

# CareCertify LLC

## Mental Health Clinic Training Series

MHC-09

# Telehealth, Access & Reducing No-Shows

## Participant Guide

Mental Health Clinic Training Series · Audience: Clinic Staff · Clinicians · Practitioners · Front-Office · Support · CE Hours: 1.0

## Care Only Helps If Clients Can Reach It

Telehealth has transformed mental health care, expanding access for people who couldn't easily get to a clinic. But it raises new considerations for privacy, safety, and quality. And no-shows and dropout remain a real challenge — care only helps clients who reach it and stay engaged.

This guide covers delivering quality telehealth, protecting privacy and safety online, and keeping clients engaged across in-person and virtual care. Widening access and improving retention is work the whole clinic shares.

### Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Explain telehealth basics and benefits
- Protect privacy and safety in telehealth
- Support quality and the therapeutic relationship online
- Support access and equity
- Understand and reduce no-shows and improve retention

## Section 1: Telehealth Basics and Benefits

Telehealth delivers mental health care by video (and sometimes phone) instead of in person. It has become an established, covered part of Minnesota mental health care and expands access for people facing distance, transportation, mobility, scheduling, or stigma barriers. Many services — therapy, assessment, medication management — can be delivered effectively via telehealth. It's a powerful tool for reaching people who might otherwise go without care.

## Section 2: Privacy and Security in Telehealth

Confidentiality rules apply fully to telehealth. Use the clinic's secure, HIPAA-compliant platform — not personal or public apps. Ensure privacy on both ends: you in a private space, and helping the client find a private setting where they won't be overheard. Don't record sessions without proper consent, protect devices and logins, and be alert to who else might be present. Telehealth privacy takes intention because you don't control the client's environment.

## Section 3: Safety and Emergencies in Virtual Care

Safety is more complex in telehealth because you aren't physically present. Confirm the client's exact location at the start of each session, so that if a crisis arises you can direct local emergency help (911, the county crisis team) to them. Have a safety plan and know how to reach local resources. Follow your clinic's telehealth safety and emergency protocol, and don't try to manage a crisis alone. Preparation makes virtual care as safe as possible.

### **Always know the location**

In telehealth, knowing where the client is each session is a safety essential — it's how you get them help in a crisis.

## **Section 4: Quality and the Therapeutic Relationship Online**

Quality care depends on the therapeutic relationship, which can absolutely thrive online — but it takes intention. Be present, attentive, and warm on camera, minimize your own distractions, and make eye contact with the camera. Watch for engagement and for technical or comfort barriers, and help clients with the technology. Recognize that not every client or service is well-suited to telehealth; match the modality (in-person or virtual) to the client's needs.

## **Section 5: Access and Equity**

Telehealth widens access, but it can also exclude people without devices, internet, digital skills, or privacy at home — the 'digital divide.' Help clients with technology where you can, offer phone or in-person alternatives when video isn't feasible, and provide language access and accommodations online. Pay attention to who telehealth reaches and who it might leave out, so that expanding access doesn't widen disparities.

## **Section 6: Understanding No-Shows**

No-shows and dropout are a persistent challenge in mental health care, and they usually have understandable reasons: ambivalence about treatment, symptoms (depression sapping motivation, anxiety about coming in), transportation, cost, stigma, forgetting, or chaotic life circumstances. A no-show is more often a sign of barriers than a 'bad client.' Understanding the real reasons — with compassion, not judgment — points the way to solutions.

## **Section 7: Reducing No-Shows**

Practical strategies reduce no-shows: appointment reminders (calls or texts), warm and welcoming contact that builds connection, reducing barriers (telehealth options, flexible scheduling, help with transportation), and following up after a missed appointment to re-engage rather than simply discharge. Front-office and support staff are central to this work. Reducing no-shows keeps clients in care and improves outcomes.

## **Section 8: Engagement and Retention**

Keeping clients engaged in care is everyone's work, and it starts at first contact and continues throughout treatment. Warmth, respect, reducing barriers, and genuine connection keep clients coming back. When clients miss appointments or drift away, reach out to re-engage them rather than giving up — many people re-enter care when someone shows they're wanted. Every role, from the front desk to the clinician, supports the engagement that makes treatment work.

## Key Terms

Term	What it means
Telehealth	Care delivered by video or phone instead of in person.
HIPAA-compliant platform	A secure system that protects telehealth privacy.
Client location	Knowing where a telehealth client is, for safety.
Digital divide	Gaps in device, internet, or skills that limit telehealth access.
No-show	A missed appointment, usually a sign of barriers.
Engagement / retention	Keeping clients connected to and continuing in care.

## Check Your Understanding

1. What are the benefits of telehealth?
2. How do you protect privacy in telehealth?
3. Why must you know the client's location in telehealth?
4. What are common reasons for no-shows?
5. Name three strategies to reduce no-shows.

## What's Next

### Looking ahead

Next, MHC-10: Clinic Safety, Emergencies & Mandated Reporting covers keeping the clinic safe and your reporting duties.