



香港臨床心理學家公會

Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists

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Clinical Practice Recommendations for Telehealth Psychological Services

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists (“HKICP”) notices a growing demand for telehealth psychological services. These recommendations were developed to address the related ethical and practice issues.
- 1.2. These recommendations are informed by the [Code of Ethics of HKICP](#) (“the Code”) and the relevant laws of Hong Kong.
- 1.3. Registrants should refer to the Code, which is applicable to the registrants and their provision of psychological services across formats or means.

2. Definition of Terms

- 2.1. “Registrants” means the registrants of HKICP.
- 2.2. “Telehealth” means the delivery of healthcare or related activities that use any form of technology as an alternative to face-to-face consultations. It includes, but is not limited to email, telephone call, video call, videoconferencing, and texting.
- 2.3. “Telehealth psychological services” means any psychological services including but not limited to treatment, assessment, consultation and education.
- 2.4. “The Code” means the [Code of Ethics of HKICP](#).

3. Competence

- 3.1. Registrants should refer to Section 6.3 of the Code.
- 3.2. Registrants should ensure that they possess the required competencies based on adequate training and education for safe provision of telehealth psychological services just like they should for provision of face-to-face services.

- 3.3. Registrants should remain aware of and acknowledge the limits of telehealth on the quality of psychological services.
- 3.4. Registrants should ensure that their psychological services are suitable to be delivered via telehealth.
- 3.5. Registrants should ensure that they and their clients have adequate knowledge and competencies for engaging in telehealth psychological services, in areas including but not limited to information technology and network security.

4. Informed Consent

- 4.1. Registrants should refer to Sections 7.3 and 7.7 of the Code.
- 4.2. Registrants should obtain informed consent from their clients for telehealth psychological services.
- 4.3. Registrants should inform their clients about the potential risks and benefits of telehealth psychological services.
- 4.4. Registrants should inform their clients about the charges for telehealth psychological services. Fees payable and the methods of payment should be agreed upon at the beginning of the professional engagement.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. Registrants should refer to Section 7.2 of the Code.
- 5.2. Registrants should ensure that they and their clients have the required hardware and software to deliver and receive telehealth psychological services via secure connections.
- 5.3. Registrants should take steps and particular care to ensure confidentiality of information on the Internet.
- 5.4. Registrants should verify the identity of the party with whom the registrants are communicating via telehealth communication.

6. Protections for Vulnerable Persons

- 6.1. Registrants should refer to Section 7.4 of the Code.
- 6.2. Registrants should ensure that their vulnerable clients are suitable for and capable of benefiting from telehealth psychological services.

- 6.3. Registrants should ensure that the rights and welfare of their vulnerable clients are sufficiently protected against the limits of telehealth psychological services.
- 6.4. Registrants should ensure that assistance is readily available for their vulnerable clients when they are in emergencies.

7. Maintaining a Proper Relationship with Clients

- 7.1. Registrants should refer to Section 7.5 of the Code.
- 7.2. Registrants should maintain a professional manner whenever they are communicating with their clients regardless of forms of telehealth communication.

8. Record Keeping and Data Protection

- 8.1. Registrants should refer to Section 7.6 and the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486).
- 8.2. Registrants should remain aware of their clients' right to access their personal data recorded in whatever forms of telehealth communication.

9. Working with Clients Located Outside Hong Kong

- 9.1. Registrants should comply with the law governing psychological services in all jurisdictions where clients receive the services.
- 9.2. Registrants should ensure that their Professional Indemnity Insurance covers the liability of their professional work conducted via telehealth and for clients located outside Hong Kong.

10. References

- Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and National Boards (2020). Telehealth guidance for practitioners. Retrieved from <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/News/COVID-19/Workforce-resources/Telehealth-guidance-for-practitioners.aspx>
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