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Veterans Telehealth Initiative
Expanding Behavioral Health Access

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Overview

Many veterans who need behavioral health services do not receive it. Those who do seek out services frequently terminate prematurely (1). It is hypothesized that veterans engage in treatment less often for the following reasons (2, 3): transportation costs, fear of stigmatization for receiving behavioral health services, living in rural areas, provider shortage areas that lack mental health specialists. Telemedicine has proven to be effective for treatment of behavioral health conditions and addresses the reasons for lack of services among veterans. Telemedicine has been proven effective for a variety of conditions including:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (4)	**Anxiety Disorders** (5)
Depression (6)	**Acute Suicidality** (6)
Eating Disorders (7)	**Smoking Cessation** (8)

It is well known that frequency of therapy is highly tied to efficacy (9). However, issues such as worktimes and available childcare still impede veterans from receiving services. Psychoeducation is also known to enhance the efficacy of treatment (10). Maintaining high engagement is critical for disseminating psychoeducation. The Veterans Telehealth Initiative (VTI) Program provides solutions to both of these issues by removing common barriers (e.g., location, childcare), allowing high frequency therapy, and highly engaging video-based psychoeducation.

Evidence-Based Programs

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Substance Use Disorders: 12-Step Facilitation Education, CBT, and Mindfulness
Depression: Behavioral Activation and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Exposure and Response Prevention and CBT
Panic Disorder: Relaxation, Panic Induction and Reaction, and CBT

Professional Services Provided:

- Psychotherapy weekly
- Telepsychiatry PRN
- Telemonitoring of symptoms
- Multidisciplinary treatment team meetings
- Personalized feedback, which has been shown to enhance electronically mediated treatment (11)

Example Program Overview: Alcohol Use Disorder Treatment

A typical program covers approximately one month of intensive treatment. All 4 science-based treatments are included. The program includes interactive feedback, peer-facilitated components, multimedia rich presentation, and a holistic approach with links to other mental health treatment programs.

Week 1	Motivational Enhancement	Contingency Management
Week 2	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	Contingency Management
Week 3	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy / Mindfulness Treatment	Contingency Management
Week 4	Mindfulness Treatment	Contingency Management

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