

"Ethics and Technology"



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Agenda

- Types of Tech
- Benefits
- Ethical Issues
- Strategies
- Cases

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Types of Tech

- ▶ Videoconferencing (e.g., Skype)
- ▶ Teleconferencing
- ▶ Email (text-based therapy)
- ▶ Chat rooms
- ▶ Online discussions
- ▶ Web-Assisted Therapy / Avatar Interventions
- ▶ Messaging
- ▶ Online Social Networking (e.g., Facebook)
- ▶ Cloud - Sharing Documents
- ▶ Electronic monitors, GPS, Social Robots
- ▶ "Clueless traditionalists..." Zur



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SW & Tech Practice Standards


- › I: Provision of Information to the Public
- › II: Designing & Delivering Services:
 - › Individuals, Families, and Groups
 - › Communities, Organizations, Administration, Policy
- › III: Gathering, Managing, & Storing Information
- › IV: Social Work Education

(www.naswdc.org, ASWB, CSWE, CSWA)

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Potential Benefits of Tech

- › Enhancing access for:
 - Rural / Remote / Other languages or cultures
 - Home-bound / Special needs
 - Military / Frequent travel or relocation
 - Prisoners / Children (Digital Natives)
- › Continuity of service
- › Cost savings – practitioner / clients
- › Timeliness of intervention – real time / crisis
- › Increased marketing opportunities
- › Safety
- › More honest/forthcoming? More thoughtful?



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Ethical Issues re Tech

- › Competence – in field of practice, and use of the technology
- › Confidentiality & Privilege
 - Exceptions
 - Use in court?
- › Informed Consent – risks, research?
- › Safety
- › Documentation/Records
- › Fees – fair and equitable?
- › Boundaries / Dual Relationships
- › Jurisdiction and Licensure



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10 Strategies for Using Tech

Strategy 1: Determine the most appropriate means of communication for a given purpose.

KISS ☺ You don't necessarily need the most current or most complicated technology.

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Strategy 2: Consult tech experts, and take responsibility for understanding the tech you are planning to use.



www.telementalhealthcomparison.com

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Strategy 3: Practice privately before using tech professionally.



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Strategy 4:
Consult research literature for best practices, effectiveness, and risks of using particular tech.



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Strategy 5: Assess benefits and risks for particular situations.

E.g., Clients who speak another language: See www.freetranslation.com



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Strategy 6: Develop and implement risk management strategies for the risks you have identified.



E.g. Risk - Hacking - Solution? Encryption www.howstuffworks.com/encryption.htm

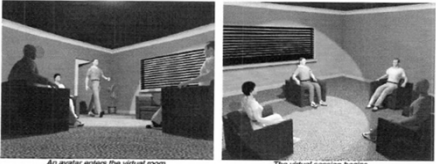
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Strategy 7:
Develop and implement a system to monitor and respond to risks.



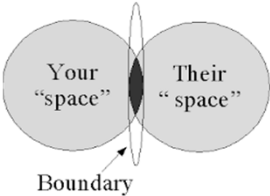
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Strategy 8: Keep abreast of the most current tech, ethics protocols, and research.




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Strategy 9: Maintain clear and appropriate boundaries between personal and professional communication.



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Strategy 10:
Ensure clients
have an
opportunity to
provide
informed
consent to the
use of tech.

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Case 7: CPW Without Borders


- ▶ Cassie Spector, MSW, works for child protective services
- ▶ Cassie works in Alabama – parent, Pauline is in Rehab in Texas
- ▶ Cassie wants to do family reunification counseling via teleconference
- ▶ What ethical and legal issues are raised by this situation?
- ▶ What additional information would we need to know?



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Case 8: Online Group

- ▶ Kerry, LMHC, decides to offer an online coming out group for lesbians living in a rural area (using videoconferencing)
- ▶ What are the potential advantages of having the group online?
- ▶ What ethical and clinical issues should Kerry take into account?
- ▶ Given these considerations, what precautions should Kerry take?
- ▶ What if some members <18?



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Case 9: Evaluator “Googles”

As part of Enid’s custody evaluation, she uses Google to search for client information. Enid discovers:

- ▶ Father has a website that appears to show him fondling a young girl
- ▶ Mother is a KKK member



1. What ethical issues should Enid consider – before doing an online search?
2. After the fact... what should Enid do with information she gathered?

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Case 10: Unsolicited Email

- ▶ Melinda’s agreement to mediate form states that clients are not to use email to communicate with her
- ▶ A client, Stephanie, emails anyhow, stating that she thinks her Ex is planning to abduct the child to another country. The Ex is planning to pick up the child for scheduled visitation in 30 minutes. Melinda asks what she should do.



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Case 11: Texting Teens

- ▶ Wanda is a therapist who helps teens with depression, anxiety, and adjustment issues
- ▶ Kato (15 years) is quiet during sessions
- ▶ Wanda decides to use texting with Kato. Kato opens up re frustration with both parents “always fighting,” as well as his desire to move in with his older sister (23).

Any ethical issues?



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Case 12: Online Info Service

- ▶ Dr. Feel – trying to promote his psychotherapy practice *and* provide potential clients with a useful service – sets up an online Q & A system.
- ▶ Gayle posts a question regarding potential autism. Dr. Feel posts parenting tips for children with autism.
- ▶ Gayle tries Dr. Feel’s tips and her daughter becomes aggressive, jumps through a window, and suffers serious injuries.

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Social Networking

- ▶ Forensic psychologist named Pete tweets: “Tough day in court, but exuberant that Gobel kids will be safe from evil parents.”
- ▶ Friend re-tweets
- ▶ Goble parents find out... very angry
- ▶ What recourse for parents?



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Conclusion

- ▶Key take-away points
- ▶Additional resources
- ▶Questions



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