



Policies and Procedures

Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc.

Title: Telepsychiatry Services

POLICY

It is the policy of Tarzana Treatment Centers (TTC) to use telehealth technology to improve access to care by making TTC psychiatric staff available to patients at other TTC sites, at home, and at other organizations. The scope of the policy includes video-conferencing using CTN Connect or WebEx and use of TTC's telemedicine carts. Telepsychiatry is defined as the use of two-way real time interactive audio and video between a psychiatric provider and a patient, in order to provide psychiatric care when distance separates participants, who are in different geographic locations. Telepsychiatry services shall be used when equivalent in-person services are not available. This is often the case when the distance is too far for the psychiatric staff to travel and local psychiatric providers are not available.

PROCEDURE

1. Technical Services/Equipment/Environmental requirements shall include:
 - a. Two cameras of sufficient quality to support general web-based video communications.
 - b. Electronic signals transmitted in a secure fashion.
 - c. Evaluation and/or treatment performed in an environment where there is a reasonable expectation of absence of intrusion by individuals not involved in the client's direct care.
 - d. The physical presence or immediate availability (e.g., situated outside the office) of an Authorized Mental Health Discipline (AMHD) during the session with patients, who may need the security or reassurance that such presence provides. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the program staff utilizing telepsychiatry services.
 - e. Any technical issues with equipment or transmission shall be reported to the Information Technology Department at itsupport@tarzanatc.org and may be called in at extension 3333 (818-996-1051, x3333), if immediate assistance is needed.

2. Consent
 - a. Explicit informed consent for telepsychiatry must be obtained and documented. The consent form must explicitly state that the patient has been provided with options of telepsychiatry, face-to-face evaluation by a psychiatric provider at a later date and/or at another facility. The consent must clearly indicate that the patient has decided to receive telepsychiatry services rather than other alternatives. All consents for treatment and other procedures applicable to face-to-face encounters must be obtained in telepsychiatry encounters.

 - b. Based on California AB 415, TTC requires that the patient grant verbal consent to participate in telehealth and that the provider record the patient's consent in the medical record. TTC implements this policy by requiring that the provider or, a staff member assisting the provider, record in an Avatar progress note the patient's consent to use of telehealth technology. If the patient is participating in a course of treatment, the provider need not record the consent in every progress note; recording the patient's consent prior to the initial telehealth session is sufficient.

3. Prescribing Medication

- a. Medication prescribing shall be done electronically using Order Connect.
- b. The medication prescription shall be sent electronically to the designated pharmacy selected by the patient when meeting with the psychiatric provider.
- c. A written prescription can be sent to the designated site via FAX or inter-office mail, should the electronic prescribing system be temporarily not working or if the patient and provider are unable to locate a nearby pharmacy for the patient. It is expected that this shall rarely occur.
- d. The medication prescribed shall be documented in the progress note at the end of the session.

4. Locations for Telepsychiatry Services

- a. Patients shall be located at one of TTC's locations when receiving telepsychiatry services. TTC offers services in Lancaster, Palmdale, Northridge, Reseda, Tarzana, and Long Beach, California.
- b. Psychiatric providers shall be located at a different TTC location than the patient, or may be located at their professional office location.