

HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY

TITLE: Psychological Services via Telecommunications Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: 22 November 2004

REVIEWED: March 2008

BOARD: Psychologists Board of the Northern Territory

PURPOSE

This policy has been developed to guide psychologists in the appropriate provision of psychological services via telecommunication.

SUPPORTING POLICIES

Conditional registrants undertaking Supervised Practice are referred to the 'Psychological Practice Provided via Telecommunication Addendum to the Supervised Practice Policy – 3.0'

POSITION STATEMENT

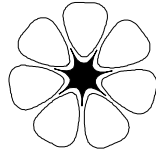
The Board supports the view that face-to-face psychological services are the optimal model of service delivery. However, the geographical challenges faced by clients and service providers occasionally makes it necessary for services to be provided via telecommunications.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The Board recognises that it is not always possible to identify the jurisdiction in which the client is located. However, when this is possible services of a psychological nature provided to a client via telecommunication must be provided by a psychologist who is registered in the jurisdiction in which the service is being received.
1. The practitioner must be registered in the jurisdiction in which they are physically located and provide services from.
2. When a psychologist from another jurisdiction is providing advice to a client in the NT, whenever possible there should be a registered psychologist with the client to advise, advocate and implement the advice provided.
3. The psychologist in the NT receiving advice via telecommunication and providing care to a client based on that advice is accountable for their actions.
4. Recording of psychological services provided via telecommunications must only be conducted for a bona fide reason (eg: for assessment of professional practice or quality assurance). The psychologist must record the consent of all those participating in the service. If consent is not available then the service must not be recorded. The psychologist or the service provider must ensure confidential storage and deletion of the recording in a timely manner.

ASSESSMENT OF SERVICES PROVIDED VIA TELECOMMUNICATION

The following points are designed to assist psychologists to assess the appropriateness of a psychological services provided via telecommunications:



- The psychologist must demonstrate sound level of judgement, discretion and decision-making when communicating with each caller;
- The psychologist practises psychology in a manner that the caller determines as being culturally safe, and
- The registered psychologist and his/her supervisor monitors and improves standards of phone counselling through active involvement in quality improvement and risk management processes.

DEFINITIONS

Psychological Counselling Services

Are those counselling services recognised as part of valid psychological services that constitute professional psychological practice.

Telecommunications:

Systems used in transmitting messages over a distance electronically which allows communication between persons whom are not in the immediate presence of each other. These include but are not limited: Email; Phone; Facsimile; Teleconference, and Videoconference:

Volunteer Counselling Services

Are support and counselling services provided by trained (not necessarily as psychologists) volunteers.

Internet:

A Computer network consisting of a worldwide network of computer networks that use TCP/IP network protocols to facilitate data transmission and exchange.

Email:

Communicate electronically on the computer.

Chat Room:

A site on the internet where a number of users can communicate in real time (typically one dedicated to a particular topic).

Teleconference & Video Conference

A conference of people who are in different locations that is made possible by the use of such telecommunication equipment as closed circuit television or telephones.