Syllabus

TELEBEHAVIORAL HEALTH CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Course Description

Learn best practices for implementing and using telehealth across the behavioral health service areas. We'll show you how to utilize telehealth to provide efficient, quality care to your patients and how telehealth can address common challenges such as physician burnout, revenue constraints, and provider shortages and burnout. The Excellence in Telehealth – Telebehavioral Health Certificate training is a self-guided program that will create a knowledge in specified telemedicine.

Why Get Certification?

•Validate your knowledge level to succeed in the behavioral health field

•Demonstrate commitment to your profession

•Show dedication to maintaining quality and competency in your work

•Encourage life-long learning and professional development

AMERICAN BOARD OF TELEHEALTH

Gold-Standard Telehealth Practices

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Module 1: Introduction to Telebehavioral Health

In recent years, and particularly within the changes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth, we have seen increases in frequency of behavioral health diagnoses and challenges in access to behavioral health care. Also prompted by the pandemic, telehealth has expanded exponentially across the healthcare continuum. Telebehavioral health, the delivery of mental health or substance abuse care by means of technology when distance separates the participants, has great potential in improving access to behavioral health care, especially in areas where psychiatric services are deficient. Empirical evidence on the use and effectiveness of telebehavioral health services across the lifespan has been reviewed and substantiated by many. Its evidence base is significant and includes studies showing satisfaction among patients, psychiatrists and other professionals as well as effectiveness when compared to in-person care. However, challenges still abound in telebehavioral health including reimbursement, regulatory barriers, and infrastructure costs. In this module, we look at the evolution of telebehavioral health, review important distinctions in terminology, consider important evidence that supports the use of telebehavioral health and discuss the risk and opportunity telebehavioral health presents.

Objectives:
1.   Describe the evolution of telehealth and telebehavioral health.
2.   Summarize evidence supporting the use of telebehavioral health.
3.   Identify common barriers to use of telebehavioral health.
4.   Describe models typically used to deliver telebehavioral health interventions across the care continuum.

Module 2: Technology, Implementation and Workflow

A successful telemedicine platform's technical solution is driven by need. Knowing the need will help formulate the type of technology required to meet that need. A telehealth technology solution should not be implemented looking for a problem to fix, rather the telehealth technology should be weaved into an ubiquitous approach to solving the need identified. Although telemedicine has embraced many communication technologies, live, interactive, 2-way, audio-video communication is broadly synonymous with telemedicine and, more specifically, telebehavioral health. Additional technologies such as telephone, email and internet-based applications are increasingly being utilized during telebehavioral health encounters. In this module, we will outline telehealth modalities, review how to incorporate clinically-driven, simple and economical telehealth technology solutions, describe the ongoing maintenance and troubleshooting requirements of technology and integration of the technology into an efficient workflow for telebehavioral health practice.

Objectives:
1.   Differentiate telehealth modalities that can be utilized to deliver telebehavioral health interventions.
2.   Identify the infrastructure requirements to implement telehealth services for the assessment and treatment of patients with psychiatric disorders.
3.   Recognize privacy and security requirements in regards to telebehavioral health and telecommunication.
4.   Describe technological concerns, clinical issues, and workflows for behavioral health professionals who seek to implement the models and methods of telebehavioral health.

Module 3: Telepresence

Telepresence is the ability for the telebehavioral health professional to create an environment to help facilitate positive patient-provider alliance and create a meaningful encounter through valuable patient-provider virtual interaction. During a virtual encounter, patient perception is formed only on what the patient can hear and see via the telehealth technology. Establishing and building professionalism via verbal and non-verbal communication and environment is crucial to foster trust and credibility with the patient. A trusting relationship can lead to better patient engagement, compliance and outcomes. Telepresence is a skillset that requires practice and self-observation. This module will outline important factors that lead to a positive patient-provider relationship such as environmental considerations, communication skills, organization and time management, as well as care coordination and follow-up. Addressing key factors in development of collaborative relationships across the care continuum with referring providers and/or remote staff will also be an important tool for effective patient care.

Objectives:
1.   Describe verbal and non-verbal communication that help build therapeutic relationships in telebehavioral health.
2.   Describe the patient and practitioner environment during a telebehavioral health encounter that establishes rapport and improves workflow.
3.   Identify best practices in care coordination and follow-up after a telebehavioral health encounter to ensure an excellent patient experience.
4.   Review various cultural and social determinants that may affect telebehavioral health patient interactions.
5.   Identify effective communication techniques to promote collaboration and effective patient care coordination when working with remote site staff.

Module 4: Legal, Regulatory, & Ethical Considerations

Individual states have governance that oversees telemedicine practice within that state. Not only do individual states define telehealth and telemedicine differently, but states also have their own requirements regarding reimbursement, scope of practice, licensing and consent. Significant state variances in telehealth definitions within law and regulation often make strategic, operational and clinical challenges abundant. As telebehavioral health use continues to grow, stakeholders – such as healthcare practitioners, administrators, vendors and insurers--must ensure regulatory compliance, traverse risks in implementation of telemedicine, and deliver high quality, ethical health care services to minimize liability. In considering legal, regulatory and ethical intricacies in the telebehavioral health setting for the purpose of this course, the following areas will be addressed: 1) Education, training, and quality; 2) Licensure and credentialing; 3) Privacy, security and confidentiality; 4) Informed Consent; 5) Malpractice and professional liability; 6) Professionalism and boundaries; 7) Continuity of Care; and 8) Patient safety planning and emergency management. Regulatory flexibilities temporarily granted during public health emergencies will also be addressed.

Objectives:
1.   Recognize variability in requirements and procedures from each state licensing board and facility in regards to telehealth licensing, credentialing and privileging.
2.   Describe the ethical responsibilities associated with a behavioral health professional's scope of practice when utilizing telehealth.
3.   Establish protocol to clarify bounds and requirements of the practitioner and patient during a telebehavioral health encounter.
4.   Review safety and emergency plans for crisis management, including legal standards for involuntary commitment and restraint/seclusion, when providing telebehavioral health intervention.
5.   Describe differences in the identification and informed consent process when providing telebehavioral health services.

Module 5: Clinical Application

Clinical considerations during a telebehavioral health encounter focus on maintaining the same standard of care and quality of service as in an in-person visit while providing care virtually. Specific workflow and clinical scope of services will be important to remember when navigating clinical application of telebehavioral health services. Telebehavioral health has demonstrated clinical utility within a variety of treatment modalities, including group, individual and family therapies and a variety of application modalities across the age span and points of telehealth delivery. Within the telebehavioral health encounter, the cognitive and physical examination is very much the same, with a few caveats. This module will review the unique aspects of screening, intake, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients via telebehavioral health. Addressing diverse cultural and age-specific needs as well as available community resources at a remote site are important aspects of providing quality telebehavioral health services.

Objectives:
1. Describe criteria to assess appropriateness of a patient for telebehavioral health.
2. Describe unique aspects of screening, intake, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients via telebehavioral health.
3. Review dispensing and prescribing via telebehavioral health in accordance with state regulations and local protocols.
4. Identify available community resources at a remote site and adapt recommendations as needed to accommodate limitations such as ancillary treatment resources, financial strains, or transportation limitations.
5. Review management of a hybrid patient-provider relationship that includes an in-person and virtual clinical relationship using technologies by providers working individually or in teams.

Module 6: Clinical Documentation, Integration with EHR Reimbursement

Telehealth creates a "virtual" consultation and provision of service between healthcare professionals and patients which equates to access to care. Health information exchange (HIE) creates the consolidated "virtual" medical record about the patient form a variety of electronic health records and resources which equates to access to the patient's health information. Telehealth and HIE should be closely linked as a means to improve access, enhance continuity of coordinated comprehensive quality care, support patients and providers at the site of care, as a means to achieve the best health outcomes and reduce costs. For billing purposes, documentation in the electronic medical record (EMR) needs to meet expectations of billing codes. Timelines, vital signs and other indicators need to be in compliance with ICD billing expectations for reimbursement. Components of a virtual clinical encounter which should be documented are similar to face-to-face encounters. Within this module, documentation, coding and billing changes required when providing telebehavioral health intervention will be reviewed along with state regulations regarding telebehavioral health reimbursement policy. Additionally, needed adjustments to documentation within the telebehavioral health format that communicates effectively with remote site staff as well as other providers that may be involved with patient care will be discussed.

Objectives:
1. Identify documentation, coding and billing changes that may be required when providing telebehavioral health intervention.
2. Discuss state regulations and third party payers regarding telebehavioral health reimbursement policy.
3. Recognize needed adjustments to documentation within the telebehavioral health format, creating a psychiatric note that communicates effectively with remote site staff as well as other providers that may be involved with patient care.
4. Describe components of integration of clinical documentation with an EHR.

Module 7: Lifelong Learning and Professional Development in the Use of Telehealth

Nothing has changed the telehealth landscape like the COVID-19 pandemic. Telehealth has pivoted from a nicety to a foundational expectation by showing the value of telehealth in limiting the spread of disease while ensuring access to health care. The use of telehealth to mitigate spread of COVID-19 increased awareness of the technology, but creating temporary waivers bypassing regulatory and reimbursement barriers provided healthcare professionals and patients with easier access to use it. Temporary waivers have opened the flood gates to telehealth utilization, but post COVID-19, how will telehealth continue to be positioned as an important aspect of health care delivery? This module looks to review the current guidelines and educational tools and resources available for lifelong learning and professional development as telehealth continues to become an essential part of care delivery going forward, increasing growth and change.

Objectives:
1. Review current guidelines and additional resources for lifelong learning and professional development in the use of telehealth.

We are here to support your telehealth education needs. For questions, feedback, or more information, please email ABT@heart.org