Telepsychiatry: Frequently Asked Questions

What is telepsychiatry?
Telepsychiatry is the practice of psychiatry conducted via a video conference connection. A live, secure video connection is established between an offsite location (a clinic, doctor’s office or home office) and a mental health facility. A typical psychiatric office visit is conducted except that the physician and the patient are not in the same physical location.

I’m a mental health professional. How can telepsychiatry benefit me?
Telepsychiatry gives a lot of flexibility to mental health providers. It makes the most efficient use of your time. If you spend a lot of time commuting, why not try telecommuting? If you generally provide your services to multiple clinics in your town, you can stay put and see patients at an offsite clinic using telepsychiatry. Or if you’ve got multiple state licenses, you can pick up extra days without having to travel. Snowbirds who live in cold climates and winter in places like Arizona and Florida can continue to work and see their patients even when they are out of state.

How can telepsychiatry benefit hospitals and mental health clinics?
Facilities in remote rural locations that have a difficult time recruiting can benefit from telepsychiatry. Telepsychiatry providers can be physically located anywhere in the world, but as long as they have the appropriate licenses, they can see your patients. Another use for telepsychiatry is to fill a part-time position. If your facility has enough volume only for a half-time provider, you might have an easier time finding a telepsychiatry provider to fill that need than recruiting a psychiatrist to work on-site part-time. Telepsychiatry can be your back-up for vacations, leaves or after hours on-call coverage.

What equipment is required for connection to the telepsychiatry platform?
All that is needed for connection to our network is a Windows PC (2000, XP or newer) with Internet access, a webcam and a microphone. We recommend a Logitech HD Pro Webcam C910 for the video and a Phoenix Duet USB Speakerphone for the audio. We can test any webcam and/or microphone you may have to see if they would be appropriate for our solution.

Is there a start up cost?
There is no start up cost associated with using the telepsychiatry platform unless you need to purchase a webcam and microphone. On average both can be purchased for less than a total of $200.

Is there a fee to use the platform?
There is no fee to use our platform if you are using one of our physicians for locum tenens services.

Is your platform secure?
Yes, all communications are sent using 128-bit AES encryption, and all parties are required to authenticate their identity before access is granted.

Is your platform HIPAA compliant?
We take appropriate measures to comply with the HIPAA privacy and security rules.

Do I need to make any adjustments to my internal network/firewall?
In most cases, there is nothing additional that is required to use the services. In more secure environments where outbound traffic is controlled, adjustments to the firewall access rules will be required. Our support staff can assist you with changing these settings.

Do you offer support?
Yes, we offer 24 hour support, seven days a week. Our trained IT professionals are able to assist with any technical difficulties you may encounter when using our network.
Is my existing camera and microphone compatible with your telepsychiatry platform? Almost any third-party webcam or PC-based video conferencing equipment will work. We can test any webcam and/or microphone you may have to see if they would be appropriate for our solution.

Are Mac operating systems supported? We are currently working to provide native Mac support. Using a Mac is possible with the aid of virtual technologies like VMware Fusion, Parallels or BootCamp 2009.

Do you support other video conferencing equipment? Our service currently does not support connecting to traditional boardroom style video conference equipment like Polycom or Tandberg hardware codecs.

Who can I call with additional questions? If you would like to find out more about telepsychiatry or are interested in booking a psychiatrist to provide telepsychiatry services, please contact Zach Richardson at 770-643-5647.