

## Wyoming Telehealth Network September Provider Spotlight:



**Karla Dieters, LCSW**

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

I have known about telehealth for some time now. Prior to the pandemic I really didn't think much about it and hadn't utilized it at all. Once the pandemic hit and I was only able to work from home, telehealth became a lifeline to me and my patients. I learned so much about the benefits of telehealth at that time. When I returned to work, I had several new patients who were unable to come in due to health reasons, so I continued to provide telehealth services and continue to today. I fully embrace telehealth services. I utilize them weekly with at minimum 3 patients a week. It also comes in handy when people are experiencing cold symptoms but otherwise feel okay to talk. It allows us to still have a session via telehealth that otherwise they would have to cancel.

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

I began offering telehealth services in 2020 when that was the only way I was able to communicate with my patients.

3. What motivates you to continue offering telehealth services?

The motivation comes from wanting to continue to provide services to individuals who are unable to come to the clinic for health and other reasons.

4. What is your proudest accomplishment with telehealth?

Truthfully, finally learning how to use it and how valuable a service it is, especially in rural areas.

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

I encourage them to just try it when the need is there. I let them know that I understand that some technology can be overwhelming to people, it really has been to me at times. I also take the time to show them how to use it in my office so they can at least practice and ask any questions they have.

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

Don't wait! Find a platform that works for you and your patients and use it. It does help especially in rural areas.

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

The biggest barrier for me was my previous mindset in using telehealth. It took a pandemic to change my mind to see the benefits of utilizing the technology.

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

Behavioral health has continued to offer telehealth services to individuals who need it and will continue to as long as it continues to be available to us.

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

I feel like I learned everything the hard way when implementing telehealth. We went from fully in clinic to fully online in the blink of an eye! I learned that I needed to change the way I began sessions by explaining confidentiality and the importance of the patient's being in a place where others cannot hear.

10. Do you have any telehealth hacks or tricks?

Utilizing telehealth services when people are not feeling well but still want to meet has been a gamechanger! In the past people would cancel, but now they can still be seen.