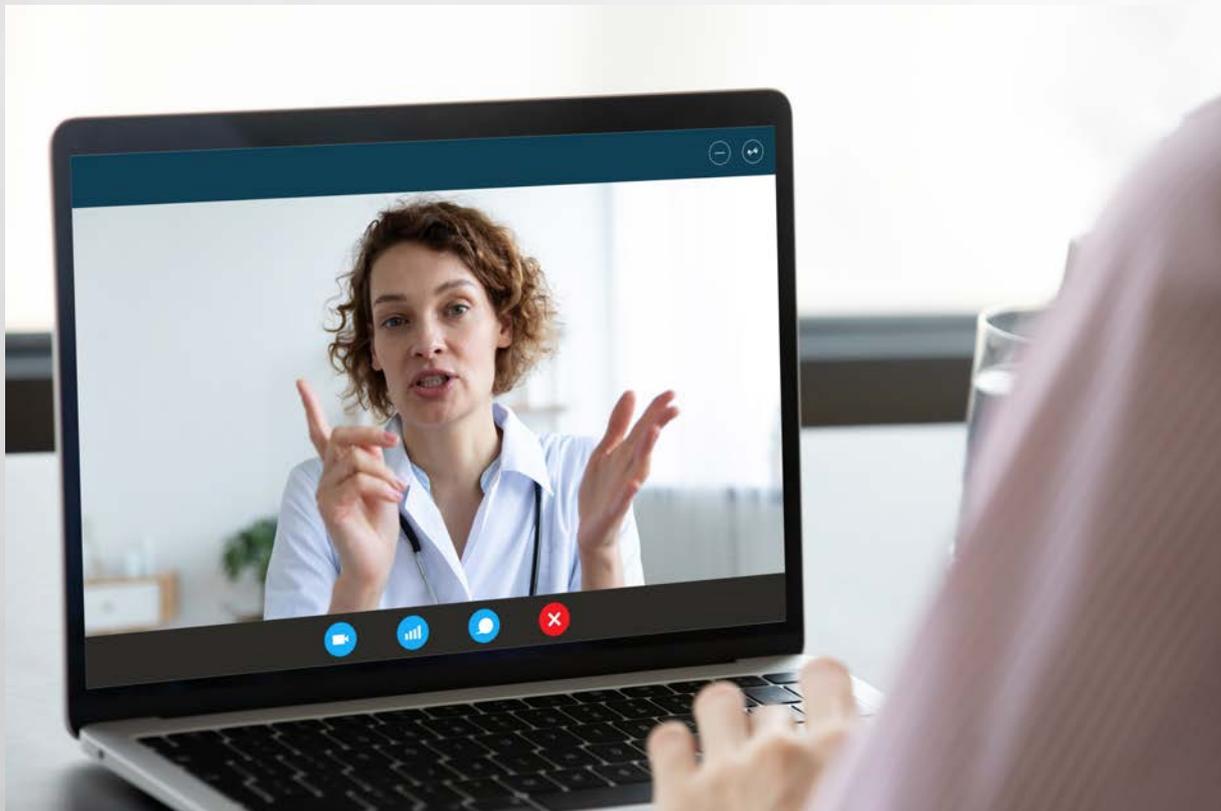


Due to increased traffic, WebEx may be experiencing some technical difficulties and may not automatically mute you upon entry.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE MUTED
(on your phone or computer) when you enter the webinar.

Thank you!

For regular updates and offerings regarding the COVID-19 Crisis, please visit the [CTAC COVID-19 Resources](https://ctacny.org) page at ctacny.org.



Virtual Group Therapy

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Webinar Overview

Today we will discuss:

- Some challenges of virtual group work
- Ideas on how to manage challenges
- Suggestions on how to create group cohesion, engagement, and connection
- Considerations when starting a new group
- Other questions/concerns?

Poll Questions

How often are you/will you be facilitating online groups?

- A.** Often (several a day)
- B.** Sometimes (several a week)
- C.** Rarely (once a week or less often)
- D.** Never

How are you feeling about the transition to an online modality?

- A.** Great, will be an easy change
- B.** Neutral, just need to practice
- C.** Nervous, help!!

For this presentation...

- My assumption is that you have a baseline understanding of technology issues, HIPAA, informed consent, etc.
- We will focus on the next step of actually facilitating groups!
- A little bit about my background...

Let's Chat

- ▶ **What is a challenge you are facing with regard to moving your group(s) online?**
 - (use the chat box and chat to “panelists only”)

What Technology are you Using?

- ▶ **Understand and know your technology**
 - What are the capabilities?
- ▶ **Computer vs. phone**
 - For individual work, a phone connection may be fine
 - For group, a phone connection may limit ability to participate in the group work
- ▶ **Questions to consider:**
 - Will you allow for people to participate without video?
 - Will you allow chat?
 - What constraints do your clients have with regard to technology access?

What Type of Group are you Facilitating?

- ❖ Support
 - ❖ Psycho-educational
 - ❖ Skill-based
 - ❖ Theory driven (CBT, ACT)
 - ❖ Process-oriented/therapy
-
- ▶ **All types of groups have benefit**
 - ▶ **Be aware that each type of group will look different in the online format**
 - ▶ **How much structure should you provide as leader?**
 - ▶ **What are the needs of your members?**

To Start

- ▶ **Make sure you know where clients are physically located during the session**
 - Get verbal confirmation at the beginning of each session
 - Document in your case note
- ▶ **Have crisis contact information handy during sessions**
 - Family member emergency contact
 - Hospitalization process information in client's area
 - Police contacts
 - May be beneficial to have this in an offline format in case internet goes out

To Start

▶ Structure with intention

- The first session you should plan on spending extra time going over:
 - How it works
 - What the client(s) can expect from this kind of treatment
 - *What will happen if you get disconnected***
 - Setting boundaries with adolescents or teens about focusing and eliminating distractions
 - What should their space be like (private, appropriate)
- Your space matters too
 - Set boundaries in your own world (private room, use headphones, no interruptions, background of screen)

Age Will Matter

- ▶ **Participation with young children**
 - Parents/caregivers may need to be more heavily involved
 - This may be something you work out with parents prior to the first group
 - You can still do play therapy or integrate creative arts
 - Send materials ahead of time
 - Ask parents/caregivers to gather paper/markers, etc. before the session
 - Don't let the technology get in the way of your creativity as provider!
 - Consider what is developmentally realistic for participation
 - Depending on the age, it may be more useful to change to focus to be parent-driven during these sessions

Is home safe?

Age Will Matter

▶ Adolescents and Teens

- Spend time setting boundaries with focus and location
 - e.g., cannot be in jammies in bed
 - How is group different from other online dialogue they have?
 - Re-focus what they want out of group
- Promote participation and engagement by using intentional interventions
 - Discussion prompts
 - Worksheets
 - Creative techniques
 - Games
- Help them engage their home environment in a way that is therapeutic and thoughtful

Is home safe?

Age Will Matter

▶ Adults

- Most of the suggestions in this presentation will fit with running groups for adults
- Consider developmental level of your group and what their needs are
- Structure and direction usually will still be necessary

Is home safe?

Is Home Safe?

Safety Issues

- ▶ **Family and intimate partner violence increases during times of stress**
 - Not a lot of guidance about what to do for virtual treatment
- ▶ **In virtual sessions:**
 - Use verbal cues
 - Is now a good time to talk?
 - Do you feel comfortable talking?
 - “I wonder if you want to move to another room?”
 - Be flexible about where clients have the session if it increases safety
 - Take more initiative with helping them sort out safety issues
 - Institute safety word
 - Have client use headphones

Safety Issues

- ▶ **Most likely, at least one parent has consented to treatment**
 - May need to work with that parent more intentionally about establishing treatment expectations
 - Go over reporting/emergency protocol
- ▶ **Be aware of technological control that abusers may use**
- ▶ **Know reporting duties and responsibilities including how you would react in an immediate crisis**

Online Group Work

▶ It will be different

- That's ok!
- As providers, we can validate and normalize that it will be a transition and that provider and client will learn together
- Spend time exploring a client's experience with videoconference – get a sense of their level of comfort with tech generally
 - Kids are usually tech savvy – however don't make assumptions
 - Do they have experience using facetime or videoconference with groups of people, or is this new?
 - How will group be different – how do they hope group is different?
- Explore your own hesitation or bias against telework. We may bring in our own resistance to this process

Potential Pitfalls in Online Group

- ▶ **Goals are still to create cohesion, connection, sense of belonging!**
 - Barriers of online can make it more difficult to feel:
 - emotional connection
 - authenticity from self and group members
 - safety (e.g., feeling hyperaware of environment)
- ▶ **Feels Linear (less spontaneous sharing)**
 - Be cognizant to not do all the talking
 - Easy for you to become *teacher* and members to become *students*
- ▶ **Be aware of your desire to fill in silences**
- ▶ **Easier to intellectualize and talk about content in this format**

Skills for Online Group Work

- ▶ **Using a more active style may help in the beginning set the culture and increase engagement**
 - Drawing out or asking members to share more often
 - Linking
 - Keeping the focus or redirecting
 - Asking targeted questions or using prompts to deepen the focus
 - Cutting off when necessary
 - Using reflection more intentionally and incorporating feeling words
- ▶ **Be prepared to work a little harder at facilitation in the beginning. You will need to set the culture and show members how you want group to run**

Skills for Online Group Work

- ▶ You may need to spend more time doing interpersonal exploration
 - Because there is a disconnection of space, as the provider you may need to increase your attunement to client response (What are their reactions? What might they not be saying?)
 - For example :
 - “I want to go back to what Jamie shared a few minutes ago, what were people’s responses to this”
 - “James, I’m wondering what else you might be willing to share about how you’re handling the situation with your family”
 - “Who in the group can relate to Sherri, please share with us”
 - “Hmm, it feels like the group is a little bit distracted today. What’s going on? Let’s talk about it. On a scale of 1 (bad)-10 (awesome) how are people feeling about being in group today”

Skills for Online Group Work

- ▶ **Use your new environments!**
 - Have kids show you things from their home to discuss:
 - Their identity
 - How they feel
 - How they cope
 - Their family
- ▶ **Use group games or exercises where they have to interact with one another**
 - Simon Says
 - Charades
 - Ispy using each other's backgrounds

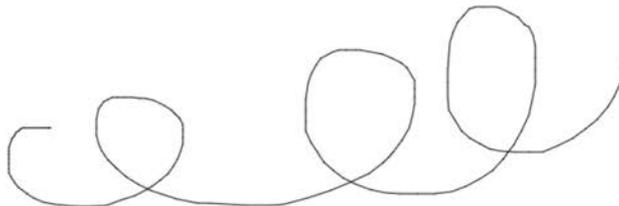
Using Technology in Online Group Work

- ▶ **Use technology**
 - Show video clips or share podcast snippets
 - Have clients share songs or even (appropriate) memes
 - Use web2.0 activities
 - Timeline apps (e.g., Dippity)
 - Creation and collaboration apps (e.g., Padlet, Popplet)
 - Webwhite boards
 - Use screen share for documents (members can share too)
 - Do breakout rooms for small group discussions
 - Use polling feature

Free board - expires in 18 days. Why? Make it permanent

This is a shared online whiteboard!
Anyone with this link can draw and write with you:
www.webwhiteboard.com/board/ewd5kgyk
If you register, you can create private and read-only boards.

hello



Courtney + 5 6mo

Group Interventions

Made with

Nobody ever listens to me. I don't feel understood.

Group 2

"Can anyone in the group relate to what Client X is saying?"

Group 4

What happens when you share here?

We're still number 1!!!

What do you need this group to understand about you?

Group 3

Can you share with the group some things that you want to be heard about.

Can you share a time you were

I don't feel appreciated by anyone in my family. I just give and they just take, I'm tired of it!

Group 2

"It sounds like you feel like you are being taken advantage of. What does appreciation look like to you?"

Group 3.

Asking if they have ever shared these feelings with their families.

Asking if anyone else in the group resonates with these feelings.

Asking how the group can help them feel appreciated.

Asking how they feel about sharing these feelings in the moment. How do they feel in this exact moment as they are expressing these feelings that they just shared.

As long as I can remember, I have felt different. I don't feel like I have much in common with everyone else in here. It's hard for me to feel a part of the group

Group 2

"How have you seen Client X contribute to the group?"

"Can anyone else relate?"

Group 4

How can we as a group make you feel more involved?

Group 4

How are you different?

I really want to get close to people, but at the same time I keep putting up barriers that keep people away from me. I am confused.

Group 2

"What kind of barriers keep us from getting close to others?"

"What do the barriers look like in the group/right now?"

Group 4

Who in this group have you made a connection with?

First!!!! 🏆

What barriers do you feel like you've put up in this group?

I want to ask for group time, but I feel like I spend too much time talking about my problems. Others are going to get tired of hearing me!

Group 2

Process thoughts on disclosing

Group 4

Can we get some feedback from the group?

Group 4

The #1 group

Will you ask the group for feedback on that?

Online Group Work – Younger Children

- ▶ Think about developmentally appropriate interventions for your age group and adapt
- ▶ Think about how parents may need to be involved
- ▶ Young children:
 - Can use also their own toys or board games and involve you in their play
 - Turn a board game that you may use in a therapy session into something you can do virtually and share between members
 - Use emotional recognition games with faces
 - Use puppets
 - Use books

COVID-19 context

- ▶ **Remember that clients are going to be somewhat in crisis**
 - Even if clients were doing great before this crisis, likely they are struggling in some way. Grief, loss, fear, confusion, existential angst...
- ▶ **If you have "plans" or expectations for a session or group, is it flexible enough to accommodate what clients need during this time?**
- ▶ **Plan for the need to do risk assessments (and understand what this means for the online context and your role)**
- ▶ **What happens to kids in crisis or after they experience trauma?**
 - Developmental regression
 - Somatic concerns
 - Need to express other ways than verbally

Setting up a Group

- ▶ **Planning is still critical (a solid group plan and curriculum helps guide the experience)**
- ▶ **Screening is important**
 - What kind of group is it and what type of client/consumer would benefit
 - open vs. closed
 - coping skills vs. process oriented
 - Who will be a good fit for the group
 - Personality
 - DX
 - motivation for group treatment
 - How will screening happen?
 - Who will do it
 - In what format (phone call, video conference)

Setting up a Group

- ▶ **Screening is important, cont.**
 - When screening for an online group, questions may include:
 - Desire to participate in online format
 - Do they have access to technology that you're requiring?
 - ✓ are you requiring video?
 - ✓ is phone only OK?
 - ✓ Is texting ok?
 - Assess for safety of home environment and other imminent risk
 - How will you involve parents (if working with kids)?
 - More frequent check ins with parent may be necessary given context

Summary

- ▶ **Be patient with yourself and your clients**
- ▶ **Continue to be creative!!**
- ▶ **Being online doesn't make boundaries or expectations less diffuse, in some ways it makes them more pronounced**
- ▶ **Know that especially in this time, you are making a difference in people's lives**

Q & A

Chat in your questions to “THE HOST”

The recording and slides will be available on ctacny.org within 2-3 business days.

Thank you!

Please feel welcome to contact Dr. Courtney Holmes at cmholmes@vcu.edu.

If you have questions about CTAC, please contact ctac.info@nyu.edu.

Please take a moment to fill out the ***Feedback Survey*** that will appear upon closing the webinar, and let us know of topics for future offerings that would be beneficial to you!

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Upcoming CTAC Events

From In-Person to On-Screen: Best Practices in Telemental Health with Children & Adolescents

TODAY, April 15th at 2 PM

Dads & Depression: Paternal Depression in New and Expectant Dads

Tuesday, April 21st at 12 PM

Helping Kinicare Families Cope with Ambiguous Loss

Monday, April 27th at 12 PM

Transition Age Youth (TAY) Engagement: Best Practices & Personal Experiences

Thursday, April 30th at 12 PM

Register at registration.nytac.org