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## Telepractice: A Day in the Life of a Pediatric Teletherapist- the Inside Scoop

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Moderated by:  
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## Telepractice: Day in the Life of a Teletherapist

The Inside Scoop

## Learning Outcomes

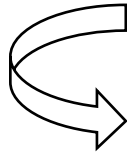
After this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify the key elements required to implement telepractice services that meet professional standards.
- List at least 3 activities that can be used in a telepractice model for the treatment of common pediatric speech-language disorders.
- Describe telepractice strategies for completing daily tasks (i.e., scheduling, communicating with caregivers, engaging students).

## Outline

1. Overview of telepractice in our field
2. Tech requirements and professional guidelines for telepractice
3. Strategies to complete tasks in the daily life of a teletherapist
4. Teletherapy techniques and practical examples

## What is Telepractice?



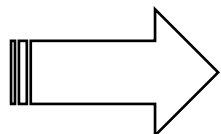
- Telepractice or teletherapy involves the delivery of therapy services online via two-way video conferencing. Telepractice links live, licensed therapists to clients who may otherwise have difficulty receiving services. Telepractice is being used in the assessment and treatment of a wide range of disorders.

## Why Telepractice?

- There is an increasing problem of a lack of specialized service providers across the country
- Therapists can connect to clients in need despite location
- Creates the ability to reach more clients (such as those who may not have reliable transportation/alternative school programs)



## Why Telepractice?



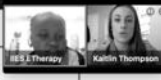
- Emerging research shows that Teletherapy can be just as effective as onsite therapy
- Connects practitioners with specific experience to students with certain speech-language disorders
- Allows the therapist to have more flexibility, no commute time, and (many feel) better use of time

## ASHA and Telepractice

- Approved Telepractice in 2005
- “The use of telepractice **does not remove any existing responsibilities** in delivering services, including adherence to the Code of Ethics, Scope of Practice, state and federal laws (e.g., licensure, HIPAA, etc.), and ASHA policy documents on professional practices. Therefore, the quality of services delivered via **telepractice must be consistent with the quality of services delivered face-to-face.**”

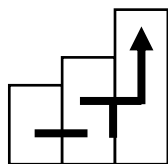
Cason, J. and Cohn, E. R. (2014). Telepractice: An Overview and Best Practices. *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups*, 23(SIG 18), 4-17.

## Evolving Technology

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday		

- Teachers & parents are becoming increasingly comfortable with technology
- The digital world is incorporated into pretty much every aspect of our lives
- Students are digital natives and are especially at ease with technology

## Evidence



Research article:

### **Understanding teletherapy as an option for K-12 Students with Disabilities**

#### Key Findings

- Teletherapy platform is an easy adjustment for students
- Telepractice encourages caregivers to collaborate in the therapy process in a positive way

Mellard, D. F., Rice, M., and Carter, Jr. R.A. "Understanding teletherapy as an option for K-12 Students with Disabilities." *Academia.edu*, Lawrence, KS: Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities, University of Kansas. 2018.



## Tech Requirements & Getting Started

In this next section we will review:

- Technical requirements for telepractice
- Basics about choosing an online meeting platform
- Important points for implementing a telepractice model

## Tech Set Up

What equipment and technology is needed?

- **Computer**- laptop or desktop
- **Webcam**- utilize one that is built in to the computer or use an external camera
- **Headset**- some therapists use, some do not (depending on sound quality from computer)
- **Good internet connection** is required
- Same set up on the student's end



## Telepractice Implementation

### Need to use a platform that is:

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

## Telepractice Implementation

### Important points:

- Secure billing and documentation system
- Private office space
  - Present yourself in a professional way
  - Good lighting and non-distracting background
- License requirements
  - Licensure in your residing state
  - Licensure in the state where the student is located
- SLP responsibilities can be completed via telepractice (i.e., attending IEP meetings, evaluations, supervision)

continued

**In this section we will review:**

- What a daily schedule looks like for a teletherapist
- How to communicate in the virtual world
- Keeping your clients engaged in the therapy process
- Incorporating movement into your day as a teletherapist

continued

## Snapshot of a Typical Day

One example of a therapist working a full school day with students in her/his same time zone, brick & mortar school:

**8:00** Step into home office and begin work

**8:00-8:30** Answer emails, review information

**8:30-11:00** Therapy sessions (including individual and groups of two students). Do some quick documentation between sessions while the aide brings students to and from the computer.

**11:00-11:45** Lunch break, catch up on log notes, step outside to take the dog out, etc.

continued



## Snapshot of a Typical Day

**11:45-12:00** Talk with teacher over the computer regarding carryover of skills for a shared student

**12:00-1:30** Administer an online assessment

**1:30-1:45** Break, grab something to drink, get up and stretch

**1:45-2:45** Therapy sessions with students (enter some log notes between sessions while online facilitator shuttles students)

**2:45-3:00** Talk with school staff about scheduling/IEP information/etc.

**3:00-3:30** Complete paperwork, respond to emails

**3:30** End of day and you are already at home!



## Snapshot of a Typical Day

Example of a Central time zone therapist working part time with West Coast students, virtual academy/home school:

**11:10** (9:10 am for students) Answer emails, review information

**11:30-1:00** Therapy sessions (individual sessions with students and check-ins with caregivers before and after some sessions). Includes 5-10 min breaks between sessions to do documentation and transition from one student to the next.

**1:00-1:30** Late cancellation for session, parent cancels session last min due to student being sick. Instead, use time to connect with caregivers via email.

## Snapshot of a Typical Day

**1:30-2:30** Lunch break, enter log notes, put on a load of laundry, etc.

**2:30-3:30** Individual therapy sessions

**3:30-4:30** Attend an IEP meeting via phone conference

**4:30-5:00** Documentation, emails, and phone call with parent of new student to discuss scheduling

**5:00** End of day, walk out of your office space and you are home!

## Benefits of Telepractice

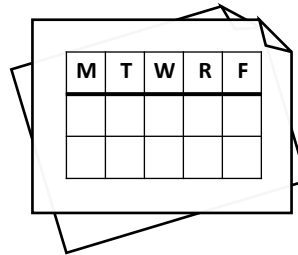
**What does teletherapy bring into your daily practice?**

- No need to run from campus to campus
- E-Therapists bring a different energy to their sessions
- No need to haul materials from place to place
- Being an E-Therapist allows for more autonomy (but you are still part of a team)
- Creative practice and constant learning

## Scheduling

How do you create a teletherapy schedule?

- Excel sheet or your own therapy calendar (use the method that is easiest for you)
- Keep your schedule (preferably digital) at your fingertips



## Scheduling

- Brick & Mortar setting:
  - Coordinate with onsite staff
  - Provide them a copy of your schedule
  - Ensure that you have all staff contact information handy
- Virtual setting:
  - Coordinate with family/caregiver
  - Have your students' contact information listed on your schedule for quick reference
- Send calendar reminders out before your scheduled session to avoid clients not showing up for therapy

## Communication

How do we communicate successfully in a virtual space?



- Use email and phone call and do them often!
- Remember to touch base with your client before your session
- Email reminders of when your session will take place (you may be able to automate through your email provider)

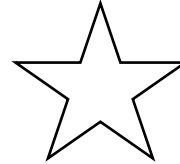
## Communication

- Discover the way your client prefers to receive their communication, is it email, phone call, text?
- **Log and document** all of your client communication- Make a digital log that lives in a client therapy profile folder on your computer or whatever location works best for you
- Always keep the log up to date in case you ever have to refer back to it
- If your client is a texter, it's a good idea to copy those texts or save them and keep those exchanges somewhere readily available to refer back to

## Communication

### Being a remote super star communicator!

- Some therapists enjoy sending anecdotes to their families/clients occasionally, or just sending a friendly check in email, to see how their client is doing
- Some therapists even pop a special note via snail mail
- Be an **active communicator**- People perform better when they know that they are being heard and listened to



## Virtual Community

### How do you get your “hall time” or “water cooler” time in?

- Reach out to other therapists (in your telepractice company)
- Some companies have a blog or a digital environment you can be part of and engage in conversations with other E-Therapists
- Share your stories about your own personal experiences
- Ask questions and collaborate with other E-Therapists



## Virtual Community



- Create “Hall Time” with your on-site personnel and caregivers:
  - Schedule in an extra 5 to 10 minutes with teachers or parents before or after a session
  - Ask how your student/client is doing from their perspective
  - Touch base with school administrators who you work with but do not necessarily communicate with on a daily basis

## Engaging Your Client

### Getting buy-in from clients:

- Build rapport and trust with your client, start out with a “Getting to Know You” session
- Telepractice can be highly interactive!
- Share items digitally to engage your client, use real photos and personal experience to personalize the therapy sessions



## Engaging Your Client

- Clients may feel very at home in the digital space, most are comfortable with technology like streaming and Facetime
- Find things that you have in common, you can share your environment (as appropriate) with those that you work with
- Clients can “invite” others into their online session occasionally as a reward, which can boost motivation and moral
- Send “homework” or provide opportunities to do projects outside of the session to keep clients engaged

## Get Moving

What is it physically like to do teletherapy?



- Therapy is **dynamic** no matter what service delivery model is being used
- You can get up and move around during sessions!
- Incorporate kinesthetic movements into articulation therapy
- Adjust the camera to see the whole body of your client as needed
- You can include singing, dance, jumping jacks, etc.
- **You are not tied to your chair and neither is your client**

## Get Moving

- Movement adds a fresh energy into your therapy sessions (for all ages) remember to mix it up once in awhile!
- Keep yourself moving and healthy too
  - Incorporate movement breaks for yourself between sessions
  - You can sit on an exercise ball if you choose (just be sure to stay steady during sessions)
  - Be sure to incorporate stretching into your daily routine
  - Keep an eye on your posture, ensure that your computer is at the right height (looking straight ahead at your screen, not up or down)

## Session Activities

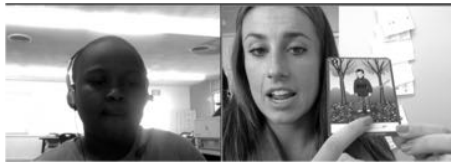
**How do you keep yourself engaged in online sessions without manipulatives?**

- The digital space is limitless: free activities, paid activities and games, online books, digital spinners, videos, songs, whiteboards, digital stickers, and other types of online rewards
- You can create your own digital materials or you can use already established games and activities
- You can incorporate and share your own personal items as well (display photos on the screen and create questions around those)

## Session Activities

Wait! You can have manipulatives!

- If you have a document camera, you can share tangible manipulatives, such as Mr. Potato Head, dolls, artic cards, books, flip charts, etc.
- You can incorporate any type of therapy material, tangible or digital, depending on what you feel most comfortable with
- The client can share their tangible manipulatives too, such as their favorite items or pictures



In this section we will review:

- What does a basic teletherapy session look like?
- Populations/disorders that can be treated via telepractice
- Practical therapy session techniques teletherapists use in their daily work

continued

## What Does a Teletherapy Session Look Like?

Video Example 1: Telepractice session example

continued

## What Does a Teletherapy Session Look Like?

- Telepractice sessions are live and interactive
- Use of webcams allows the therapist and the client to see themselves and each other
- Practice materials or games can be displayed on the screen for the student to see
- The therapist can share keyboard and mouse control with the client/student so that they can actually type and click on the activities on the screen
- The experience is really dynamic and engaging

## Who Can We Work With?

- SLPs can treat a variety of clients and disorders via telepractice
- Use clinical judgement to determine if telepractice is an effective model for each client
- For purposes of this presentation, we will focus on a pediatric population

## Treatment of Common Pediatric Speech-Language Disorders

1. Autism Spectrum Disorder
2. Articulation Disorder
3. Middle School Language Disorders

## Treatment & Telepractice

How do teletherapists address **Autism Spectrum Disorder**?

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Use clinical judgement to determine if telepractice is a good fit for your particular student/client
- Some students may need a caregiver or classroom aide beside them to facilitate participation, while others may be able to participate more independently
- High motivation for computer activities may yield better participation than expected
- Apply similar strategies to telepractice sessions as you would use onsite with students

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Incorporate visual supports into telepractice sessions:

- Display on your computer screen and share the screen with the student
- How do I find online visual supports?
  - Use visuals/picture prompts you have saved on your computer
  - Create your own visuals
  - Do a quick online search to find free visuals
  - Use real pictures of the student if appropriate

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Video Example 2:** How to make your visuals more dynamic through use of an online whiteboard



## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Targeting emotion concepts/facial expressions:

- Model and practice facial expressions using the webcams
- Utilize games that address understanding of emotions
- Incorporate comic strip activities

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Video Example 3:**

- Online emotions game demonstration from Do2Learn.com
- Build your own comic strip with Makebeliefscomix.com

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Utilize social skills videos:

- Conducive to the teletherapy platform
- Play the video while screen sharing with the student
- Pause at key points to ask questions, make predictions, talk about what the people in the video could do differently
- Some videos are made to appeal more to young students (cartoons) and others are geared more for older students

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Video Example 4:**

- Social skills video from TD Social Skills (check out their Youtube channel)

## Autism Spectrum Disorder

Additional Ideas:

- Social Stories
- Use of real pictures (digital)
- Figurative/nonliteral language games
- Consultation approach
- Individualize based on client's needs and functional level

## Treatment & Telepractice

How do teletherapists address **Articulation Disorders**?

## Articulation Disorder

- Articulation therapy can be very effective in a telepractice model
- Good internet is a key component
- Telepractice is face-to-face and in real time
- Therapists often feel like they are right there with the student

## Articulation Disorder

Modeling of speech sounds:

- Use of webcam for visual feedback
- Student and therapist see each other on the screen
- Similar to practice in front of a mirror during onsite work

## Articulation Disorder

### Video Example 5:

- Telepractice session clip, modeling speech sounds

## Articulation Disorder

### Onscreen speech-sound games:

- Games are interactive and dynamic to keep students engaged
- Utilize for repetitive speech sound practice
- Incorporate phonological awareness development

### Video example 6:

- Game examples from ABCYa.com

## Articulation Disorder

Utilize word/sentence lists:

- Display on the screen for basic articulation practice
- Incorporate onscreen drawing tools or an online whiteboard to make static word cards into a dynamic activity

### Video example 7:

- Articulation resources from [Amyspeechlanguagetherapy.com](http://Amyspeechlanguagetherapy.com)

## Articulation Disorder

Articulation carryover activities:

- Do an Internet search to find real images



## Articulation Disorder

Articulation carryover activities:

- Use to target sounds at the conversational level
- Individualize the images for the student's age and interests to get them talking
- Choose an image that will elicit the target sound
- Play I Spy with images, ask questions, incorporate story creation activities, etc.

## Articulation Disorder

Key Points

- Work/Reward approach
- Games that incorporate target speech-sound
- Make static materials dynamic through use of interactive whiteboard
- Individualize activities based on age/needs

## Treatment & Telepractice

How do teletherapists engage **Middle Schoolers** working on language skills?

## Middle School Language

- Older student populations can be challenging: may no longer be interested in typical therapy games, may feel stigmatized by attending speech therapy
- Anecdotally, we have observed that the stigma is lessened for telepractice sessions, older students tend to open up more when speaking online with the therapist
- You can tailor the activities to the student's age level and incorporate academic materials when appropriate



## Middle School Language

Use of onscreen reading materials:

- Incorporate free online language resources

### Video example 8:

- Language tasks from Ereading worksheets.com and Readworks.org

## Middle School Language

Include academic materials:

- Connect with the teacher (via email) to inquire about language concepts they are addressing in class
- Incorporation of classroom concepts can yield better carryover and more meaningful sessions
- Debate topics can be used to gain student's interest - utilize to target sentence structure, written language skills, etc.

## Middle School Language

Keep students engaged and motivated:

- If using static materials/worksheets, incorporate fun games into the session
- Utilize games that have language practice built in

### Video example 9:

- Games from Mathisfun.com and Quia.com

## Middle School Language

Use of narrative video stories:

### Video example 10:

- Narrative short film from literacyshed.com
- Utilize to target language goals
- Identifying the main idea
- Story retell
- Comprehension questions
- Inferencing
- Written language skills
- Descriptive language

## Telepractice

### Key Take-Aways:

- Telepractice is becoming more prevalent in our field
- It can be a dynamic and effective service delivery model
- The tech set up is not complicated, but guidelines must be followed
- Telepractice allows for flexibility in your daily work
- Therapists can complete all the needed SLP responsibilities in their day to day practice

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