



Innovative and Effective Practices to Support Remote Clinical Internships: A Compilation of Recent Research on Best Practices

Prepared for:

Greater Nashua Mental Health Center

By: the New Hampshire Technical Assistance Center, with funding from the New Hampshire Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services

February 2021



Growth Partners LLC

Contents

Overview of Research Request and Methodology	2
Topic	2
Background	2
Method	2
About This Technical Assistance (TA) Product	2
Summary of Findings	3
Background	3
Challenges and Benefits of Remote Internships	3
Challenges	3
Benefits	3
Innovative and Effective Strategies to Support Remote Internships	4
In-Depth Planning	5
“Goodness of Fit” Screening	6
Effective Onboarding Processes	7
Access To, Training In, and Comfort with Technology	8
Appendix A: <i>Internships in the Era of COVID-19: A Nonprofit Guide for Virtual Internships</i>	12
Appendix B: <i>What Do We Know about Online Internships? A Review of the Academic and Practitioner Literatures</i>	15
Appendix C: <i>Going Global in Small Steps: E-Internships in Small and Medium-Sized Organizations</i>	18
Appendix D: <i>An Exploration of Supervision Delivered via Clinical Video Telehealth (CVT)</i>	21
Appendix E: <i>Shifting a Training Clinic to Teletherapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Trainee Perspective</i>	23
Appendix F: <i>Challenges and Considerations for Predoctoral Psychology Interns During a Pandemic</i>	27
Appendix G: <i>Working Relationships Among Supervisors and Interns in Virtual Internships</i>	29

Overview of Research Request and Methodology

Topic

Innovative and effective practices to support remote internships for students at all levels in clinical settings

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the experience of student interns in clinical substance use disorder (SUD) treatment settings. Because of the need to significantly replace in-person client appointments with telehealth, Greater Nashua Mental Health Center (GNMHC) is not able to provide its interns the typical, in-facility experience with face-to-face mentoring from a professional clinician. GNMHC—which is expecting a new intern in mid-January 2021—is interested in learning about effective strategies for preserving the integrity of the intern experience for students, at all degree levels, when clinical work must be conducted remotely.

Method

Growth Partners LLC (Growth Partners) reviewed, collected, and compiled innovative and effective practices being used to support remote-based internships for students, at all degree levels, in clinical settings and in related sectors. Research articles spanning 5 years, from 2016 to 2020, were examined to select best practices and common and contrasting experiences.

Search Strategy

Electronic searches of databases, such as PubMed, Google Scholar, ProQuest, ScienceDirect, and Synergy, were completed and articles selected. Growth Partners used the following as search terms: e-internships, clinical internships and COVID-19, virtual internship strategies, virtual internships, and COVID-19. Six articles were obtained from these searches. Research was compiled using the most recent research studies, guidance, and articles on the impact of the pandemic on training and internship settings.

About This Technical Assistance (TA) Product

The New Hampshire Technical Assistance Center, operated by Growth Partners LLC, is funded by the New Hampshire Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services to provide a wide range of TA services to support the state's alcohol and other drug continuum of care. If you would like more information about this document or would like to request TA, please visit us at www.nhtac.org.

Summary of Findings

Background

High-quality internships provide students, at all levels, with “an immersive experience in an organizations’ workplace culture” and “rich opportunities for the development of professional networks and discipline- or occupation-specific professional skills and competencies,” such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving (Hora et al., 2020, p. 5). The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has dramatically impacted the experience of student interns in clinical SUD treatment and other settings due to the need to significantly replace in-person client appointments with telehealth. This limits the ability of agencies that sponsor interns from providing an in-facility experience, with face-to-face mentoring from a professional clinician, raising concerns about preserving the integrity of the intern experience for students, at all degree levels, during the period that clinical work must be conducted remotely.

Challenges and Benefits of Remote Internships



Challenges. The challenges associated with remote internships affect both professional development and practice. For example, because exposure to organizational culture and etiquette is key to the development of future employees, successful remote work requires thoughtful attention to new ways of ensuring effective communication and to preserving professional community.

Regarding practice, research indicates that interns and trainees can find it difficult to go without the non-verbal cues that can be essential in assessing client well-being and progress. In addition, video-based therapy gives clients greater discretion over how much to engage during a therapy session. For example, in the first few weeks of teletherapy at one site, multiple adolescent clients chose to walk away from the computer screen during difficult moments (Scharff et al., 2020).



Benefits. Research also highlights multiple benefits of remote internships. These include increasing (1) access to students who may be located at a distance from the sponsoring agency and (2) trainee exposure to certain clinical populations, with whom they would not otherwise work during in-person supervision. For example, telesupervision can provide unique opportunities related to rural patient care and to diversity in training (Jordan & Shearer, 2019).

Research findings also underscore how receiving supervision via video technologies can provide interns with a better understanding of the patient experience of telehealth by being themselves on the receiving end of video technologies (Jordan & Shearer, 2019). In addition, seeing clients in their homes via telehealth technology can provide interns with new opportunities to witness family dynamics (Scharff et al., 2020).

Research findings indicate that providing therapy during a period of near-universal anxiety, due to pandemic conditions, has required trainees to consistently practice managing their own emotional distress—with the help of supervisors—to empathize with and to support their clients. Although this can be difficult at times, trainees derive future benefit from the opportunity to strengthen this essential competency early in their training (Scharff et al., 2020). From an organizational perspective, remote internships can also be beneficial in that they reduce financial and space concerns (e.g., overhead, office space, insurance) (Jeske & Axtell, 2016).

Innovative and Effective Strategies to Support Remote Internships

Key factors to successful, remote-based internships include in-depth planning; “goodness of fit” screening; effective onboarding processes; experience with, access to, and training in technology; and effective supervision and communication.

Research underscores the importance of maintaining best practices associated with experiential learning, supplemented by accommodations to enrich the remote experience.

Recommendations for operationalizing each of these are summarized in the following pages, along with citations to the research abstracts (contained in appendices A – G). Appendix A—*Internships in the Era of COVID-19: A Nonprofit Guide for Virtual Internships*,” by Katy Hogan and published by the National Council of Nonprofits in 2020—provides a concise and useful set of considerations and sequential steps for planning a successful remote internship. Appendix B outlines the standards for “legitimate internships” by the [National Association of Colleges and Employers](#) (NACE). While these standards apply to both online and remote internship programs, some become even more important in remote experiences. The other abstracts build and expand upon these with additional findings.



In-Depth Planning. Carefully define the internship purpose, goals, and expectations, and have clear organizational policies on the use of telehealth and telesupervision. Researchers note that underestimating the time and planning needed to set up and develop the program can lead to unsuccessful remote internships. (Jeske & Axtell, 2016).

Defining Internship Purpose, Goals, and Expectations. Establish clear expectations and learning outcomes for the internship prior to its beginning. This sets a foundation for clear communication, which leads to secure attachments and completed internship projects that meet all criteria (Hora et al., 2020).

Clear Organizational Policies. Have a clear policy on the use of telesupervision that adheres to requirements for national standards for accreditation. Policies should also cover the following topics: emergency procedures in case of patient crisis, how live supervision/observation will be conducted, supervision resources, protocols for accessing supervision resources between scheduled sessions, and ways for clients to access supervisors (Jordan & Shearer, 2019). It is also important to develop policies for providing remote interns and supervisors with secure access to client files and to a remote resource library, establishing Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)-compliant videoconferencing accounts (e.g., [Zoom for Healthcare](#)), and designing protocols for crisis intervention for remote clients in distress. For example, one program stipulates that the intern begin each therapy session by asking for the client's physical address in case it is necessary to call a mobile crisis unit. Even with additional protocols in place, research findings note that interns observed that physical separation from their supervisors results in increased independence in using their clinical judgment for risk management. To manage this, supervisors are kept apprised of each intern's exact schedule, and interns can add supervisors to the phone or video call, if needed (Scharff et al., 2020).

Important organizational policy topics include but are not limited to:

- * Use of telesupervision adherence to national standards for accreditation*
- * Crisis intervention/emergency procedure in case of patient crisis*
- * Access to supervision resources between scheduled sessions*
- * Client access to supervisors*
- * Secure access to client files*
- * Use of HIPAA-compliant videoconferencing accounts*



“Goodness of Fit” Screening. Remote interns are more likely to succeed if they are motivated, have good communication skills, are self-driven, and have the right technological skills. Research underscores the importance of screening interns carefully to determine “goodness of fit” and readiness to engage in telesupervision. Other important skills include the ability to conduct self-regulated learning and reflection.

Successful strategies to assess “goodness of fit” for remote interns include having applicants submit video clips and goal statements to help supervisors get a better sense of their ability to summarize who they are, how they present themselves, and what learning goals they hope to achieve (Jeske & Axtell, 2016). Another suggested strategy is to conduct a baseline competency assessment that includes an understanding of the interns’ learning needs, competencies, and goals and of their individual approaches to learning. This can help to identify those who are more likely to engage more easily in telesupervision (Jordan & Shearer, 2019).

Remote internship programs also benefit from careful consideration of the supervisors selected to provide telehealth supervision. Because interns may need to engage outside of regularly scheduled supervision sessions, supervisors who are less willing to be available for consultation in between supervision sessions—or are less responsive via email, phone, or instant messaging—are not ideal candidates for telesupervision, regardless of their other supervisory or clinical strengths (Jordan & Shearer, 2019).





Effective Onboarding Processes. It is important to create an effective onboarding and training plan and to spread onboarding over a few days to a week. Topics for onboarding include orientation to the policies discussed earlier, as well as human resource (HR) and information technology (IT) needs, security considerations, access to online platforms and other distance technologies used by your organization, organizational codes of conduct, confidentiality protocols, formal trainings, and connecting with colleagues.

Key onboarding tasks and considerations (Hogan, 2020):

- * *Make a list of HR/IT needs, and help the intern work through each.*
 - * *Provide a written set of security policies, and review them with the intern.*
 - * *Set up accounts for platforms your organization uses to communicate and meet, along with instructions and expectations for their use.*
 - * *Provide a code of conduct or an etiquette guide, if available.*
 - * *Identify, in writing, what information is confidential and what can be shared, and explain why.*
 - * *Send recommended readings/websites/social media for review ahead of the intern's first day.*
 - * *Share the organization's mission, vision, and values statements.*
 - * *Build any trainings into the onboarding schedule, and provide clear deadlines by which they should be completed.*
 - * *Plan how you will introduce your intern to others within the organization (e.g., will your intern have a peer coach or mentor or virtual coffee dates?).*
-





Access To, Training In, and Comfort with Technology. In remote internships, all interactions are facilitated by, and heavily dependent on, technology, software, and good communication skills of all involved. Research identifies lack of utilization of resources and technology as key factors leading to unsuccessful remote internships (Jeske & Axtell, 2016).

Relating remotely has become a normal part of the lives of people worldwide, particularly younger generations, who routinely connect with friends, family, colleagues, and others on social media and by texting or talking on smart phones. However, some supervisors find that interns do not have the technology required to perform work or to communicate well, and some interns find that communicating with a supervisor is not the same as with friends and family (Youngblood, 2020).

Reliable and secure internet access from home and the ability to remotely access a secure electronic records system is critical to provide continuity of contact and care with clients. A secure, reliable, and comprehensive electronic record will allow an intern to both access and share client information with other approved users, such as their supervisor, to maintain and ensure appropriate clinical oversight, ethical considerations, and HIPAA compliance (Badwan, 2020). Others noted that interns need to have clear instruction on how to effectively use technology, solve technology issues, and obtain support. They also need to be provided the opportunity to adjust to being supervised remotely (Jordan & Shearer, 2019).

Research shows that supervisors with extensive experience using online technologies tend to favor more interactive and regular online meetings than supervisors who are less experienced or comfortable. The use of technologies reduces delays in communication, makes it easier for a supervisor to track progress and to provide feedback, and provides access to resources interns need on an “around-the-clock” basis, reducing reliance on supervisors to be available during all hours. Examples of these technologies include shared databases; document-sharing software; interactive video, chat, and joint-working programs; and shared appointment calendars. If organizational resources permit, the use of software-based performance metrics can also be very helpful (Jeske & Axtell, 2016). In addition, learning management systems (LMS) can be

Those selected to supervise remote interns should be comfortable with—and highly experienced in—using online technologies.

helpful in organizing intern materials (e.g., readings, discussions), increasing communication, and tracking progress (Hora et al., 2020).

When conducting teletherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic, many trainees experience a blurring of boundaries with their clients due to lack of access to office space to conduct their sessions. As graduate students, many trainees may live with a roommate or partner who is also quarantined, and some trainees have traveled to stay with family during the crisis. Thus, many have limited private space in which to work. Holding video sessions from their own homes potentially allows clients to see their pets, decorations, and furniture. While these non-verbal disclosures do not fit the established definition of self-disclosure, disclosures of at least some personal information have become unavoidable for many trainees.

Remote interns using telehealth technologies can mitigate privacy concerns by wearing headphones; practicing telehealth from their bedrooms if it is the only private space available; and displaying virtual backgrounds to block out personal information.





Effective and Ongoing Supervision and

Communication. Any differences between telesupervision and in-person supervision are related to individual variables of the supervisor and/or the intern, rather than to the platform of supervision. Thus, the things that create good supervision in person, such as a supportive relationship and strong working alliance, are important, regardless of platform (Jordan & Shearer, 2019).

Supervision of remote interns may have to occur more frequently and for shorter amounts of time.

In remote internships, however, supervision may have to occur more frequently and for shorter amounts of time (Badwan, 2020). Lack of supervisory support and feedback programs lead to unsuccessful remote internships (Jeske & Axtell, 2016).

The supervision experience will be more successful if interns are given an opportunity to discuss any initial discomfort in using video technologies both to provide clinical care and to engage in supervision. Accordingly, telesupervision often requires more investment in the beginning of the intern experience, compared to in-person supervision. The way in which the supervisor connects with the intern and provides timely and meaningful feedback is especially important, given the physical distance.

Research identifies multiple strategies for increasing the effectiveness of supervision, communication and for managing knowledge, including (Jeske & Axtell, 2016):

- Implementing a response time of less than 24 hours for returning emails from interns
- Signing into chat services to see which interns are online
- Responding to intern queries immediately
- Developing discussion groups for team projects
- Using analytics to keep track of key performance indicators
- Replicating the “water cooler” dynamic, with social media groups designed to help remote interns and staff meet, chat, and exchange news independently
- Creating shared databases and interactive portals that allow all team members to contribute and support each other openly; this also allows supervisors to better assess progress, knowledge sharing, and participation of all team members—including the remote intern—and reduces isolation.
- Using interactive portals to record team interactions and team conferencing, which can promote a sense of purpose and identity and help the supervisor evaluate the interns’ progress over time

Appendix A: *Internships in the Era of COVID-19: A Nonprofit Guide for Virtual Internships*

Hogan, K. (2020, September 11). *Internships in the era of COVID-19: A nonprofit guide for virtual internships*. National Council of Nonprofits.

<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/thought-leadership/internships-the-era-of-covid-19-nonprofit-guide-virtual-internships>

This article provides guidance and tips on adapting internships to a virtual environment, including creating resources for intern partners and ensuring experiential education opportunities remain high quality for students and hosts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The author oversees graduate and undergraduate intern programs and has had experience moving her intern programs fully online for the academic year 2020-2021.

Key tasks associated with successful virtual internships include creating clear objectives, developing a training plan, defining the supervisory structure, creating a clear line of communication, building community, and supporting professional development and mentorship.

Key topics and details covered in the article are summarized below:

Clear Objectives

- What are the primary tasks and duties, and what professional development opportunities can you build into this internship?
- Share the objectives and expectations in a written description with the intern and everyone involved (e.g., direct supervisor, human resources team, intern, school contact).

Training Plan

- **Onboarding:** Spread onboarding over a few days to a week.
- **HR/IT:** Make a list of HR/IT needs, and help the intern work through each.
- **Security:** Detail all security policies in writing.
- **Accounts:** Set up accounts for platforms your organization uses to communicate and meet, along with instructions and expectations.
- **Conduct:** Provide a code of conduct or an etiquette guide, if available.
- **Confidentiality:** What information cannot be shared? Identify, in writing, what is confidential, and explain why.

- **Pre-Work:** Send a recommended list of readings/websites/social media for review ahead of the intern's first day. Share the organization's mission, vision, and values statements.
- **Trainings:** Build any trainings into the onboarding schedule, and provide clear deadlines by which they should be completed.
- **Community Building:** How will you introduce your intern to others within the organization? Will your intern have a peer coach or mentor? Will there be virtual coffee dates?

Supervisory Structure

- Determine who manages the intern's day-to-day work.
- Clarify expectations and performance management process (i.e., how will it be defined and tracked?).
- Schedule a midpoint and final review.

Clear Line of Communication

- Conduct daily touchpoints and weekly check-ins.
- Use a weekly agenda template. Add reflective pieces (e.g., what was difficult this week? what surprised you? what are you most proud of?).
- Develop a workplan that includes a feedback loop (i.e., what is expected? how will the intern know that s/he is meeting expectations? how can s/he expect to receive feedback and how frequently? does s/he know how [and to whom] to give feedback about his/her experience?)
- Communicate expectations for etiquette and professionalism when using email, texting, phone calls, social media, and video conferences, as well as for dress code when working from home.
- Communicate how the intern's tasks help advance the organization's mission. Explain how the tasks fit into the bigger picture.

Building Community

Set up:

- A welcome coffee or lunch virtually
- A virtual office happy hour
- Virtual meetings with others within the organization and debrief these meetings with the intern

Professional Development and Mentorship Activities

- Assign a mentor or peer coach/buddy.
- Ask about short- and long-term goals.
- Suggest webinars relevant to the intern's work.

- Set up virtual coffees with others outside of the organization, and mentor the intern through the networking process.
- Facilitate a meet-and-greet with the chief executive officer or high-level leaders.
- If comfortable, offer resume review, mock interviewing, and other professional guidance near the end of the internship.

Contact information:

Katy Hogan
Director of Washington Programs
John Glenn College of Public Affairs
The Ohio State University
hogan.124@osu.edu

Appendix B: *What Do We Know about Online Internships? A Review of the Academic and Practitioner Literatures*

Hora, M., Vivona, B., Chen, Z., Zhang, J., Thompson, M., & Brown, R. (2020). *What do we know about online internships? A review of the academic and practitioner literatures.*

[http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_Report%20%2310 Online Internships Lit Review May2020.pdf](http://ccwt.wceruw.org/documents/CCWT_Report%20%2310_Online_Internships_Lit_Review_May2020.pdf)

In this literature review, the authors present key findings from academic and practitioner literatures regarding online internships. Key factors identified that led to the success of online internships include pre-internship orientations, self-regulated learning, sufficient technology, and effective supervision. They highlight the importance of adherence to and application of the standards outlined for “legitimate internships” by NACE to remote internship programs. In addition, the authors outline their own criteria to include, providing students “with an immersive experience in an organization’s workplace culture, which can provide rich opportunities for the development of professional networks and discipline- or occupation-specific professional skills and competencies (p. 5).” These competencies include skills like teamwork, communication (oral, written, digital, non-verbal), critical thinking, and/or problem solving.

NACE Criteria for Face-to Face, Online, or Remote Intern Experiences

- * *The experience must be an extension of the classroom: a learning experience that provides for applying the knowledge gained in the classroom.*
- * *Skills/knowledge learned is transferable to other employment settings.*
- * *The experience has a defined beginning and end and a job description with desired qualifications.*
- * *There are clearly defined learning objectives/goals related to the professional goals of the student’s academic coursework.*
- * *There is supervision by a professional with expertise and educational and/or professional background in the field of the experience.*
- * *There is routine feedback by the experienced supervisor.*
- * *There are resources, equipment, and facilities provided by the host employer that support learning objectives/goals.*

Intern engagement ideas:

- * Randomly assign interns to company executives for “coffee chats” to reduce the feeling that a virtual experience is a socially isolating one.*
 - * Use LMS to organize materials, track progress, and increase communication.*
-

The review of academic literature focused on research relating to key elements of effective online/remote internships and on ideas for work-based learning, including the following:

- Clear expectations articulated for the internship prior to the internship beginning
- Backwards design, which articulates learning outcomes prior to creating the internship; explicit, clear communication between clients, mentors, and interns during the virtual internship leads to secure attachments and to internships that end in completed projects meeting all the criteria.
- Supervisor training
- Availability of academic advisors
- Post-internship evaluation, which is essential to continually improve programs
- Longer internships, which are more likely to include a mentor-intern relationship; mentoring enhanced students’ skill development (especially communication skills), and students were more likely to be given opportunities to engage in collaborative work.

Results from practitioner literature review included reviewing how-to guides from career services, work-based learning, and internship practitioners and professionals. Key tips and guides from postsecondary professionals included the importance of:

- Recognizing that internships are not free labor
- Substantial investments in time to plan an effective experience (i.e., articulate learning goals, identify outcomes and assessment methods) and supervisor commitment to regular mentoring
- Student/intern motivation, self-advocacy, and self-regulated learning practices
- Functional communication technology
- Requiring that the intern attends all meetings prepared and ready to contribute
- Advocating for oneself in an online internship
- Asking for regular meetings with and feedback from his/her supervisor
- Awareness of supervisors and staff of potential biases and blind spots, with respect to intern identities
- Preparation of the intern, by supervisors, for his/her work assignments 1-2 months prior to the start of the internship itself

Advice for students considering online internships:

- * Make sure you have time!*
 - * Make sure you manage your time well.*
 - * Know your work habits and what you need to succeed.*
 - * Do not be afraid to ask for things.*
-

Work-integrated learning examples:

- * Use immersive, scenario-based activities that modify problem-based learning, and allow intern to assume roles in different scenarios.*
 - * Scaffold real-world scenarios—from easy to difficult situations—to assess the intern’s complexity and accuracy of problem-solving abilities.*
 - * Use LMS for readings, engaging in discussions, and submitting assignments.*
-

Contact information:

Amy Rivera
Project Manager
Center for Research on College-Workforce Transitions
Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education,
University of Wisconsin
arivera3@wisc.edu

Appendix C: *Going Global in Small Steps: E-Internships in Small and Medium-Sized Organizations*

Jeske, D., & Axtell, C. M. (2016). Going global in small steps: E-internships in small and medium-sized organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*, 45(1), 55–63.
http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/98453/2/WRRO_98453.pdf

This article describes the rise of e-internships across different countries and explores the opportunities and challenges in developing talent and knowledge management practices, managing diversity, and the investment required for e-internships to succeed.

Strategies for successful remote internships include assessing intern-supervisor “fit,” managing knowledge and facilitating knowledge acquisition in new and innovative ways, using peer coaches, and managing supervisor responsiveness and comfort with using technology.

The authors note that, in virtual work and e-internships, “all interactions are facilitated by—but also heavily dependent on—technology, software, and good communication skills of all individuals involved (p. 2).” Developing trust with colleagues can be more challenging. The authors collected interviews from 19 experts in the field, including former interns, experts on internships, staff, and advisors. The organizations in the study ran internships located in several countries, including the United States, India, Ireland, Romania, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

The authors listed a few benefits of e-internships, including no costs for long-distance travel, financial and space concerns on the part of the organization (e.g., overhead), office space, and insurance and technological requirements onsite. The main criticism is that e-internships do not provide the same access to support and opportunities that traditional internships do. E-interns may not experience corporate culture and etiquette or learn about professional expectations—all key skills in the development of future employees.

Key facilitators for the success of e-internships in small and medium-sized organizations can be drawn from the experiences of large national and international organizations. One finding from the authors is that many supervisors had been extensive users of online technologies, due to working as freelancers, teleworkers, or virtual workers in the

past. They note that people with this background favored more interactive and often more regular online meetings than supervisors with a more traditional background.

Because job shadowing can be a challenge for many organizations with e-interns, providing training materials and sessions can be helpful.

Office culture is difficult, if not impossible, to gauge in an online environment. Thus, good communication is needed to keep all individuals up to date and to ensure no e-interns fall through the cracks. E-interns are more likely to succeed if they are motivated, have good communication skills, are self-driven, and have the right technological skills.

Factors that led to unsuccessful e-internships included underestimating the time and planning needed to set up and develop the program. That also relates to the lack of utilization of resources, technology, supervisory support, and feedback programs. Additionally, assessing an intern's suitability virtually may prove challenging, especially when projects require trust, due to the intern having access to confidential information or intellectual property. Some technologies, especially those not allowing for interactive and face-to-face online exchanges, may filter out those cues that normally aid in interpretation of important non-verbal cues.

Intern-Supervisor Fit

Use of video clips and goal statements that help supervisors get a better sense of the person's ability to summarize who s/he is, how s/he presents him-/herself, and what learning goals s/he hopes to achieve was one key finding from the interviews.

Approaches to Managing Knowledge

- One approach to "water cooler" exchange of information is developing social media groups specifically designed for e-interns to meet, chat, and exchange news independently.
- Creating shared databases and interactive portals for all team members to contribute and support each other openly allows supervisors to better assess progress; knowledge sharing; and participation of all members of a team, including the e-intern. This approach also reduces isolation and uncertainty about whom to contact for specific questions.
- Interactive portals that record team interactions and team conferencing can not only promote a sense of purpose and identity, but also assist the supervisor in evaluating the e-intern's progress over time.

Peer Coaching

This strategy ensures that e-interns have access to peers when the supervisor is not available. Peer coaches benefit by building their supervisory experience. They are responsible for ensuring all participants in a team are aware of each other's roles and bring all their knowledge to the task.

Supervisor Management

- Implement a response time of less than 24 hours for emails to avoid delays due to asynchronous working hours and communication.
- Sign into chat services to see which e-interns are online and to respond to queries immediately.
- Develop libraries of training materials.
- Facilitate discussion groups for team projects.
- Use analytics to keep track of key performance indicators.
- Encourage social cohesion to increase knowledge transfer.

The use of technology reduces delays and makes it easier for a supervisor to track progress and to provide feedback. It also provides access to resources they need around the clock, thus reducing email traffic/chat queries and the reliance on supervisors to be available during all hours. These include shared databases and document; interactive video and chat; and joint working programs, appointment calendars, and performance metric software.

Contact information:

Debora Jeske, PhD
Work Psychologist and Adjunct Senior Lecturer
University College Cork
d.jeske@uss.ie

Carolyn Axtell, PhD
Head of Work Psychology and Senior Lecturer
Sheffield University Management School
c.m.axtell@sheffield.ac.uk

Appendix D: *An Exploration of Supervision Delivered via Clinical Video Telehealth*

Jordan, S. E., & Shearer, E. M. (2019). An exploration of supervision delivered via clinical video telehealth (CVT). *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 13*(4), 323–330. doi: 10.1037/tep0000245

This article describes an evidence-based practice project in which psychology trainees at a Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System site were invited to complete an anonymous, online questionnaire regarding their telesupervision experiences. The survey used quantitative and qualitative items to explore trainee perceptions of telesupervision implementation, satisfaction, and efficacy.

Remote interns perceived telesupervision to be equal in quality to in-person supervision, which may have been due to the competency and supervisory quality of the telesupervisor.

The findings in this article suggest telesupervision is perceived to be equal in overall quality from the trainee perspective. Although the quantitative findings suggest that rapport with the supervisor is higher in telesupervision, they should be interpreted within the context of the qualitative data which suggests this may have been due to the competency and supervisory ability of the telesupervisor. Any differences between telesupervision and in-person supervision are related to individual variables of the supervisor and/or the trainee, rather than the platform of supervision. Thus, the authors note that the components that create good supervision in person, such as a supportive relationship and strong working alliance, are important, regardless of platform.

Greater Understanding of Telemental Health Services

The project also found trainees were better able to better understand the patient experience of telemental health in clinical care by being themselves on the receiving end of clinical video telehealth (CVT) services for telesupervision.

Trainee Exposure to Underserved Populations

Additionally, there was increased trainee exposure to certain clinical populations, such as those in rural settings, with which s/he would not otherwise work during in-person supervision. Telesupervision provides unique opportunities related to rural patient care and to diversity in training. This will lead to increases in diversity of staff and trainees, as well as to competency in future providers working with underserved populations.

Clear Organizational Policies

The authors suggest programs should have a clear policy on the use of telesupervision that adheres to the [American Psychological Association \(APA\) Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology](#) requirements. The policy should highlight emergency procedures in case of patient crisis, how live supervision and observation is achieved, onsite supervision resources, protocols for accessing supervision resources between scheduled sessions, and ways for patients to be able to access supervisors.

“Goodness of Fit” Screening

Screening of trainees to determine “goodness of fit” and readiness to engage in telesupervision was also highlighted. Technology and distance between supervisor and trainee may add additional stress in getting needs met. A baseline competency assessment, that includes both an understanding of the trainee’s learning needs, competencies, and goals and of his/her individual approaches to learning, may help to better identify those trainees more likely to engage more easily in telesupervision.

Effective Training and Use of Technology

Trainees need to have clear instruction on how to effectively use technology, solve technology issues, and to obtain IT support. They should also have an opportunity to adjust to being supervised via this platform.

Supervisor and Trainee Connection

The supervision experience will be more successful if trainees are given the opportunity to discuss initial discomfort (both in providing clinical care and engaging in supervision) with CVT. Telesupervision requires more investment of time at the beginning of the training experience, compared to in-person supervision. How the supervisor connects with trainees and provides timely and meaningful feedback is especially important given the physical distance.

Remote training programs also benefit from careful consideration regarding the supervisors selected to provide telesupervision. Just as trainees may need to make efforts to engage outside of regularly scheduled supervision sessions (e.g., via instant messaging, telephone, CVT), supervisors who are less willing to be available for consultation in between supervision sessions or are less responsive via email, phone, or instant messaging are not ideal candidates for telesupervision, regardless of their other supervisory or clinical strengths.

Contact information:

Shiloh E. Jordan, PhD
VA Pacific Islands Health Care System
shiloh.jordan@va.gov

Appendix E: *Shifting a Training Clinic to Teletherapy During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Trainee Perspective*

Scharff, A., Breiner, C. E., Ueno, L. F., Underwood, S. B., Merritt, E. C., Welch, L. M., Fonda, C., Weil Malatras, J., Lin, B., Hormes, J. M., Pierterse, A. L., Gordis, E. B., Halpern, L. F., Paziienza, R., & Litchford, G. B. (2020). Shifting a training clinic to teletherapy during the COVID-19 pandemic: A trainee perspective. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 1–11. doi: [10.1080/09515070.2020.1786668](https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2020.1786668)

This article describes the experiences of doctoral trainees in their first year of training at the Psychological Services Center (PSC), a training clinic at a large public university. It provides insights into—and challenges and successes of—the steps taken to shift to remote training and practice while maintaining educational and community mandates and ensuring continuity of care and training during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trainee perspectives on remote internships identified challenges with the use of technology, client contact, remote supervision, and privacy concerns when using telehealth from their homes.

The PSC is a community-based training clinic, where doctoral students in clinical and counseling psychology provide therapy and assessment services. Services are offered to clients of all ages, including couples and families. A sliding fee scale is offered to allow for increased access to clients with financial limitations. Doctoral students spend 1 year in their practicum for psychotherapy training under the supervision of licensed psychologists. Common client presentations include adjustment difficulties and anxiety and mood, externalizing, and personality disorders. Trainees do not see clients whose primary concern is SUD or who have a recent history of psychiatric hospitalization.

As the COVID-19 outbreak continued to rise, the PSC transitioned to teletherapy within 8 days. The necessary steps included:

- Providing trainees and supervisors with secure access to client files and to a remote resource library
- Establishing HIPAA-compliant Zoom video-conferencing accounts
- Developing a new billing system
- Training students and supervisors on teletherapy
- Transitioning phone screening and new client intake process to teletherapy

A summary of findings is provided below.

Technology

- Client files, including scheduling, session notes, and scanned copies of paper documents, are stored using the [Titanium Schedule](#) electronic medical records system.
- However, the client intake process, prior to the pandemic, still involved signing paper copies of treatment consent forms. These forms, as well as a consent form for teletherapy, are now available to clients on the PSC website.
- With support from university IT, trainees and supervisors used [GlobalProtect](#) virtual private network services to connect to individual IP addresses and to securely access client files, via the password-protected Titanium Schedule program, from their personal devices.
- Additionally, university IT provided all trainees and supervisors with HIPAA-compliant Zoom for Healthcare accounts. Trainees and supervisors worked with PSC administration and university IT to download necessary programs.

Challenges encountered included trainee and supervisor difficulty accessing Zoom and their assigned remote desktop and unreliable cellular and internet service. These issues were mostly resolved; however, unreliable Wi-Fi and cellular service remained as a concern, causing occasional interruption in supervision meetings and in client sessions.

Client Contact

- Trainees blocked their phone numbers when reaching out to clients, due to PSC policy prohibiting therapists from sharing personal contact information. As such, clients could not return calls, except to leave messages on the PSC voicemail, which was checked remotely by the PSC administrative assistant daily.
- Clients who expressed interest were asked for their preferred teletherapy platform (phone or video conference) and whether they had access to the required technology.
- Screening and assignment of potential cases were secured on network folders, replacing paper forms, for review by administrative staff, trainees, supervisors, and the clinic director.
- Offering a sliding scale, rather than billing clients' insurance, conferred several advantages in the teletherapy transition. The sliding-scale policy allowed trainees to adjust clients' fees, in consultation with supervisors and the clinic director, for clients who had experienced a loss of income due to the pandemic. While collecting direct payment for teletherapy is more straightforward because it does not involve insurance companies, the PSC still experienced initial obstacles to timely fee collection.

Supervision

- PSC administrators elected to use Zoom for Healthcare through the university's existing Zoom license. Although Zoom for Healthcare has the capacity for HIPAA-

compliant sessions, it does not allow for HIPAA-compliant recording. Thus, trainees and supervisors were unable to record and review teletherapy sessions.

- Live supervision was also more difficult, as supervisors had less flexibility to toggle between trainees in concurrent sessions, and some supervisor-trainee dyads did not want to threaten clients' sense of privacy by introducing an additional caller. Despite these challenges, supervisors were able to continue to support trainees over Zoom and phone during and after their sessions.
- The PSC has established several procedures for high-risk situations.
- Supervisors were aware of each trainee's exact schedule, and trainees could add supervisors to the phone or Zoom call, if needed.
- Each therapy session also began with the trainee asking for the client's physical address in case it was necessary to call a mobile crisis unit for a client in distress. Even with these additional protocols, PSC trainees noticed that physical separation from their supervisors resulted in increased independence in using their clinical judgment for risk management.
- Without access to recorded sessions, trainees took a more active role in individual and group supervision, using their clinical judgment and presenting the most pressing issues in supervision.
- While some clinics have moved to remote assessment due to COVID-19, training in assessing clients remotely may prove beneficial in trainees' future endeavors.
- PSC administrators and supervisors recognized the necessity of developing recording infrastructure for establishing a sustainable, remote training program. In addition to these technological changes, remote supervision for new trainees should include attention to the trainee experience and to self-care.

Trainee Experience

- Trainees mitigated privacy concerns by using headphones; practicing therapy from their bedroom if it was the only private space available; and displaying virtual backgrounds in Zoom.
- The lack of control over the therapeutic environment has created not only vulnerability, but a sense of equality and cooperation between clients and trainees.
- For phone sessions, trainee therapists have creatively adapted experiential exercises, such as a values card sort, psychoeducational materials, and routine outcome measures, to be read aloud. The shared sense that teletherapy is a work in progress has altered the therapeutic relationship in ways both obvious and hard to quantify.
- Providing therapy during a period of near-universal anxiety and despair required trainees to consistently practice managing their own emotional distress, with the help of supervisors, to empathize with and to support their clients. Although this was difficult at times, trainees will derive future benefit from the opportunity to strengthen this essential competency early in their training.

Challenges Within the Trainee Experience

- Trainees found it difficult, at times, to go without non-verbal cues that can be essential in assessing client well-being and psychotherapy progress.
- Video-based therapy also gave clients greater discretion over how much to engage during a therapy session. In the first few weeks of teletherapy at the PSC, multiple adolescent clients chose to walk away from the computer screen during difficult moments.
- While trainee therapists were no longer physically in the room with their clients, clients participating in sessions from their own homes conferred distinct advantages for treatments, such as in vivo exposure to stimuli, not readily accessible at the PSC.
- Trainees held video sessions from their own homes, potentially allowing clients to see their pets, decorations, and furniture. Disclosures of at least some personal information became unavoidable for many trainees.
- Client privacy concerns were also an issue, with other members of clients' households, pets, outside noise, and the computer or phone itself presenting potential distractions.
- Sharing the experience of an unprecedented global crisis also led to heightened emotional dynamics between trainees and their clients and supervisors. Trainees found it difficult at times to separate themselves from their clients' concerns about safe socializing, loneliness during isolation, and fear and helplessness about the state of the world.
- Shifting to teletherapy has resulted in unique challenges for the subset of PSC trainees who work with clients ranging from 5 to 16 years old. Many parents have been less available during remote sessions, due to the need to watch their other children. Parents missing session time can detract from the progress expected in parent management training, where consistency across all caregivers is critical.
- Alternatively, authoritarian or talkative parents have, at times, granted more autonomy to children at home, allowing children to speak uninhibitedly in their first one-on-one sessions.
- Seeing clients in their homes has also provided new opportunities to witness family dynamics.

Contact information:

Adela Scharff

Doctoral Student, Clinical Psychology Program

University of Albany, State University of New York

dscharff@albany.edu

Appendix F: *Challenges and Considerations for Predoctoral Psychology Interns During a Pandemic*

Badwan, M., Carroccia, K., Gomez, D., Harris, E., Luginbuhl, J., Noonan, C., O'Connor, K., Payes, A., Rubin, B., Simmons, A. R., & Turecka, S. (2020) Challenges and considerations for predoctoral psychology interns during a pandemic. *Psychotherapy Bulletin*, 55(3), 25–30.
<https://societyforpsychotherapy.org/challenges-and-considerations-for-predoxloral-psychology-interns-during-a-pandemic/>

The authors' paper focuses on the context of psychology training during a predoctoral clinical internship in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Challenges related to professional responsibilities for remote interns include lack of control over workspace, distractions, and time management.

Challenges related to professional responsibilities include lack of control over workspace, distractions (e.g., children home due to lack of childcare, mandated online schooling for children), and time management. Interns struggle with wanting to support clients and essential staff at their placements, as well as to meet requirements for clinical hours to graduate and to obtain licensure.

The APA and other regulatory agencies have updated legal and ethical standards as a result of the pandemic. Thus, it is imperative that clinicians remain as current as possible with ever-evolving statutes and regulations. Additional training on how to manage risk for clinical staff is important.

Developing set standards for communication focused on clinical, legal, and ethical changes to trainees. Supervision may have to occur more frequently and for shorter amounts of time.

Reliable and secure internet access from home and the ability to remotely access a secure electronic records system are critical to provide continuity of contact and care with clients. A secure, reliable, and comprehensive electronic record will allow an intern both to access and to share client information with other approved users, such as his/her supervisor, and to maintain and ensure appropriate clinical oversight, ethical considerations, and HIPAA compliance. Key takeaways for clinical training sites are summarized below.

Health and Safety

Limit in-person contact, and prioritize trainee health and well-being.

Flexibility and Creativity

- Prioritize a developmentally sensitive focus.
- Recognize that trainees will vary in their developmental level and in how they respond to expectations and responsibility, especially within the context of a global pandemic.

Balance

- Recognize that a significant challenge for students has to do with the many roles and responsibilities they hold (e.g., doctoral intern, parent, partner, caregiver) and that there is a need to balance and maintain these roles within the delivery of health service, while maintaining personal and public health and safety.
- Understand and use a compassionate lens when considering that trainees are making decisions, learning, and working within parameters and constraints that have never been encountered.
- Adjust educational, training, and licensing requirements.
- Minimize the adverse impact on trainee finances and program completion.

Social Justice/Responsiveness

- Consider the inequities maintained by differences in race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, physical ability, and gender and sexual orientation, along with other identify factors.
- Recognize the power differentials that may make self-advocacy challenging for certain individuals.
- Minimize critical resource disparities.

Contact information:

Maya Badwan, PsyD
Doctoral-Level Mental Health Clinician
Birch Psychology
maya.badwan@birchpsychology.com

Appendix G: *Working Relationships Among Supervisors and Interns in Virtual Internships*

Youngblood, P. D. (2020). *Working relationships among supervisors and interns in virtual internships* [Doctoral dissertation, University of the Incarnate Word]. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing.

The author conducted a qualitative, multi-method, interpretative study to examine the virtual internship as his doctoral dissertation. **This study explores the differing perceptions about the internship and the need to reconcile those perceptions to avoid conflict and fulfill individual interests.**

Key elements of working relationships among supervisors and remote interns:

- * Defining work community and the purpose of the work*
- * Creating patterns of behavior and allowing interns to ask questions*
- * Having command of telecommunications technology*
- * Providing feedback—but not necessarily solutions—to interns*
- * Building relationships and resolving conflicts*
- * Recognizing and addressing conflicting commitments*
- * Building supervisor-intern relationships*
- * Applying academics and internship work*

Thematic analysis found that the work community of which an intern supervisor is a member—the space in which work takes place, work activities, roles people play when working together, and work relations—create a foundation for understanding the nature of virtual internships and the relationships formed during this period. Key findings are summarized below.

Defining the Work Community

By creating internships and selecting working groups and by deciding on who worked with whom and their roles and the purpose of their work, the work community both enabled and constrained the boundaries of internship relationships. Work group members, in turn, fine-tuned how the work community was defined by refining their roles, detailing work goals and activities, and establishing patterns of behavior to aid them in working together. In this way, work community representatives and work group members formed a symbiotic relationship.

Defining the Purpose of the Work

The driving force behind the willingness of most of the organizations in this study to sponsor internships appeared to be a need to accomplish existing work or to initiate new projects requiring additional personnel.

Creating Patterns of Behavior

What constituted the overt supervisor-intern relationship in this study centered around the content, frequency, regularity, and perceived quality of communications mediated through telecommunications technologies, which necessarily substituted for in-person interactions available during a traditional internship. All participants reported that supervisors allowed interns to ask questions. The way supervisors conducted this interaction, however, ranged from active to passive.

Communication Technologies

Relating remotely has become a normal part of the lives of people worldwide, particularly younger generations, who routinely connect with friends, family, colleagues, and others on social media and by texting or talking on smart phones. However, some supervisors found that interns did not have the technology required to perform work or to communicate well, and some interns found that communicating with a supervisor was not the same as with friends and family.

While the predominant platforms that study participants used to establish a virtual environment in which to communicate were the telephone system and email, other participants used a more extensive group of telecommunication technologies, depending on the purpose and content of communication. Several interns and supervisors reported using Skype, Slack, Google Hangouts, blogs, and other social media on which to post information, coordinate work, get assistance, alert community members of upcoming events, or interact informally. Other technology was used for work-related purposes.

Providing Feedback but Not Necessarily Solutions

Intern K “learned a lot more than expected (p. 82)” from her supervisor, who allowed her to work out issues on her own and provided examples, when needed, particularly with new or complicated tasks. Intern M’s supervisor provided feedback on his approach but, otherwise, let him work out problems, which he appreciated.

Acquiring Knowledge or Skills About the Relationship

Nearly all interns reported this to be their primary, non-work-specific learning outcome. Supervisors reported similar learning outcomes from their interns. Many interns asked supervisors to recommend them for full-time work or for other internships or asked permission to use them as references for later opportunities.

Relationship Conflicts and Resolution

Relationship conflicts were evident from first meetings through closure. One source of conflict was interns' commitments to academics. Some student interns prioritized schoolwork, exams, and school holidays over internship work and schedules. Conflicting commitments outside the internship was an issue for both interns and supervisors. In some instances, supervisors expressed concern about their own ability to spend the time they felt interns needed on the internship.

Supervisor-Intern Relationship

For many participants in this study, this was the center of a complex web that student interns needed to understand and negotiate to accomplish their work or to connect with the work community. Both supervisors and interns worked with others in- and outside of the work community. In addition, supervisors frequently had more than one intern, and some interns had more than one supervisor.

Application of Academics

Interns were interested in how their work reflected how their academic preparation was applied in the work community and how the work they did for the internship contributed to the "real world."

Contact information:

Phillip Youngblood, PhD

Assistant Professor of Information Systems and Program Coordinator for the Computer Information Systems Program

University of the Incarnate Word

Email information not found