

## Areas of Competence for Psychologists in Telepsychology

### Introduction

The American Psychological Association (APA) has espoused that the expanding use of telecommunication technology in psychology practice supports the need for the development of guidelines for telepsychology. Over the last decade psychologists have been introduced to rapidly evolving technological media. As a result, psychologists are becoming more dependent on the use of technology in their practices. As the state of Ohio has rules pertinent to telepsychology and the Ohio Psychological Association (OPA) has developed telepsychology guidelines, this document is designed to set forth a fundamental level of core competencies related to telepsychology that all psychologists in the State of Ohio should adhere to in order to demonstrate best practices and assure client welfare. This document is designed to identify basic telepsychology competencies pertinent to the (a) Ohio Board of Psychology Telepsychology Rules (2011); the Ohio Psychological Association Telepsychology Guidelines (2010); The APA Guidelines for Telepsychology (2013); and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

**I. Psychologist Technical Skills: Foundational technological skills that are needed to establish a therapeutic relationship via technological means for the psychologist and the client.**

<b>Knowledge and Skills of Technology Approaches</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
I.a. Knowledge of limits of practice in relation to telepsychology rules and guidelines	Psychologists need to be aware of 2012 State of Ohio Telepsychology Guidelines 2011 Ohio Bd. Of Psychology Telepsychology Rule 4732-17-01(1) and 2013 American Psychological Association Telepsychology Guidelines
I.b. Knowledge of telemental health best practice standards and guidelines	Knowledgeable about current telemental health standards and guidelines relevant to telepsychology such as 2013 Practice Guidelines for Video-Based Online Mental Health Services
I.c. Knowledge of evolving technology	Remain abreast of evolving uses of technology in providing psychological services.
I.d. Knowledge of existing technology	Use of current forms of telecommunications such as video conferencing, telephone, texting, email, etc.
I.e. Knowledge of how to assess the client's knowledge and skills for receiving services via telecommunications	Evaluating the client's abilities to receive services via telecommunications based upon their knowledge and skills in using the telecommunications that would be used to receive telepsychology services
I.f. Knowledge of how to assess client's needs to determine the most	Establishing contact with client to conduct an initial assessment to determine their physical capabilities,

appropriate technological approach for therapeutic services.	language requirements, cultural mores, clinical needs and access to devices and services permitting synchronous and/or asynchronous communications.
I.g. Knowledge of current and evolving online assessment tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a diagnostic interview in order to assess client's psychological needs and issues to align with appropriate online assessments.</li> <li>• Adhere to standardized procedures for conducting online assessments to ensure the integrity of the data.</li> <li>• Awareness of limitations relating to online assessment and interpretation.</li> </ul>
I.h. Knowledge of security issues related to telepsychology therapeutic approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of encryption</li> <li>• Storage of electronic communications (e.g., time period, location)</li> <li>• Disposal of electronic records of client data</li> </ul>
<b>II. Psychologist's Clinical Telepsychology Skills: Set of foundational skills used in the application of telepsychology.</b>	

<b>Knowledge and Skills of Clinical Telepsychology</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
II.a. Knowledge of how to conduct therapeutic and/or assessment services online.	Maintain periodic consultation with professional colleagues, attend trainings and professional conferences keep abreast of professional literature as well as meet any future biannual telepsychology requirements of the Ohio State Board of Psychology.
II.b. Knowledge of evolving specialized clinical skills required for online therapeutic services.	Maintain periodic consultation with professional colleagues, attend trainings and professional conferences.
II.c. Knowledge, respect, and awareness of factors pertaining to age, race, ethnicity, language, gender orientation, disability, and culture.	Identify needs and appropriate modifications related to client diversity in regards to therapeutic services and/or online assessments.

**III. Psychologist and Client Relationship: Set of foundational skills used in the application of telepsychology to establish a therapeutic online relationship.**

<b>Knowledge and Skills for Establishing, Maintaining, and Terminating the Psychologist and Client Relationship</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
III.a. Knowledge pertaining to decision-making regarding client welfare.	Conduct a risk vs. benefit analysis during the three stages (i.e., initial, ongoing, final) of the online therapeutic relationship.
III.b. Knowledge of legal	Comply with best practice approaches for the delivery of online

and ethical requirements related to state and federal laws and regulations.	therapeutic services via periodic consultation with professional colleagues, attending online trainings and professional conferences.
<b>Initial Stage of Online Therapeutic Relationship</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
III.c. Knowledge of the most appropriate therapeutic approach based on client needs.	Establishing contact with client to conduct an initial assessment to determine their physical capabilities, language requirements, cultural mores, and access to devices and services permitting face-to-face and remote (synchronous and/or asynchronous) communications.
III.d. Knowledge of how to develop and communicate the service or treatment plan and process.	Review the service or treatment plan including therapeutic goals and description of the process and development of therapeutic goals
III.e. Knowledge of HIPAA policies	Review the following with client: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written agreements and informed consent</li> <li>• clarification of fees</li> <li>• financial arrangements</li> <li>• storage of electronic communications (e.g., online session transcripts)</li> <li>• release of information</li> <li>• provisions of disclosures to other professionals</li> </ul>
III.f. Knowledge of how to establish an emergency plan	Communicate with client: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 hour emergency coverage (i.e., after hour coverage)</li> <li>• Plans for the absence/unavailability of treating psychologist to include a psychologist with telepsychology expertise</li> </ul> Securing Client Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Client's emergency contact information (e.g., alternate emergency contact)</li> </ul> Knowledge of Community Resources in Client's Geographic Area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of emergency contact numbers (e.g., police, crisis agencies, hospital, rescue)</li> </ul>
III.g. Knowledge of Limitations of Distance Technology	Awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compatibility of electronic equipment and services</li> <li>• Contingency plans for disruption of service</li> <li>• Security risks</li> <li>• Impact of various electronic communication formats on the client-therapist response time</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance Stage of Online Therapeutic Relationship</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
III.h. Knowledge of on-going risk vs. benefit analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual assessment of the therapeutic relationship, progress toward client goals, and approach being used online</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Progress monitoring (e.g., monitoring client’s perceptions of satisfaction with telepsychology services)</li> <li>● Modification of treatment plans and/or appropriateness of telepsychology services based on progress monitoring data</li> <li>● Determining whether to continue using telepsychology services versus in-person services, a combination of both, make a referral or discontinue telepsychology services</li> </ul>
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**Termination Stage of Online Therapeutic Relationship**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
III.i. Knowledge of When to Terminate Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analyze progress monitoring data in relation to the attainment of treatment goals and client benefits and risks.</li> </ul>
III.j. Knowledge of How to Terminate Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop follow-up contingency plan</li> <li>● Analyze client’s perceptions of satisfaction with telepsychology services</li> </ul>

**IV. Psychologist’s Clinical Supervision Skills Using Telepsychology: Set of foundational skills used in the application of telepsychology to guide a supervisory online relationship.**

**Supervisor and Supervisee Knowledge and Skills of Technology Approaches**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
IV.a. Knowledge of technology approaches and competency guidelines for client welfare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● See above I.a – III.j</li> <li>● Establishing compatible telepsychology communications</li> </ul>

**Knowledge and Skills for Establishing, Maintaining, and Terminating Supervisor and Supervisee Relationship**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
IV.b. Knowledge of the most appropriate supervision models based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Choose a compatible supervisory model based on an analysis of the supervisee’s clinical strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>● Determine the appropriateness of the supervisory model for</li> </ul>

on supervisee's needs.	telepsychology supervision.
IV.c. Knowledge of supervisory plan development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a written professional developmental plan of competency attainment for the supervisee that can be implemented via telepsychology and/or face-to-face supervision.</li> <li>• Arrange a systematic schedule for weekly supervision via telepsychology and/or face-to-face meetings.</li> <li>• Clarify supervisor's responsibilities and supervisee's expectations.</li> </ul>
IV.d. Knowledge of evaluation and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a best practices evaluation and feedback approach that encompasses multi-method supervisory techniques (e.g., written, interviews with other professionals working with supervisee, client feedback evaluation on services)</li> <li>• Development of a contingency plan for supervision if telepsychology approaches are not sufficient for adequate developmental professional growth of the supervisee (e.g., requires more intense face-to-face supervision with or without telepsychology supervision).</li> </ul>
IV.e. Knowledge of How to Terminate a Supervisory Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review written developmental plan of competency attainment identifying areas of growth and areas for continued professional development.</li> <li>• Secure supervisee's feedback and perceptions regarding the use of telepsychology supervisory methods.</li> </ul>

<b>V. Ongoing Professional Development Requirements: Continuing education to maintain current knowledge and skill competencies in telepsychology.</b>	
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>
V.a. Knowledge of current telepsychology practices.	Psychologists practicing telepsychology will regularly obtain needed continuing education and training to maintain competence in the area of telepsychology.

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