

Wyoming Telehealth Network July 2024 Provider Spotlight:



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1. When did you first hear about telehealth? How did you feel about it then? How do you feel about it now?

I first heard about telehealth at the beginning of the pandemic when offices were being closed for everyone's protection. I was a little skeptical of the viability of the tool at the beginning; however, felt it was a more effective alternative than individuals not getting any needed services. Now that I have been using it for several years, I find telehealth services to be a very useful tool in that clients can still get their needed services. Additionally, there is the added bonus of being comfortable in their home while they work through difficult issues.

2. When did you begin offering telehealth services? What prompted the need to offer these services?

While we utilized telehealth in a limited capacity prior to the pandemic, we fully moved to using telehealth at the end of March 2020. We started using telehealth as a response to the Pandemic.

3. What motivates you to continue offering telehealth services?

The work I do has spread throughout the state. I lead a domestic violence abuser's treatment program in which the state has very few programs to meet this vital need. The use of telehealth allows more participants to utilize this vital service from where they are within the state. Furthermore, some of our at-risk clients do not have transportation to allow them to attend in person. Thus, telehealth services allow them to still have access to the key services they need in order to be successful.

4. What is your proudest accomplishment with telehealth?

My proudest accomplishment is watching the change in clients as they progress through their treatment and knowing that if they had to come to an office that change might not happen. One of the male clients in my 26-week DV group had worked really hard on his beliefs concerning relationships and was getting ready to graduate the program. At his final group sessions, he got teary eyed and told the group that the changes he had made

were because of the work we did in the program. He stated “I want to give back to the community now and possibly work in DV treatment so that I can help others the way that I have been helped.”

5. What advice would you give patients wanting to try telehealth?

Telehealth services allow the client to be in a comfortable setting to receive the services that will help them achieve the goals they want for themselves. Being able to do the essential work while being comfortable enhances the achievements they get from mental health and substance abuse treatment.

6. What advice would you give providers wanting to start offering telehealth?

Telehealth enhances service delivery by allowing the clients to have the opportunity to do the work in an area they are comfortable in. Telehealth allows the providers to provide services to individuals who may not utilize their service if telehealth was not possible. While it may seem uncomfortable at first, allow yourself to be stretched as you will be able to further support your clients and communities.

7. What was the biggest barrier in providing telehealth services? Have you overcome it?

The biggest barrier to providing telehealth services is technology and some individual's ability to utilize technology. Using resources that are available such as the government technology resources allows some individuals to have access to technology and utilizing support services within the agency to teach individuals how to use the technology is how we overcame the majority of those barriers.

8. How do you think implementing telehealth now will affect how things will be done at your organization after the pandemic is over?

I believe that the agency sees the benefit of telehealth and will allow telehealth to continue to increase our ability to assist clients in our communities. Wyoming is so rural that without telehealth, a lot of clients would not be able to receive the services they need to build meaningful lives.

9. Is there anything you learned the hard way in telehealth implementation?

At the beginning of using telehealth, we learned very quickly to set basic ground rules for the telehealth sessions such as our clients maintaining a private space for confidentiality. We implemented orientations and regulations that were reviewed with clients to make sure the use of telehealth was safe and productive for all parties involved.

10. Do you have any telehealth hacks or tricks?

The use of telehealth has become extremely essential. When engaged in a crisis contact with a client, having the ability to move to a zoom call has been very beneficial in calming the crisis.