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Telesupervision: Overcoming barriers in technology to optimize supervision practices

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Great state. Great opportunity.



Telesupervision

- Refers to supervision provided/received via technology
- Includes telephone, videoconference, Skype, email, chat etc.
- Telesupervision is also referred to as cybersupervision, online supervision and e-supervision
(Nagel, Goss & Anthony, 2009).

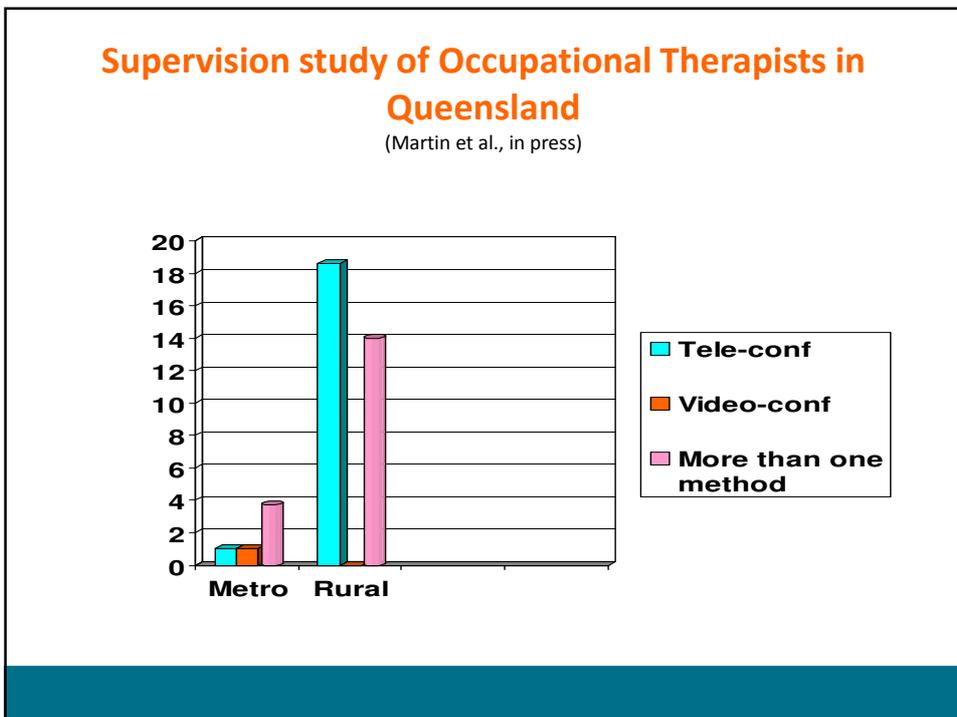


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Background

- Health professionals in rural and remote areas face numerous barriers in accessing CPD including supervision
(Martin & Kumar, 2013)
- The diversity paradox: Countries such as Australia, while vast geographically, have a relatively small and dispersed population, therefore many staff don't have colleagues in proximity to provide support
(Spence et al., 2001)
- Many studies have highlighted lack of supervision opportunities in rural and remote Australia
(Central Queensland Therapist Task Force, 1991; Spence et al., 2001; Martin et al.)
- Using technology to connect is one option

- Although technology and equipment are available for supervision, their use remains minimal
(Kavanagh et al., 2003)
- Evidence gaps: Models and parameters of telesupervision
- Those who use technology for supervision are often unsure of how best to use it



Objectives of this presentation:

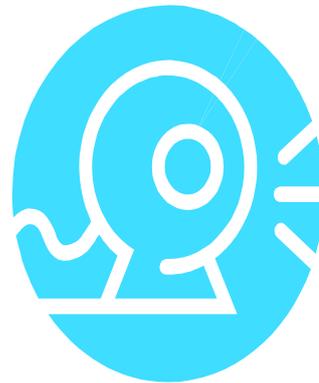
- Review telesupervision literature
- Discuss considerations/best practice in telesupervision
- Present results of a qualitative study conducted in Queensland

Functions of telesupervision
(Nagel, Goss & Anthony, 2009; Wetchler et al., 2007)

- Reduce isolation of rural/remote staff
- Increase access to suitable supervisors
- Access to multidisciplinary/expert personnel
- Avoid dual relationships in small teams

Supervision via videoconference

- After telephone, videoconference is the most common telesupervision method
- Best substitute for face-to-face sessions when visual and paralinguistic cues are considered necessary
- A Norwegian study of health professionals demonstrated positive attitudes towards supervision via V/C (Hanssen, Wangberg & Gammon, 2007)



Supervision via telephone

- Most common telesupervision method
- Frequently used, rarely discussed (Manosevitz, 2006)
- Unable to monitor facial expressions and body language
- Increased listening skills to compensate for lack of visual cues
- Tone of voice, silence etc. require more attention



Supervision via telephone

Critical factors to consider:

- A confidential and private space
- Interruptions/distractions need to be minimized
- Landline phone preferable to mobile phones
- Scheduling phone calls allow for forethought and planning rather than unplanned phone meetings
- Being caught *off-guard* may change a person's tone of voice

Considerations for telesupervision

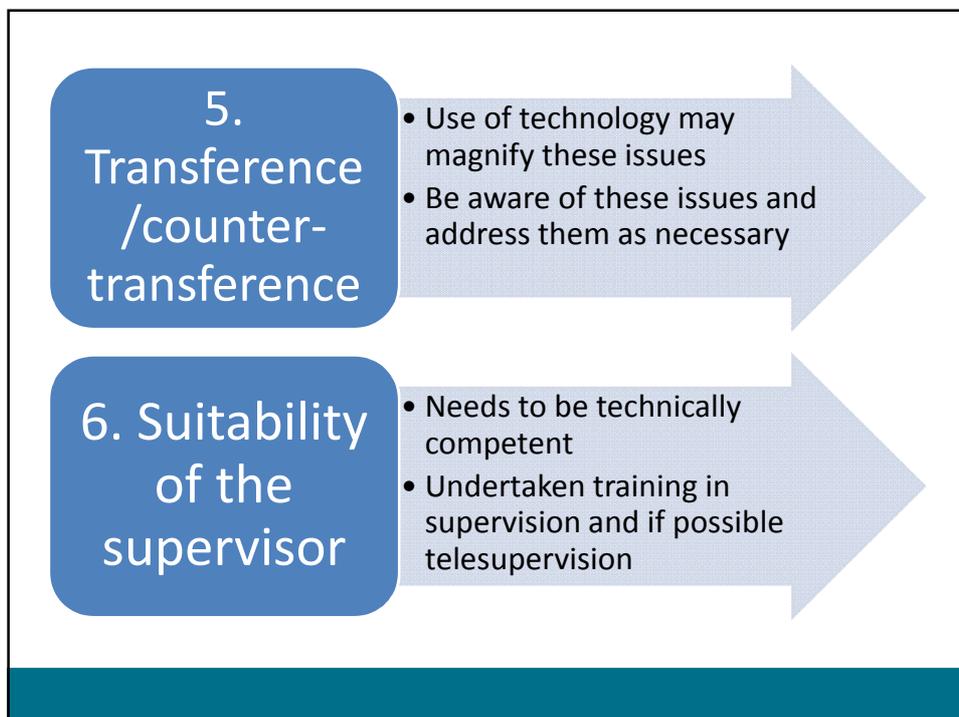
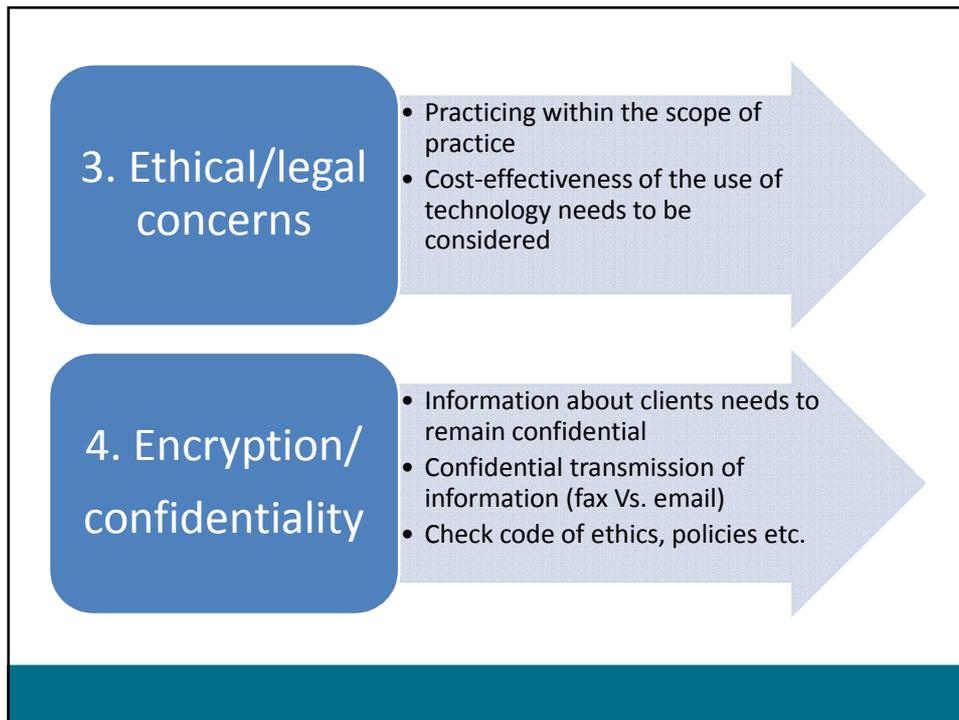
(Nagel, Goss & Anthony, 2009)

1. Review current standards

- Review standards, policies, procedures, guidelines etc. regarding use of technology in supervision – organisational, professional etc.

2. Contracting/informed consent

- Discuss the best technology that will meet needs, issues of confidentiality, course of action when technology breaks down, record-keeping, boundaries regarding availability outside sessions etc.



Best practice for telesupervision

(Miller et al., 2003)

- 1 • Facilitatory style of supervision
- 2 • Supervisor sensitivity towards supervisee competencies
- 3 • Appropriate selection of technology
- 4 • Consider learning styles, cultural and individual factors

- 5 • Teaching/supervisory style of the supervisor
- 6 • Regular evaluations
- 7 • Interaction b/n supervisee and supervisor
- 8 • Supervisor's understanding of the regulatory requirements
- 9 • Compliance with the institution's ongoing self-evaluation and accreditation processes

Findings from the qualitative supervision study

(Martin et al. in press)

- 6 out of 9 supervisees interviewed received supervision via telephone
- Overall consensus that augmenting telephone supervision with face-to-face contact is helpful

What the participants said..

- Supervisees that knew the supervisor from before entering the supervision partnership reported that as a key factor in the success of the telesupervision partnership
- Supervisory relationship is very important in telephone supervision
- Supervisee needs to be a lot more effective in communicating

What the participants said..

- There are more chances for miscommunication on the telephone
- Difficult to do hands-on practise, learn about skills etc
- Not being able to see someone makes it difficult to build rapport
- Issue of the pregnant pause/awkward silence

Conclusions

- Despite some limitations, telesupervision has many advantages
- More primary research is warranted to build the evidence in this area
- “ it (telephone supervision) is not the best way to do it but it is the easiest way I suppose...” (participant quote)

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