Measured Impact Webinar
BOUNDARIES IN THE ELECTRONIC AGE

Presented by:
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National Capacity Building Project

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Objectives

- Articulate five key ethical principles relative to decision-making;
- Articulate key issues relative to doing internet searches on clients or potential clients;
- Discuss issues involved in "friending" both current and former clients;

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Standards for Conduct

- Organizational rules & policies
- Ethics codes (e.g. APA, NASW)
- Codes of conduct (licensure related)
- Laws & rules
- Standard of care: what a reasonable & prudent practitioner would do in the same or similar circumstances (failure to meet standard of care is malpractice)

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Some Practical Challenges

- Our central duty to engage – to establish a trusting relationship vs. obtaining "informed consent"
- Building dependency with the goal of building better independence
- Cultural differences & issues
- Economic realities impacting access to devices/technology

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Ethical Framework I Use

- Beneficence – doing good; helping
- Non-maleficence – avoiding harm
- Autonomy – client's input and role
- Fidelity – consistent with what was promised
- Justice -- welfare of client vs. others; fair use of resources – having a basis to proportion them

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Web Research -- Googling

- Now that without expense and requiring little time we can research clients…..but should we?
- New NASW Code of Ethics (8/17): obtain consent before conducting an online search for information about clients (unless emergency sit.)
- Reasons for searches?

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Decision table or chart
do web research (google) a client

	Positives	Negatives
Never	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Some	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
All	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Ethical Decision-Making

- It is not what is ethical vs. unethical, but the comparative ethicality of the options
- This involves weighing which principles are best dealt with through one option or another
- What are the likely positive vs. negative outcomes of choosing a given course of action?

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The Electronic Age

- 96.4% MN Metro homes with kids have internet access; 81.6% without kids in metro have access
- 90% of US adults have a cell phone
- 99% in households with $ 75,000+ income own cell phones
- 97% of those aged 18 – 29 have them
- www.pewresearch.org

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Challenges Related to Information

- Confidentiality
- Does info from posts on internet bring about duties?
  - o Welfare of young people
  - o Apparent harassment
  - o Apparent threats
  - o Apparent recklessness
- What about info you stumble onto?

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Internet Posts & Violence

- We do not have empirical evidence on predictions based on posts
- Preliminary data suggests that posts do not in general predict
- In general this provides a basis for discussion and inquiry in a session, not a report
- Susan Klebold A Mother's Reckoning

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Traditional Boundaries with Information Access

- Client has access to info. about the professional based on published biography or revelations
- Professional only has access to info. about client from disclosures or access granted through releases
- Newspaper or TV coverage of events could provide some info

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Dual or Multiple Relationships

Professionals should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with current or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or harm to the client. Where dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, professionals are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, & culturally sensitive boundaries.

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Internet Boundaries Challenges

- Contact w/current or former clients
- Contact with relatives of colleagues
- Social support blog encounters
- Interaction on a Caring Bridge site
- Interaction on site or blog related to hobby or area of interest
- Interaction on political action site

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Self-disclosure by Professional

- Risk management vs. helping client – corrections is different
- There are not clear rules on this, and there is great variability in the field
- On professional website:
  - What is helpful/expected?
  - What is risky/ill-advised?
- What about self-disclosure elsewhere on the internet?

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Communication & Boundary Challenges

- Generational differences in expectations
- Ability to be in contact at all hours, even when professional is away from office
- For the high risk or dependent client, easier to slip into high level contact
- Emails & text messages create record & can lead to sense of obligation

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Text Messaging

- A growing number of people do texting instead of phone call or email;
- This is an abbreviated type of message with less information
- This the only way to quickly reach people who don't answer phones but text
- How do you use texting, or how have you considered using it?
- Positives vs. negatives?

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Texting for Service Delivery

- Veterans Crisis Line (800) 273-8255 or text 838255
- Crisis Connection program with texting in 7 counties in NE Minn.
- May be a way of initiating care – "patient engagement"
- Growing number use for follow-up or crisis contacts

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Current & Future Service Options

- What about Skype – it is free & easy but not HIPAA compliant
- The telephone, without encryption, is not HIPAA compliant
- Systems which are compliant
- What are pluses and minuses of providing service this way?
- Uber & Lyft & client transportation

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Cell Phones: A Potential Treasure Trove of Tools

- A practitioner can record & share clip
- A practitioner can make an instructional clip – a client can even film a demonstration done in office
- What are boundary issues in creating this sort of App or tool?
- What risks to client confidentiality?

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Smart Phones, Tablets & Apps

- Apps which come in all shapes & sizes can be used on smart phones, tablets
- *Cognitive bias modification (CBM)* using an app for social anxiety which directs attention away from hostile faces
- *Nader Amir* at San Diego State – 30"/week for anxiety disorder
- *Daniel Pine* at NIMH – 40 children with chronic anxiety

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More Examples of Apps

- Mood 24/7 https://www.mood247.com *get to know yourself*
- PTSD Coach Mobile App downloaded 45,000 times in 58 countries www.americantelemed.org/i4a/pges/index.cfm?pageid=3969
- Defense Dept: T-2 Mood Tracker identify & track stress; Breathe2Relax release stress; Tactical Breather manage stress

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Apps Continued

- Healthline rates best Apps for various things
- iMedicalApps -- examines new apps
- Can be a source of reference information or assist the practitioner
- Can enable a client to log in personal data and keep focused on goals
- Some use sensors & can monitor blood pressure, blood sugar, etc.
- App that can detect mood changes via voice – early warning for bipolar?

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Apps

- Best Anxiety iPhone & Android Apps – *Self-Help for Anxiety Management, Sleep Time - Alarm Clock, Stop Panic & Anxiety Help; Anti-Anxiety APP*
- Best Depression iPhone & Android Apps
  Sleep Cycle; Health Through Breath; Depression CBT Self-Help Guide; Positive Activity Jackpot; Operation Reach Out
- Some Apps connect to a service provider

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Many New Tools & Also Challenges

- A practitioner can record & share a video clip
- A therapist can make instructional clip – a client can even film a demonstration done in office
- This rapid expansion in options and tools is overwhelming, even for the computer-savvy person

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Social Networking Sites
(April 2017)

- Facebook – 1.5 billion/mo.
- Youtube – 1.499 billion/mo.
- Twitter – 400 million/mo.
- Instagram – 275 million/mo.
- Linkedin – 250 million/mo.
- Reddit – 125 million/mo.
- VK -- 120 million/mo.

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Friending on Facebook

- Program site vs. personal site
- Current clients
- Former clients
- Does your center have a standard or rule?
- Examples of rules

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Networking for Support

- Pro-Ana blogs: social support, ways to cope, self-expression – risk of exposure & question about whether it encourages (look up pro-ana on Wikipedia)
- Pro-Mia blogs: bulemia - related
- Victims of abuse: rape and sexual assault victim bulletin boards
- Do an internet search about any condition or problem to see what is there
- Support vs. Trigger – endless challenge

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Other Networking Issues

- Caring Bridge – posting about illness
  - Having your bridge open to clients
  - Posting on client's bridge
- Blogs -- posting responses;
- Sites focused on special interests:
  - Client alerts you to site
  - You encounter client on a site
  - Former client alerts you to site

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Search Engines (May 2018)

- Google – 1.8 billion unique monthly
- Bing – 500 million unique monthly
- Yahoo Search– 490 million monthly
- Baidu – 480 million monthly
- Ask – 300 million monthly
- Aol Search – 200 million monthly
- DuckDuckGo – 150 million monthly

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Google & Net Research

- Should you "Google" a client?
  - Emergency Room – identity issue
  - Client denies suicide history but has prior attempts
  - Reality check on claims by client
  - Checking criminal justice history
  - Screening for sex offenders
  - Custody studies; adoption

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Google & Net Research (cont.)

- What if the client or student googles you?
  - Intern entering therapy googles her therapist and then wonders if she's "blown it" by doing this.
  - What if they tell you? What if you suspect?
  - Sites that evaluate professionals – YELP has >25 million hits a month

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Google & Net Research (cont.)

- Hiring or credentialing process – do you google candidates?
- What about field placement students or candidates for supervision?
- Do you disclose this practice?
- If you stumble on information?
- Expectations may be changing as regards having things on net be discovered

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Google & Net Research (cont.)

- There do not appear to be court cases yet
- Experts warn that there are liabilities
- Most applicants are not told the truth about data found – anything can be false
- Would be best to forewarn of your practices
- Don't use false identities to search
- Applicants may be able to learn of search

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Self Protection

- Be aware of your web-presence
  - "Google" yourself
  - If there is false information, contact site administrator to get things changed
- Could control on-line presence by posting your own www.google/com/profile?
- Collegial discussion – develop standards
- Firms that offer protection are growing but unclear how valuable they are

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Communications & Social Media Policies

- Do you have any, and if so, how are they communicated?
  - Email
  - Texting
  - Web research/googling
  - Interaction on the internet
  - Friending on Facebook
- Do you have any office rules about recording devices (e.g. cell phones)?

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Some real world examples from Survivors of Torture treatment programs

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Thank you for attending this webinar by

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on

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The National Capacity Building Project is a project of the Center for Victims of Torture: www.cvt.org

More resources are available at: www.HealTorture.org

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