

Telepsychiatry: Glamour and Glitch?

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Objectives for Learning Outcomes:

1. Provide useful tips and tricks for telepsychiatry.
2. Learn to build rapport with telepsychiatry patients.
3. Explain psychopharmacology and its limitations within the correctional system (i.e. available formulary, abuse potential, etc).

Telepsychiatry: Glamour and Glitch?



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Objectives

- Useful telepsychiatry tips and tricks
- How to work with telepsychiatry patients in a variety of settings
- Telepsychiatry and psychopharmacology in a correctional setting

Disclaimer

- *The opinions expressed in this presentation and on the following slides are solely mine and not necessarily those of the Department of Corrections or any other organization I am affiliated with.*

What is Telepsychiatry?

Telemedicine is the process of providing health care from a distance through technology, often using videoconferencing. Telepsychiatry, a subset of telemedicine, can involve providing a range of services including psychiatric evaluations, therapy (individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy), patient education and medication management.

Telepsychiatry can involve direct interaction between a psychiatrist and the patient. It also encompasses psychiatrists supporting primary care providers with mental health care consultation and expertise. Mental health care can be delivered in a live, interactive communication. It can also involve recording medical information (images, videos, etc.) and sending this to a distant site for later review.

-American Psychiatric Association (2020)

Benefits

Video-based telepsychiatry helps meet patients' needs for convenient, affordable and readily-accessible mental health services. It can benefit patients in a number of ways, such as:

- Improve access to mental health specialty care that might not otherwise be available (e.g., in rural areas).
- Bring care to the patient's location
- Help integrate behavioral health care and primary care, leading to better outcomes
- Reduce the need for trips to the emergency room
- Reduce delays in care
- Improve continuity of care and follow-up
- Reduce the need for time off work, childcare services, etc. to access appointments far away
- Reduce potential transportation barriers, such as lack of transportation or the need for long drives
- Reduce the barrier of stigma

Evidence for Effectiveness

There is substantial evidence of the effectiveness of telepsychiatry and research has found satisfaction to be high among patients, psychiatrists and other professionals. Telepsychiatry is equivalent to in-person care in diagnostic accuracy, treatment effectiveness, quality of care and patient satisfaction. Patient privacy and confidentiality are equivalent to in-person care.

Research has also found that overall experiences among all age groups have been good. There is evidence for children, adolescents and adults regarding assessment and treatment (medication and therapy). There are even people for which telemedicine may be preferable to in-person care, for example people with autism or severe anxiety disorders and patients with physical limitations may find the remote treatment particularly useful.

Telepsychiatry has been found especially effective with respect to the treatment of PTSD, depression, and ADHD. See more on the [evidence base for telepsychiatry](#).

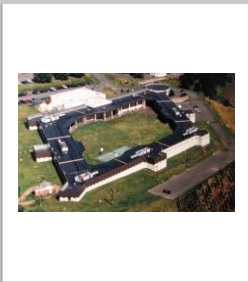
Previous Experiences with Telepsychiatry

- Sheppard Pratt Hospital (Maryland)
- Forensic evaluations (international)
 - International Refugee Assistance Project

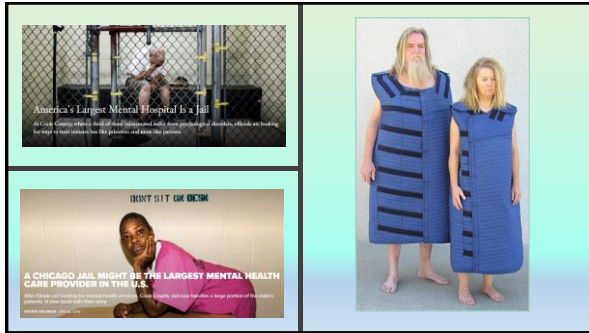


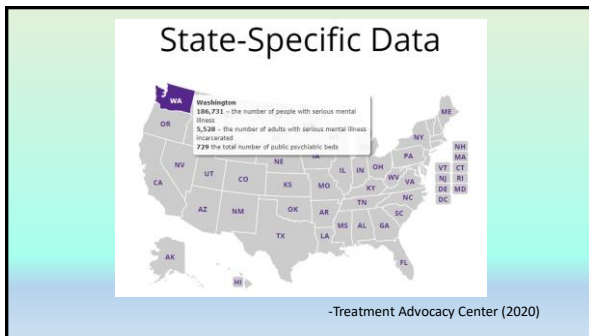
Why Corrections?

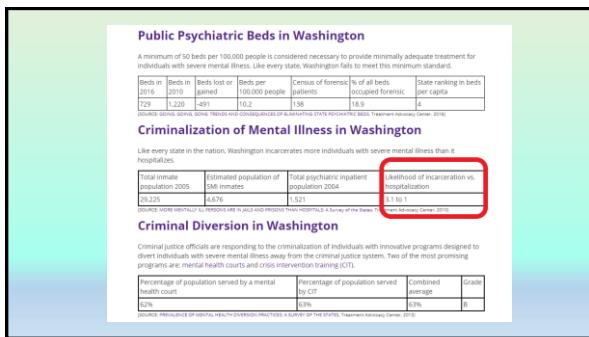
- Deinstitutionalization movement → transinstitutionalization
- Criminalization of mental illness
- Increasing numbers of the incarcerated mentally ill

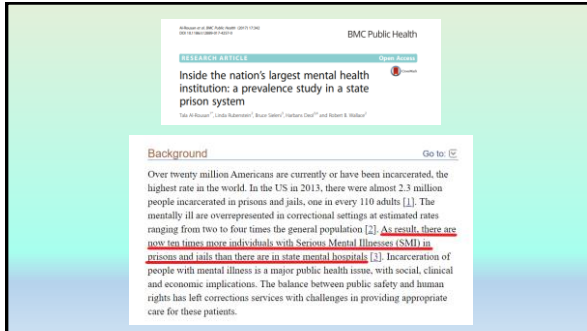




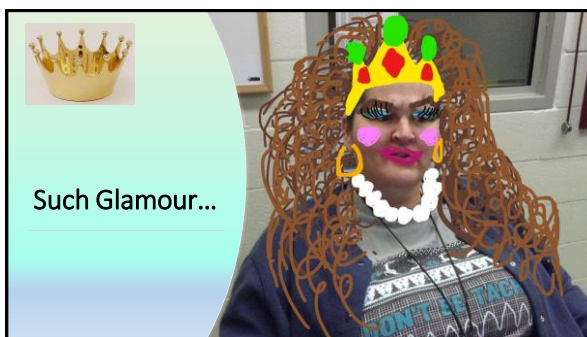












Other Challenges

- Varying severity of patients (S code)
- Environmental factors
- Logistical difficulties

Positive Aspects

- Increased openness with a teleprovider
- “Outsider” = neutrality
- Safety

Safe Sharing and Support

While anonymity may make it easy for people to act antagonistically, unprofessionally, or unethically, research has shown it can also make people more likely to be forthcoming and helpful. A 2010 study by University of Toronto researchers Vanessa Bohm and Zhong found that, in dark rooms versus bright ones, people were more likely to point out that strangers' pant zippers were undone or that they had food in their teeth, saving the strangers from possible embarrassment.

Sharing personal information and divulging secrets more frequently than in face-to-face communication is one of the most consistent findings of anonymity studies. Experiments and longitudinal studies in turn show that relationships started and maintained online are as stable and deep as relationships offline and that instant messaging and other communication technologies help people maintain relationships.



Tips and Tricks

- Know where you're looking
- Try to be aware of how you appear
- Avoid “angry concentrating face”
- Active listening

Tips and Tricks, Continued

- Avoid using the "u" word
- Be empathic...
- ...while maintaining clear boundaries
 - Be clear about what I can and cannot do
- Personalization
- ★ Always offer options

Psychopharmacology in DOC

Restricted formulary

- Wellbutrin, Seroquel
- Newer antipsychotics (Latuda, Vyratar, Saphris, etc)
- Gabapentin
- Melatonin
- All stimulants
- Strattera
- Benzodiazepines

Other Considerations

- Clinical Review Committee for restricted medications
 - Example: FP (Wellbutrin) and MF (melatonin)
- Pill-line vs KOP (Keep on Person)
 - Always pill-line: Effexor, Wellbutrin, Lamictal, Tegretol, Trileptal, Amitriptyline, Nortriptyline, Imipramine, Desipramine, Clonidine (high doses)
 - Recommended pill-line: Trazodone (high doses)

Even More Considerations

- Balancing abuse potential with adequate treatment
 - ADHD protocol
- Collaborative treatment for medical patients
 - Pain management
- Thinking outside the box: Complex PTSD

Concluding Remarks

- Telepsychiatry is a viable option to provide mental health services in a variety of settings
- Various challenges and benefits of telepsychiatry in corrections
- Importance of flexibility with restricted psychopharmacology options



Thank you for
listening!
