

Implemented in Spring 2020

**University of Maryland School Psychology Program
Policy on Telesupervision During Extenuating Circumstances**

Telesupervision is defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) as “clinical supervision of psychological services through a synchronous audio and video format where the supervisor is not in the same physical facility as the trainee.” APA requires programs using telesupervision to have a formal policy in place and limits its use to no more than 50% of total supervision at practicum sites. Telesupervision is not permitted during the first intervention practicum experience. On internship, telesupervision may not account for more than 50% of individual supervision (1 of 2 hours weekly) or for more than 50% of the total weekly supervision hours (2 or 4 hours weekly).

During extenuating circumstances, such as a public health crisis causing campus/school closures and quarantining, APA’s Commission on Accreditation (CoA) “recognizes that expansion of these methods temporarily during this unprecedented time may be necessary” and that “flexibility in the use of these distance practices as part of a program’s plan... is appropriate” (email communication 3/11/20).

The University of Maryland’s School Psychology Program typically requires face-to-face supervision with minimal telesupervision on an as needed basis. During extenuating circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020), the following telesupervision guidelines will be implemented. The rationale is that greater flexibility in the use of telesupervision will allow students to continue their clinical activities and minimize disruptions to learning.

1. Telesupervision may be utilized in addition to, or as a replacement for, face-to-face supervision for practicum courses, fieldwork, and internship. Course instructors can determine the amount of telesupervision permitted for each course when this policy is in place. Institutional guidelines and public health advisories should be taken into account when determining whether to hold face-to-face supervision. Safety and health will be prioritized during decision-making.
2. Students at all levels of training (pre-practicum through interns) can request telesupervision instead of face-to-face supervision. Supervisors should be flexible in allowing telesupervision, even when face-to-face supervision is offered, and not require students to disclose personal health-related information in these instances.
3. When using telesupervision, supervisors should continue to use best practices in supervision, taking care to develop/maintain the supervisory relationship. Plans for supervision during crisis/urgent situations should be developed as needed.
4. When using telesupervision, students should engage in similar professional behaviors expected for face-to-face supervision (e.g., timeliness, sending materials ahead of time, responding to feedback), as well as additional preparations such as testing technology tools in advance.
5. In situations where multiple supervisors oversee student activities (e.g., University supervisor and field-based supervisor), supervisors should discuss telesupervision plans and professional responsibility for cases.
6. To protect confidentiality of client information, telesupervision should occur through secure, approved formats such as Zoom. Materials shared should be password protected and uploaded to secure, approved sites such as Box. Supervisors and course instructors are encouraged to provide additional guidelines for information sharing. Supervisors and students are responsible for using a private location and secure internet connection when engaging in telesupervision and sharing relevant materials.
7. Supervisors and students are encouraged to exercise patience while telesupervision logistics are worked out and everyone learns new technological tools.

It is hoped that the program’s telesupervision policy will benefit all during this challenging time. Students, supervisors, and course instructors should contact the program director (Dr. Jill Jacobson, jillbj@umd.edu) with questions related to the implementation of these guidelines.