Introduction to digital health, and shifting paradigms for AOD workers in clinical practice

The first in a series of 4 webinars:
22 April 2020

Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association

VAADA digital health webinars

1. **Introduction to digital health, and shifting paradigms for AOD workers in clinical practice** – Wednesday 22 April @2pm

2. **Clinical considerations of digital health; risk management, harm minimisation, self care and boundaries** – 29 April @2pm

3. **Managing increased presentation of dual diagnosis and experiences of mental distress** – 6 May @2pm

4. **Focus on identification and risk management of experiences of family violence –** Wednesday 13 May @2pm

* Please register through Eventbrite for all sessions

Today's presentation:

- Digital health and online treatment services; how they are defined and what you need to consider when using them in the alcohol and drug (AOD) sector

- The pros and cons of using digital health

- Practical tips

- What you need to consider when selecting your tools of trade

- Digital health – It's not just 'business as usual', it involves an entire paradigm shift in clinical settings

Digital health – what is it?

- There are lots of different words: 'internet-based', 'online counselling' and 'telehealth'

- Essentially they are very similar in meaning, i.e they all refer to the concept of a clinician working with a client while they are differing locations (therefore not F2F) using a device..

Digital health – what is it?

- Both the Commonwealth Department of Health and Department of Health and Human Services define digital health on their websites:

- https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/e-health-telehealth
- https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/rural-health/telehealth

- Both definitions are useful, but they are very medicalised. The objectives are very similar to those in the AOD sector;
  - to improve patient/client outcomes
  - support the delivery of quality care
  - make digital health use a viable alternative to traditional service delivery

Digital health - pros

- Can work well in rural and remote areas – saves time and costs

- Is as effective as F2F interactions in many studies (with both AOD and MH clients)

- Privacy, convenience and comfort of being in own home

- Can be used for both individual and group sessions

Digital health - cons

- Not all clients have access to devices

- Absence of some visual and non-verbal cues

- Technological difficulties, security and confidentiality

- Not all clients may be suitable (eg. ABI, ID, those in crisis and those in family violence situations)

Digital health: Selecting your tools

- There are lots of tools that can be used – but only a few are suitable

- You need to consider:
  - Security/privacy
  - What guidelines your agency has (if any) in the use of digital health
  - What device your client can access

Practical tips for setting things up

Clinician:

- A dedicated, quiet space is good

- Make sure the equipment works!

- Position the camera if you are using one

- Where possible guide the client in setting up – from downloading and using software

Practical tips for setting things up

- Set boundaries, rules and appointment times

- Send materials (worksheets etc.) well beforehand

- Allow time between clients

- Clearly document instances where consent is verbal. Also check your own agency guidelines

Practical tips for setting things up

Client:

- Quiet and private space, with phone charged

- Predetermine the location where possible so you know where the client is

- Have a contingency plan

- Consider the use of a support person (if appropriate and with consent) in sessions, and/or as an emergency contact

What can managers do to support staff?

- Familiarity with agency policy and procedures

- Ensure that clinical staff have the equipment (including software) they need, and that they are familiar with its use

- Maintain regular line, and access to clinical supervision while the staff member is working off-site.

Shifting paradigms

- The move to digital health in our workplace as a response to COVID-19 has not just been about using new platforms to communicate with our clients

- The current situation has resulted in major changes across our entire working and home lives, necessitating a different approach in our thinking and behaviour as a whole

Shifting paradigms

- Changes to clinical practice
- Re-organising tasks
- Learning new ways of doing things
- Learning and operating new technology
- Problem solving (how do we do group work now? Etc.)
- Working from home, and potential loss of boundaries between home and work
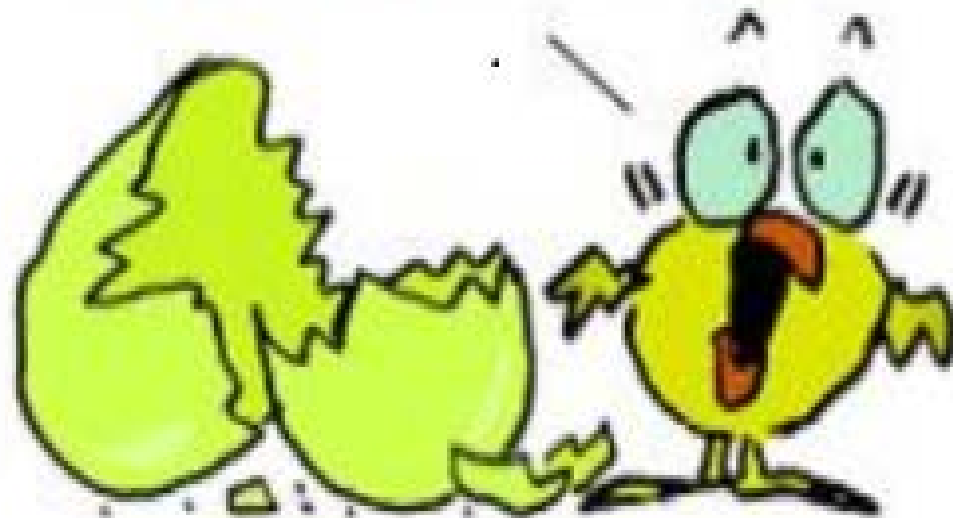
Activity

- Group discussion

Resources and reading

- Insight – Centre for Alcohol and Other Drug Training and Workforce Development, *Orientation to Telephone Counselling for Alcohol and Other Drug Workers,* Queensland Health 2020 (online)

  https://insight.qld.edu.au/toolkits/online-and-telephone-based-treatment-resources/detail

  The Insight website (www.insight.qld.edu.au) also has a large range of general resources for AOD workers

- Mentalhealthonline, *A Practical Guide to Video Mental Health Consultation* Swinburne University of Technology 2020 (online) https://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au/pages/video-mental-health-consultation

Resources and reading

- Robinson, E. *Online Counselling, therapy and dispute resolution: A review of research and its application to family relationship services* Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse, No 15 2009 pp15

  https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/online-counselling-therapy-and-dispute-resolution-review

- Turning Point Telehealth Phone and Video Consultations Guides:

  https://www.turningpoint.org.au/covid-19-resources?utm_source=Turning+Point&utm_campaign=b4f0a0b936-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_5_16_2018_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f7034a10c5-b4f0a0b936-

Further Information

Jane Moreton

Project Manager

Ph: 9412 5608

jmoreton@vaada.org.au

www.vaada.org.au

Naomi Carter

Project Manager – Workforce Development and Stakeholder Engagement

Ph: 9412 5607

ncarter@vaada.org.au

www.vaada.org.au

Thank You