We've seen the students enjoy the sessions and make good progress. And research is supporting this as well as we discussed. Are you able to complete various SLP responsibilities via telepractice? Yes, you can attend IEP meetings, conduct evaluations, and you can complete supervision tasks as well. And lastly, what kind of
activities can you use in online sessions? We’ve given you a taste of that with several examples and all of those video demos. But the possibilities are really just limited to your imagination. Here are some final thoughts we wanted to leave with you. The foundations of privacy, security and connectivity are really imperative for delivering telepractice services, but once you have those basics established, then if you’re thoughtful about it, you can really provide engaging and enriching telepractice sessions for clients. And I hope we’ve been able to shed some light on that for you here today. Lastly, here is a list of our references. You can also get a copy of that in the handout that is available to you. And our contact information. Please feel free to reach out to us. We’ll take some time to answer questions here now, but if we don’t get to your question or you think of something later, please feel free to reach out to us directly at our emails or you can go to our website, www.electronic-therapy.com and click the Contact Us link to reach us directly there as well. Okay, so now we’ll take a look at some of the questions here. So several folks have asked what platform we use and recommendations for platforms. There are, like I mentioned in the presentation, there are many different platforms out there like the platform we’re using here for this particular meeting today is Adobe Connect. And there are several different companies out there.

So you can look into each one if you’re looking to get into telepractice. See what features it offers and what suits you best. I will say that they all have their differences, but they all have a lot of similarities too. Like Diana mentioned in that early part of the presentation, probably not a good idea to go for the free online platform because that does not offer the security or the encryption needed to maintain HIPAA compliance. So stay away from the free platforms. Okay, let me take a look here at some more questions. Kristen says, I know you must be licensed in the state where you reside as well as where the student is located, but is there any leeway for seeing students when taking short out-of-state trips? For example, if you take a long weekend to another state but want to continue servicing your students while away, if you have a private
place to work and bring your computer along. Is this possible? Typically there, and I'll let Diana jump in here too, if she has more to say after I answer. But typically, there is some leeway there. I know especially if you're, for example, moving to a new state, you need to check with that state board and their requirements. You usually have a certain amount of days to notify the state board. But usually there's a bit of a grace period where you can be pursuing that license and still see students. Diana, did you wanna jump in to say anything else about that? I would say bottom line is you gotta check with state board and their regulations. Yeah, okay, cool. Let's take a look here. We've got a lot of questions here, so I'm trying to get to all of them. Okay. Leslie says. Here, let me take a look at this next one so I don’t miss it.

Okay. Lori says, can you explain more about what you used to play the cannon game? Yes, as Amy mentioned in the intro in the bios I’m actually an independent app developer and I have several speech therapy apps available on iTunes and I was using some materials from one of my games there. If you're interested in that, you can go to iTunes and look that up. It's the myarticulationseries by Sara Smith. That one was the Initial L game. Okay. When performing advanced articulation therapy, highly nuanced air flow, what has your experience been with slight sound distortion which is inherent in most computer audio? For example S sounds very slushy and lisp like over the computer audio. That's a common question. A lot of people think that that’s going to be problematic when doing articulation therapy via telepractice.

And we have found that most of the time, the audio works well enough to do what you need to do. But you do typically have an onsite facilitator there. So if you're working with a student in their home, that might be a parent or caregiver, if you're working with a brick and mortar school, that might be a teacher or an aid or a para-pro. And so that person can also be somewhat your eyes and ears on the ground, so to speak. So sometimes that’s beneficial. But I would say that that’s a really, people ask that question a lot and it’s actually not nearly as much of a problem as you might think it is.
Lori asks, I’ve worked for an established telepractice company for a few years with an extensive online library and looking at doing this on my own, are most therapists purchasing digital forms of therapy materials or can you use digital pictures of your own materials on the whiteboards to make them interactive? Yes, you can use your own materials. Upload them to whiteboards to make them interactive. The online, there’s some free online whiteboards out there that you can just do a Google search for and check that out. We’re not promoting any specific one here, but they have some great interactive features where you can really create your own interactive games. Yes, using digital materials you might already own. There’s also tons of free speech therapy sites out there that you can access and display on the screen for use in your sessions with your students. Okay. And we will get into in the part two of our presentation that’s gonna take place in October. We’ll get into more about the legalities and some more details about telepractice in that section too.

So some of your questions that we may not get to here, you can either contact us directly or it might be covered in the part two of this series. Let me take a look here and see what else. Okay, I am gonna answer this one. I think I might have just enough time to get this one. This is a big question a lot of people have. Lori asks, can you explain how you do iPad activities via the computer? Okay. So with the online meeting platforms, they all have different features like I said, but most of them, it’s not possible for the students to actually click on the iPad screen if you’re doing an iPad activity. So we recommend using a regular laptop or desktop computer because that’s gonna really allow you to have this interactive session.

However, if you want to display an iPad activity on your screen to use with a student, you can use a mirroring app. And so just to do a quick Google search for that and you can mirror the iPad and what’s displayed there with any apps you have on your iPad on your computer screen for the student to see. The student, you can give them a keyboard and mouse control, but they won’t actually be able to click on your iPad. But
you can kind of mimic that by using there's a spotlight feature or a red dot and a feature with most online meeting platforms. So you can allow the student to hover that spotlight where they would like to click on the app and then you click it for them. So it really mimics that interactive nature of playing with the iPad app. So hopefully that makes sense. Contact us if you want a further explanation and more details 'cause that kind of gets into the nitty gritty of how all this works. I think that's all the questions we have time for today. Amy, are we out of time here?

- [Amy] You know, we could probably, I would wanna let our participants know that they can go if they need to go. They'll get credit for having been here the whole time. If you wanna take one or two more questions, if we can wrap up in say three minutes or so.

- [Sara] Okay, great, great.

- [Amy] There's a lot of good ones here.

- [Sara] Yeah. Yeah, I see a great one here. There's a lot of questions. I'm sorting through. I'm gonna answer this one. Corrina asks how to address the issue of a student having poor Internet connection, causing them to cut in and out out of sessions that impacts their participation behavior with the parent or the virtual school. So yes, in order to participate, the client, whether that be a student in a brick and mortar school or homeschool or whoever your client is, really there's a requirement that they do need to have good, high speed Internet connection. You need to have that kind of seamless, real time interactivity for the session to be effective. And I would say that this was more of an issue years ago when a lot of folks didn't have good Internet. It's becoming less and less of an issue now that even people in really remote areas often still have good internet. So it's becoming less of an issue, but definitely the student that connectivity, that real time connectivity is really imperative. And I saw another one
that I wanted to pass over to... Diana, you might be good to answer Carolyn’s question. She asks, do teletherapy companies shy away from training independent contractors or contractors who are gonna file a 1099 expected to find training independently of the company that they are going to contract with? And Diana might be a good person to answer that one, so I’ll let her jump in here.

- [Diana] Okay, thanks Sara. Hi Carolyn. It’s a great question. Just speaking personally, there should not be shying away from training just because your status is an independent contractor. So in doing your due diligence, that’s a great question to ask. When you’re speaking to teletherapy companies, for us we do provide training for all of the therapists. So I think that’s an imperative piece and I feel like therapists should be supported in that process and definitely dig deeper into that. You should be have an established base for yourself before you begin working in teletherapy and feel comfortable with the platform and feel comfortable with working with the activities and have had somebody working with you to make you get to that place for yourself instead of being completely left in the dust. But again, that’s my two cents on that piece. But additionally, it is also good to do your own research, practice, learn as much as you can, train yourself in the area as much as you can. But when working with a company, you should be also supported in that too to be most successful. And Sara, I’ll kick it back to you.

- [Sara] Great. And I think we’re gonna wrap it up there but feel free to reach out to us directly if we didn’t get to your question today. And check out the part two of our series that’s gonna come up in October because we’ll have much more info to share then. Thank you so much for your time.

- [Amy] Thank you so much, Sara and Diana. This was great information and thanks to our participants. Fantastic questions. I guess we could have made this three or four hours long, but we will look forward to part two, which as Sara said, is coming up on
October 10th. And again, you have our presenters email addresses there in your slides in your handout. I've seen lots of thanks for the informative presentation. I will echo that and I'll go ahead and wrap it up for today. I hope everybody has a great afternoon and we'll see you next time. Bye bye.