

eHealth and Relational Engagement for Mental Health

OVERVIEW

eHealth is a quickly growing medium for health care practice that is used in diverse settings, including with people with mental health challenges, and to support mental health in all people. It is theoretically possible, if the technology used is sophisticated enough to provide clear, crisp visuals, real-time relay, exceptional audio, and accurate physiological measurement, that can be used by astute and technologically literate nurses and other health care professionals to create a sense of caring, presence, and individualized attention with the client, using e-health tools.



While engaging with the virtual representation of a client, the health care provider must strive to envision and experience the client's three-dimensional body and being in order to accurately advise, assess, diagnose, and interact fully and dynamically. This perceiving must occur within a virtual network environment, where both body-sense and body-awareness are combined with digital information. Not only the body, but also the person's inner being, including their mind must be acknowledged and somehow included.

Health professionals must ask themselves: “What are the psychological and emotional effects of being examined and assessed via a video camera? Is the sense of intimacy and privacy common in caring client-nurse interchanges lost in the virtual translation?”

Another critically important aspect of e-health evolvement is the public use of the Internet for networking with health care providers and other members of the public. Essentially, this branch of E-health is a client-centered World Wide Web-based network where clients and health care providers collaborate through ICT mediums to research, seek, manage, deliver, refer, arrange, and consult with others about health related information and concerns

Although eHealth developed from the telehealth network movement, it is a unique phenomenon in two ways: networks and resources devoted to E-health have developed on the Internet at an amazing rate over the past decade or so, and the emphasis is genuinely client focused. “It differs from telehealth or telemedicine in that e-health is Internet-based and includes a range of services, nursing or healthcare, health education, and medication prescription or refills via e-prescribing. In conjunction, telemonitoring devices may be used, via a Universal Serial Bus (USB) port on the patient's computer, to collect additional physiologic data (e.g blood pressure, pulse, temperature, weight, spirometry, blood glucose, and oxygen saturation levels)” (Moody, 2005, p. 157).

The phenomenal growth of eHealth cannot generally be credited to the health care system or its employed social actors. Rather, clients driven by the need and urge to become informed health consumers and participants have catalyzed this new style of networking, clients who have learned to utilize ICTs in the form of the Internet to meet their health concern needs. Although statistics show that women are underrepresented in Internet usage, women tend to access the Internet more than men to seek health related information and networking.

Nurses can be primary actors in the virtual arena of eHealth, serving as health advisors, Internet guides to help clients select reliable information resources, support group liaisons, web information providers, and so on. Nurses need to be involved in the design and implementation of eHealth portals and programs that provide the best possible eHealth experience for clients, including those with a mental health challenge.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This learning activity is intended to provide learners with the opportunity to:

- Recognize the potential benefits of eHealth for mental health promotion and treatment
- Describe current applications of eHealth for mental health
- Predict future applications of eHealth for mental health
- Discuss how nurses can collaborate with other health professionals on eHealth projects to support mental health

PREPARATION

READ: Chapter 20 *The Challenge of Advancing Technology* in the Sheridan text.

READ: Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2014). *E-Mental Health in Canada: Transforming the Mental Health System Using Technology: A Briefing Document*. Author. https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_E-Mental_Health-Briefing_Document_ENG_0.pdf

VISIT: eMentalHealth.ca at <http://www.ementalhealth.ca>

VISIT: Healthy Place - <http://www.healthyplace.com/>

VISIT: PsychCentral <http://psychcentral.com/>

VIEW VIDEO: What is e-Mental Health? <https://youtu.be/sDvUqZ38gUU>

VIEW VIDEO: Virtual Mental Health Appointment <https://youtu.be/pORvET2575g>

VIEW VIDEO: Dr Tom Micklewright discusses top mental health apps
<https://youtu.be/mf1vgJmhlek>

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF E-THERAPY FORUM

After doing the readings and watching the videos, consider at least two benefits and two pitfalls of using virtual, online, app or other technologically enhanced e-counseling or e-therapy for clients with a mental health challenge. Share your insights on the Moodle forum. Respond constructively to at least one of your classmate's discussions.



REFLECTION

- How could iPads/Androids be used to support eHealth and Mental Health?
- Have you found any iPad/Android apps that help you to explore your own mental health?

REFERENCES

Moody, L. (2005). E-health web portals: Delivering holistic healthcare and making home the point of care. *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 19(4), 156-160.