

There's Always Something:
Clinical Challenges and Dilemmas

Screen Dreams: Teletherapy

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"The experiences of omnipotence fostered by the virtual sphere and the ease of remote communications open up new possibilities, but they also raise new methodological interrogatives for psychoanalysts, who are faced with requests for treatment over the phone or Skype, the credibility and limitations of which are now the subject of heated theoretical-clinical debate."

Stefano Bolognini, 2013 IPA Congress (Former IPA President)



"Teleanalysis is a kind of tent that is a necessary solution to preserve the analytic situation as long as is necessary."

IPA Webinar, Psychoanalysis in the Times of COVID-19:

An Interregional Perspective

Stefano Bolognini, 2020 (Former IPA President)

Feasibility of distance-mediated treatment I

PATIENT FACTORS



- Collaborative working alliance, in-office
- Adherence to in-office treatment
- Risk factors: eg SI/HI/Substance Use
- Trial of distance-mediated treatment
- Capacity to manage responsibility of secure videoconference (VC)
- Contingency plan

Feasibility of distance-mediated treatment II

CLINICIAN FACTORS

- Training, consultation & peer review
- Experience
- Periodic re-evaluation



PARAMETERS FOR CONDUCTING DISTANCE-MEDIATED TREATMENT

Patient-Clinician Agreement

- Establishing the Frame
- Decide who will always initiate the remote session
- Secure videoconferencing equipment
- Contingencies for internet interruptions



INFORMED CONSENT


- Option 1: Teletherapy or Teleanalysis
- Option 2: Temporary substitute (alternative therapist)
- Option 3: Transfer
- Option 4: "No treatment"

LEVERAGING UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE DISTANCE-MEDIATED SETTING

- Transference & Countertransference
 - Transference to clinician
 - Transference to setting
- Greater patient comfort & safety, perhaps
- Offset prolonged separation
- Alternative to treatment dilution

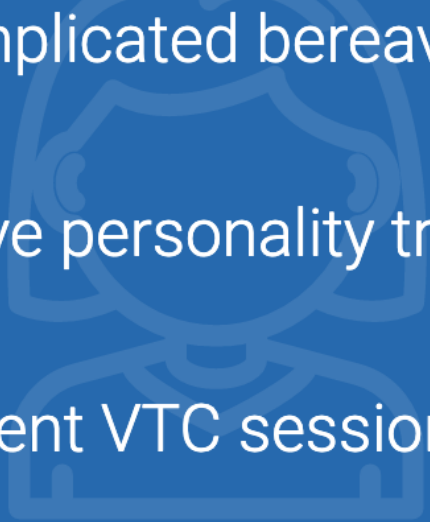
CASE VIGNETTE

"Damian"

- 15 yo adolescent boy who continued in therapy at college
 - Longstanding hx of treatment for depression, anxiety, ADHD
 - Socially awkward & object of bullying
 - The unveiling of imaginary characters via VTC only
 - The digital screen as a concrete transitional space
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CASE VIGNETTE

"Brent"

- 58 y.o. man with complicated bereavement
 - Obsessive-compulsive personality traits
 - Request for intermittent VTC sessions “just in case”
 - The revelatory aspects of patient’s choice of setting
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Differential Aspects of Teletherapy

Pre-COVID-19

- Separations were planned**
- Duration was predictable and tolerable**

During COVID-19

- Separation was abrupt and unplanned**
 - Duration is filled with uncertainty**