



Online Therapy : A Therapist` Guide to Expanding Your Practice

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If we go beneath its many varieties, schools, and theories, therapy is a rich form of interpersonal communication. As the tools of communication become more sophisticated to meet the demands of the twenty-first century, so does the therapeutic process. The premise of this book is that therapists can be dramatically empowered by embracing the Internet as a medium of communication with their patients and taking their practices online. By learning to utilize Web-based tools such as message boards, chat rooms, audio and video conferencing, and e-mail, therapists are able to reach scores of new clients and better treat the clients they already serve. Unlike discussions in professional journals and elsewhere, this book does not debate the merits and pitfalls of using the Internet in therapy, but moves directly to implementation. After all, online therapy is already here! Therapists all over the world now recognize it as a means to reach such underserved client populations as patients who live in rural areas, patients housebound by physical disabilities, and younger patients who are uncomfortable in face-to-face sessions. Online therapy also serves as a positive counter to HMOs that may severely limit the number of face-to-face sessions a patient is entitled to and pressure therapists to transition clients to medication at the earliest opportunity. This book is divided into two parts. Part I provides an overview of the modes of therapy that work best online and discusses issues of ethics, privacy, and confidentiality. Part II covers the nuts and bolts of setting up an online practice, either by creating an individual Web site or by joining an e-clinic, and discusses such practical issues as telemedical law, advertising and pricing of online services, billing, payment for referral, and legislation relevant to managing HIPAA. Four helpful appendices outline the software needed for online practice, reference existing online therapy sites, and provide guidelines published by major psychiatric organizations such as APA. An invaluable guide to a communication tool that is quickly changing the way we think about mental health care of the twenty-first century, Online Therapy is sure to persuade even the most technology-resistant therapist to explore this vast new world of options.

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