Early Childhood Distance Technology
Early Childhood Learning Network
Center for Development and Disability

USE OF DISTANCE TECHNOLOGY FOR TRAINING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND REFLECTION TO SUPPORT HOME VISITATION PROVIDERS

GUIDANCE MANUAL
SEPTEMBER 2014

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Introduction

In 2011, the New Mexico Children Youth and Families Department (NM CYFD), the New Mexico Department of Health, and the New Mexico Public Education Department collaboratively identified areas of the state socio-ecological and educational risk factors including adolescent births, pre-term births, infant mortality, poverty, inverse graduation rates, child abuse, lower school success and achievement, etc. These communities were designated as "Investment Zones" in which state agencies would provide more support and resources to impact better life outcomes for young children (http://cyfd.org/docs/Risk%20Factors%20Map%20and%20List%2005-2013.pdf). CYFD, through its Home Visiting Program of the Office of Child Development (OCD), sought to formalize ways in which community home visiting sites might be better served through a range of communication and technology resources. Among Investment Zone areas, four communities and counties were targeted by CYFD for this level of intervention, including: Gallup and McKinley County, Tucumcari and Quay County, Deming and Luna County, and the South Valley of Albuquerque in Bernalillo County   (M. Coop, personal communication, September 27, 2014). The Center for Development and Disability (CDD) at the University of New Mexico was charged with exploring and implementing means by which training, technical assistance, consultation, reflective supervision, and community capacity building could be strengthened through a variety of distance technologies to help support services in these Investment Zone communities.

In working with the recommendations of the "Collaboration Team" formed by CYFD contractors, committed to improving early childhood outcomes in NM, the CDD extended its existing efforts of Rural and Early Access for Children's Health (REACH), a technology outreach vehicle, to refine and expand rural and early access to these identified, underserved communities within the four Investment Zones. This initiative rapidly spread to other rural and urban communities throughout the state as uses of technology were embraced for a range of early childhood supports, and distance technology became common place in providing training, technical assistance, consultation, reflective supervision, and community capacity building support to home visiting programs statewide.

This Guidance Manual is designed to not only provide information about distance technology services, but also to engage the reader in brainstorming ways these services can also be provided most effectively at the local level, with ways feedback might be provided to CYFD and the Professional Development Team at the CDD.

What is Early Childhood (EC) Distance Technology?

This Distance Technology initiative grew from existing and collaborative distance technology efforts by the CDD including REACH, as described above, and the

Investment Zones Covered by Project

Distance Technology Project ECHO™ (**E**xtension for **C**ommunity **H**ealthcare **O**utcomes) at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. Project ECHO™ pioneered case-based learning through distance technology for healthcare practitioners in rural NM, grappling with complex medical diagnoses for patients frequently underserved. As research revealed the evidence-based success of the model (Arora, et al 2011), the possible application to EC practice related to reflective supervision and case-based discussion seemed natural. Therefore, EC

Distance Technology, built on both REACH and the ECHO Project Model™ for health care providers, was applied to supporting home visiting programs.

Today, EC Distance Technology has expanded to include a variety of media and means to provide interaction across the home visiting, child care inclusion, family child care home visiting programs, and the CYFD contractors who support them. The technology has continued to evolve from first use, and will continue to change as new accessible and cost effective technology resources are developed.

Data collected by CYFD contractors, charged with identifying community priorities, helped design the EC Distance Technology model, along with the research base of the ECHO Project Model™ at UNM. This resulted in formats compatible with community program needs and reported in satisfaction surveys of distant learning participants. In addition, EC Distance Technology partners with other UNM/CDD distance learning efforts to leverage a range of professional learning opportunities through the Developmental Screening Initiative which offers Continuing Medical Education (CME) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) at no cost to licensed professionals statewide.

Why EC Distance Technology?

> We use distance technology where it fits. We have developed proposals with community agencies through distance technology; we have held program meetings with the CDD and the Center for Education Policy Research (CEPR) at UNM. We have also been using it collaboratively for the Family Child Care Home Visiting model planning work.
> (M. Coop, Coop Consulting)

EC Distance Technology is built on the evidence based ECHO Project Model™ for health service delivery in rural NM. Adapted from that model, EC Distance Technology is helping ensure best practice service delivery to young children and families through staff development across a range of CYFD/OCD programs. It is also:

- **Cost effective**, by limiting the time and expense for travel, equipment and software. Currently, video connections have evolved from once limited use, and major capital layout for expensive cameras and equipment, to a range of inexpensive hardware and software options;

- **Accessible statewide**, with ready access through desktop and laptop internet connection, requiring little preliminary coordination for use in connecting with the CDD, with other satellite sites within a program, and between programs across the state without external support from the CDD;

- **Highly rated in satisfaction** surveys by participants in delivering rapid and responsive levels of support to distant sites;

- **An enhancement of existing network** of distance learning and technical assistance efforts already available to New Mexico's distant communities;

- **Developed from evidence-based model** of professional development and program support for service delivery.

How is EC Distance Technology Designed and Conducted?

EC Distance Technology is built around the priorities in NM Home Visiting Standards Manual (http://cyfd.org/docs/HV_Standards10.7.13.pdf) for personnel development and service delivery through training, technical assistance, consultation, reflective supervision and practice, and community capacity building. It is a tool to support CYFD goals within the NM Home Visiting program. It provides:

- **Home Visiting Training, Technical Assistance and Consultation** by bringing resources to the community, being responsive in tailoring resources to community needs, and supporting personnel development locally;

- **Reflective Supervision** for administrators and practitioners that is accessible, confidential, cost effective, and responsive;

- **Administrative Supervision** for program administrators that is accessible, cost effective, responsive, and which contributes to strong program development and management as standards, program evaluation, personnel requirements, and other administrative issues are addressed collaboratively;

- **Community Capacity Building** through staff training within the community, opening EC Distance Technology opportunities up to other community members, leveraging distance resources to enhance community knowledge and understanding, building community network of collaboration and resource sharing, allowing community programs to work with their off-site

How do you develop the trust that is needed in reflective consultation over a telephone line or a video connection? Prior to beginning any reflective consultation group by distance connection, we try to arrange for at least one opportunity for participants to meet in person. Supervisors meet quarterly with CYFD program managers as well as the Home Visiting Professional Development team . . . . We offer opportunities to engage in small group activities. This helps lay the groundwork for future reflective calls by providing a face-to face opportunity for us all to get to know one another. This is foundational to relationship development, especially when future communication will be by telephone or video connection.

(For more guidance on preparing for reflective consultation through distance communication with others, see Appendix A).

satellite office through visual connection, and facilitating statewide direct and responsive connection between and among additional Home Visiting program sites. EC Distance Technology has brought a variety of CYFD contractors into regular contact with community programs for information and support.

Getting Started: Understanding the Agency Technology Resources and Needs

The first step in the process of using, or even deciding if distance technology is a viable option in your agency, is to take inventory, review resources available and determine your agency needs. The *Home Visiting Program Technology Infrastructure Self-Assessment* tool (see Appendix B) can assist with this effort. The tool provides a framework for review of equipment, facilities, technology staff, policies and procedures that will assist in determining your agencies current status. It is also intended to be used as a planning tool to build capacity.

Recruit the Information Technology (IT) services within your community program if you have such expertise in house to assist you with your efforts. This will help ensure that EC Distance Technology services are compatible with your ongoing technology support and any future technology planning your agency is engaged in.

Once you have documented the current status on the tool, take some time to review the information and begin planning the action that needs to be taken to move your agency forward. List specific action steps, determine the person who will be responsible for that action and project a target date for completion. Periodically document the status of your action steps.

Understanding what technology needs are for your site, and how to plan for them, helps ensure success in connecting with staff and others throughout the state.

Your Professional Development Team member at the CDD can also work with you and the CDD REACH Team for assistance in determining technology needs and cost effective approaches. The CDD REACH website is: http://www.cdd.unm.edu/reach/.

As we all know, with every new cellphone version, technology is changing rapidly. While EC Distance Technology uses accessible, free or low cost and encrypted (when needed) software, we know that future iterations of software, and required on-site hardware (laptop, desktop, etc.) will also change over time. (For current software used by EC Distance Technology, see https://www.zoom.us or http://www.skype.com). To accommodate these changes, it is recommended that you periodically utilize the self-assessment tool as a resource for on-going continuous quality improvement.

Considerations in Using EC Distance Technology

Whether you are a seasoned Distance Technology practitioner, participating in technical assistance as a recipient or consultant, or someone new to the uses of Distance Technology, the following considerations are consistent throughout all areas of practice:

- **Equipment considerations**, which currently utilize laptop and desktop computers at your site;

- **Software considerations**, which change, but presently include Zoom and Skype. Currently this is downloaded at no cost to the program. Any software utilized must ensure confidentiality for client and family, and staff discussions in group and individual reflective supervision;

- **Space considerations**, for individual and/or small group accommodations, such as a shared office space or small room with laptop/desktop, internet access and appropriate software. Reasonable expectation of privacy for reflective supervision and case-based discussion is essential. Accommodations for larger groups, including expansion to community groups, may require larger space arrangements;

- **Confidentiality considerations,** whenever personal information is exchanged. Some examples of this include discussion of family and child needs or discussion of personnel performance;

- **Technical Assistance considerations,** for connectivity which may involve your program IT department and/or availability of local staff to work with CDD-REACH;

- **Considerations for staff training and awareness** in use of EC Distance Technology resources and adherence to appropriate agency policies, including equipment use, client and staff confidentiality, and home visiting standards applicable in all areas of work, conducted with or without Distance Technology.

  Etiquette in use of distance technology which requires new and different ways of attending to others and presenting oneself in a professional setting. (For specific guidance on distance conferencing etiquette see Appendix C – Video Conferencing Tips for Success)

Access to technical support

Ideally, you will develop a system for supporting distance communication by identifying a contact within your Information Technology department or Technical

Support department or, an experienced technology user. If such support does not exist in your program ask your manger or human relations lead for more information about whom to contact for computer/technical support. Sometimes this person may be an officemate with computer technology experience, or the phone helpline for any of the methods described.

Challenges
Using distance technology as a method of communication and learning can be a paradigm shift, and, as with any new trend, there are issues and forces that must be considered. Equity, costs, effectiveness, and special needs of remote learners are but a few considerations (Bingham, Davis, Moore, 2006). Other challenges can include confidentiality, terms of use of applications and policies for acceptable use of agency equipment. These issues can be addressed in the context of your agency or organization's policies and procedures.

Some users may be challenged by the idea of using technology itself. Reading about what experienced users have learned and shared can be helpful for successful communication via distance technology. To make the experience for users that are relatively new to distance technology a positive one, *Videoconferencing Tips for Success* (Appendix C) offers commonsense guidance for participating and preparing for a video conferencing.

Thinking Through the Use of EC Distance Technology for Your Staff & Agency

We are all learners, and through the parallel process that is so key to home visiting, we all grow and learn together. We all have something to teach and share, and our honest belief in the strength of families to grow and learn, and teach us, requires that we allow ourselves to be learners as well.

Following are Brainstorm discussion questions for your user teams in preparing for and carrying out a variety of activities through EC Distance Technology. They may be discussion starters within program staff and/or with CYFD and the Professional Development Team.

BRAINSTORM #1:

How can our program ensure relationships are established among all participants and providers for best outcomes through EC Distance Technology? Share your ideas:

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You are a Home Visiting Program Supervisor. How do you begin to prepare your staff to participate in a group reflective consultation telephone conference? Share your ideas:

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You are a home visitor who is participating in a case-based discussion focusing on a client family you serve. What support would you like to receive prior to the distance case-based discussion? Share your ideas:

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You provide direct, face-to-face reflective supervision to a range of home visitors in your program. How can you best be supported through consultation with the Professional Development Team to provide the best service possible to Home Visiting staff? Share your ideas:

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Brainstorm #2

What are your home visiting program's unique needs that are not always clearly addressed in large group, face-to-face trainings? Share your ideas:

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How might your program's needs be addressed through EC Distance Technology? Share your ideas:

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Brainstorm #3

You are a home visitor new to this work. You understand that you may be asked to participate in a phone or video conference regarding some difficult case situations you have encountered. How can your supervisor support you in this process? Share your ideas:

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BRAINSTORM #4

We are committed to community capacity building. What are some ways we can share these resources, what we learn, and what our community can take advantage of through EC Distance Technology in the future? Share your ideas:

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Who are our potential community partners? Share your ideas:

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How and when do we invite community members and organizations to broadcasts and presentations offered through EC Distance Technology? Share your ideas:

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How do we plan for appropriate space for shared opportunities? Share your ideas:

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BRAINSTORM #5

All this is new to our staff.   How do we prepare our staff to utilize distance communication for:

Reflective Practice?

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Consultation?

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Training?

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How do we prepare our agency leadership for use of technology and its ever changing process?

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How do I remain vigilant about use of technology and protection of personal information?

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Through thoughtful planning with staff, consultation with colleagues and technical assistance resources, and vigilance of changing technology and confidentiality needs, EC Distance Technology can be a powerful tool to maximize training and technical assistance opportunities, build community capacity, and help staff and families benefit from reflective process as children's growth, development, and futures are supported for best outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Using Distance Technology in Relationship Based Consultation

Appendix B: Home Visiting Program Technology Infrastructure Self-Assessment

Appendix C: CDD Tips - Video Conferencing Tips for Success

Appendix A
Providing Training and Technical Assistance – Using Distance Technology in Relationship Based Consultation

One can easily see the benefits of using distance technology to provide training and technical assistance when supporting individuals across an entire state. With the limited resources of funding and time needed to travel great distances, the use of distance technology has many advantages.

As it is with so many technological innovations, our first response is to jump right in and put it to use without fully exploring the human impact of using that new technology. Think about when the telephone was first introduced to the world. How incredible to be able to talk to your friend in the next town without leaving your home! What probably wasn't considered at the time was how intrusive a telephone call can be, especially at dinner time!

With all new technologies the initial focus is primarily on the benefits rather than any possible limitations related to its use. In regards to relationship based work it is important to fully explore the benefits of using distance technology to provide support as well as any limitations. In this section we will explore the limitations of distance technology and suggest activities and approaches that can help compensate for these limitations.

Relationship Based Consultation

What do we mean by relationship based consultation or relationship based work and how it can be affected by the use of distance technology? Larry Edelman shares a number of relevant quotes regarding the focus on relationships in early childhood services (Edelman 2004):

> "Relationships matter critically. Consistent relationships with caring adults are essential for healthy development" (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, p. 5).

> "All learning takes place in the context of relationships and is critically affected by the quality of those relationships" (Norman-Murch, 1996).

Across the spectrum of early childhood education, care, and services, research on the critical nature of relationships and their impact on child development and wellbeing has informed practice. We know that the quality of the relationship between a parent/caregiver and an infant or toddler will have a significant impact on that child's brain development. Providing support to parents so they can be attuned to their baby's cues and needs helps them in the development of a nurturing, comforting, and predictable relationship with their child. So, in a relationship based home visiting model, for example, this is where the focus lies. Home visitors meet with parents/caregivers and explore those interactions, feelings, and thoughts related to their relationship with their baby. In doing so, they

engage the reflective capacity of the parent, so the parent has a better understanding of their own thoughts, responses, and feelings related to interactions with their child and how they impact the relationship.

In addition to the parent child relationship, other relationships that come into play in supporting the parent child relationship are also important. Edelman goes on to share the following quote:

> "Human relationships, and the effects of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy development" (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000, p. 4).

In relationship based consultation, as part of the support provided, the consultant attends to their relationship with the person they are supporting. Providing a caring, accepting, and supportive environment to that person has a positive impact on their relationship with whoever they support. This is what is referred to as the parallel process. A prominent writer on the subject, Jeree Pawl, sums it up in what she refers to as the Platinum Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto others". Relationships have an effect on other relationships. (Pawl, 2001 p4)

The same applies to the relationship between the supervisor of a consultant and the consultant. In relationship based work, the supervisor provides reflective time for the consultant that is collaborative, non-judgmental, and that promotes reflection. This is the parallel process at work: relationships affecting other relationships. Having experienced that supportive time with her supervisor, the consultant is better equipped to provide that same type of supportive, accepting interaction with the person she is providing support for, whether that be a parent or another service provider who works directly with the parent.

Now, if we follow this relationship based work up the ladder further, we find that we need someone to provide the same kind of supportive, accepting, and collaborative relationship to the supervisor as well. Those at the top of the parallel process sometimes get left out of this relationship based practice. When resources are limited and distance becomes a major challenge in providing this type of support to any person along the parallel process ladder, distance technology can be very helpful.

Within the EC Distance Technology model of support, staff provided training and technical assistance, as well as reflective supervision and training, to home visiting supervisors across the state. This was done primarily using video technology (which will be discussed in more detail later) so that individuals, or groups could see their support person and hear them, almost as if they were in the same room.

Telephone conference calls were also used at times so we will explore and compare the use of the two technologies.

Video conferencing has many obvious advantages over telephone conferencing. However, due to limitations of bandwidth or even lack of access to high-speed internet connectivity, sometimes telephone conferencing must be used. Both systems allow for distance communication, and it is important to explore the interpersonal considerations in their use.

Relationship Based Consultation:

Attending to relationships is at the foundation of relationship based consultation. Interactions, behaviors, and overall communication are the elements that contribute to the development and maintenance of relationships.

Since relationship building is a key factor in the provision of any type of relationship based support, it is important to explore how the use of distance technology to provide that support can impact the development and ongoing maintenance of those relationships.

Considerations in Using Distance Technology for Support

Telephone Consultation:

In utilizing telephone conferencing to provide support, one obvious piece of missing information in our communication is body language. We can hear the person on the other end of the line but we cannot see them. And a crucial element of body language is eye contact. We have a better idea of when someone is listening to us if they are looking at our eyes and face as we speak. Eye contact also helps us measure how engaged the other person is during a conversation. Since we cannot use eye contact to measure the other person's level of engagement when providing technical assistance or relationship based consultation over the telephone, it is important to offer frequent opportunities to the participant for them to respond or comment. This gives us a measure of the participants' engagement as well as helping to build a connection between consultant and participant.

Use of a vocal response to assure attentiveness is also important for the consultant to use. For instance, in our experience providing reflective consultation for small groups of home visiting supervisors using telephone conferencing, we have learned that the consultant needs to listen as well as make the occasional affirmative comment or paraphrasing statement to help the supervisor know that the reflective consultant is attending (again, because body language is not available).

The consultant must keep all of the participants in mind while providing telephone group support in order to act in ways that assures everyone's continuous engagement. So, for instance, it is helpful from time to time for the consultant to ask what questions other participants might have for the person speaking or for their comments. In addition, one helpful way to remember and think about everyone on the call is to have photographs of each participant available that can be laid out before the consultant during a call to help keep everyone in mind.

But how do you develop the trust that is needed in reflective consultation over a telephone wire? Prior to beginning any relationship based consultation by telephone, it is recommended (if possible) that the consultant arranges for at least one opportunity to meet the participants in person, and for the participants to have an opportunity to meet each other as well. In the New Mexico home visiting system, funded through the NM Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD), home visiting supervisors meet face to face quarterly with CYFD program managers, as well as the Home Visiting Professional Development team that provide relationship based consultation support through conference calls. During these meetings the supervisors sit together in their call groups and are offered opportunities during the meeting for them to engage in small group activities. This helps lay the groundwork for future conference calls by providing a face to face opportunity for them to get to know one another. This is foundational to relationship development especially when their future communication will be by telephone (or even with video conferencing).

Video Consultation:

Many people have already experienced video conferencing through easily assessable tools like Skype, FaceTime or Zoom, so the experience may not be completely foreign to most people. Video conferencing adds the visual dimension to the use of distance technology. Along with this comes the ability to view body language and share body language. This ramps up the level of information exchange beyond what is available when participating in a conference call. Participants must attend to what they are saying with their body. For instance, slouching in one's chair may send a different message than sitting upright, leaning slightly forward toward the camera.

Eye contact is available with video conferencing (as opposed to telephone conferencing), but can sometimes be problematic based on where the camera and screen are positioned. When the camera and the viewing screen are positioned apart from one another (i.e. the camera off to one side of the viewing screen).

Our natural inclination is to talk to the image of the person we see on the viewing screen in front of us. If the camera that is projecting our image to the other person is directly above the viewing screen, then it will appear to the participant on the other end that we are looking right at them. However, if the camera and the viewing screen are placed apart from one another, than as we talk to the person on the viewing screen, the actual "eye" of the other person, which would be the camera lens, is off to the side. So by looking at the screen and not the camera (eye), you are actually not making eye contact with the other person!

This tends to be less of a problem when utilizing a desktop PC or laptop where the camera is typically at the top of the viewing screen. However, even in this case, as we focus on the eyes of face on the screen before us, they are situated slightly below

the camera so it can appear to the other person that we are focused somewhere below their eyes, like on their chin.

Since eye contact is such an important element of face to face communication, it is important to be aware of this potential limitation when video conferencing. It is an example of one of the differences between actually being in the same room with someone and talking with them through video conferencing. These differences can have an effect, either consciously or unconsciously, on relationship building and trust. Just think of how it feels when you are conversing with someone who averts their gaze or does not make consistent eye contact. Often we read this as a sign of someone not being completely honest with us!

For this reason, and other reasons related to video conferencing, it is also recommended, if possible, to have a face to face, in person meeting with your video partner beforehand. In doing so, you will gain the initial traction you will need in relationship building that will be the foundation for future video conferencing connections.

Audio Delays in Video Conferencing:

In our face to face communication with others we experience the natural give and take rhythm of conversation. We learn how to wait and listen when it's the other person's turn to talk. With video conferencing there is sometimes a second or two delay between what we are seeing and what we are hearing. Because of this, it is sometimes hard to know when someone has begun to speak because we do not hear them at the moment they have begun (because of the delay). This can sometimes lead to both parties speaking at the same time. These instances, for the most part, may simply rise to the level of being a minor irritant. However, if we multiply this with other challenges such as intermittent technical difficulties, strong emotional content, or unresolved interpersonal issues, this could potentially be a tipping point leading to frustration or major irritation.

The key to overcoming issues relating to audio delay is repeated use of a video system in order to learn to anticipate the delay and act or react accordingly.   It can be very much like learning the nuances of communicating with someone from a different culture. In addition, as facilitator, one can get into the practice of when you find yourself speaking at the same time as the other person, deferring to them and inviting them to speak first.

Reading Emotions in Video Conferencing:

One element of relationship based consultation that can be impacted by the use of distance technology has to do with the expression of emotions. There are many subtle indicators of emotional expression that can be missed when using distance technology. For instance, on a conference call or even when using video conferencing (depending how close the participant is to the camera), if a person's eyes begin to tear up, that may not be evident to the person on the other end. In

relationship based work this "miss" can be huge since it is so important to be sensitive of, and attend to, the other person's feeling state.

Another missed cue regarding emotion can be when someone stops speaking because they are flooded with emotions. Sometimes a participant might try to keep themselves from crying, or sit very still because they are restraining themselves from making an angry outburst. This kind of body language is more evident when you are sitting in the same room with someone. However, this obviously would not be detected over the phone, and can go undetected during video communication. In fact, when someone becomes silent and completely still on the video screen, we might think that the technology has failed and what we are seeing is a "frozen" image of the other person! So instead of responding with a compassionate comment, we might instead blurt out something like, "I think we're having technical difficulties, call IT".

These examples are often not game changers if they happen within an already established, safe and trusting relationship. But they do inject a certain awkwardness and discomfort into a newly developing relationship. Depending on the content of the discussion it would be worthwhile to consider that someone is silent or still because they may be struggling with strong emotions, and just wait it out before responding.

Another instance of when someone is being perfectly still on the screen can be when someone is listening intently. When someone is sharing strong emotions, the other person often listens while keeping their body very still so the other person knows that their full attention is being given. Again, if we are in the same room with someone else this is obvious. However, if our communication is being projected via video conferencing and we witness the other person being absolutely still, we might look up and wonder if the person is really there, or if we are again viewing a frozen image of them! In addition, depending on the distance from the camera, slight head nods by the listener might not be visible to the other person.   So one thing to consider is to add a vocal response to the head nods (and/or exaggerate the head nods) with something like a simple "uh huh", or "I'm with you", in these situations. Even shifting positions or other non-distracting movements will assure the other person that you are "really there".

Additional Considerations:

There are many things we must attend to regarding our own behavior that will have an impact on a developing relationship. One behavior that impacts trust is the ability to follow through with what we promise. Being late for a meeting or not showing up for an appointment can have a negative impact on a relationship. The same goes for showing up late for a telephone or video conferencing meeting. Since travel is not an issue when using distance technology, we do not worry about getting stuck in traffic or having a flat tire impacting our ability to be on time to a meeting. This sometimes gives us a false sense of security about how much time we will need

to prepare for a distance technology meeting. We might find ourselves working at our desk on another task until moments before our video call (if we are conducting it on our PC).

If this is the case, we are not allowing for the possibility of other unforeseen events that can delay our joining the meeting. Testing our system or having ample time to set it up and initiate whatever distance technology we are using can save us from possibly being late, or even having to cancel a meeting completely because of some failure in the technology we are using. If a distance technology participant consistently needs to wait because their consultant is setting up at the last minute, this can negatively impact the relationship. It can also negatively impact the participant's trust in the use of distance technology, perhaps to the point of developing a reluctance to meet with you in this way.

Even when we allow ourselves extra time to prepare, sometimes we are simply faced with a technological problem that is not easily resolved. In this case we are faced with the choice of doggedly pursuing a fix to the technological problem, which can eat up precious time, or we can make the choice to shift to an alternate technology (one that is reliable and easily accessed, like the telephone). What we have learned in our work is to have a back-up conference call number that everyone has in advance and that everyone can switch to if fixing a video conferencing problem appears to be taking too much time. For this purpose, and for video failures mid-way through a video conference, it is also important that participants have the cell phone number of the facilitator so participants can contact the facilitator in the event of a video failure. Once the facilitator is contacted, then a decision can be made to transition to a phone conference call instead.

Looking Ahead:

As we have seen, there are aspects of video conferencing that are inherently problematic when providing relationship based consultation. Certainly this is not an exhaustive exploration of the subject. However, by being aware of the challenges mentioned above, one can also be on the lookout for other potential stumbling blocks when using distance technology within relationship based consultation support.

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Appendix B
Home Visiting Program Technology Infrastructure Self-Assessment

Home Visiting Program Technology Infrastructure Self-Assessment					
Name of Program					
Date					
Contact Person					
Phone					
Address					
Technology/Equipment Needed for Video Conferencing					
Technology/Equipment	**CURRENT STATUS**	**ACTION TO BE TAKEN**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION**	**STATUS**
High-Speed Internet in offices available for program use.					
Desktop or laptop computer with built-in or stand-alone webcam.					
Audio capability that may include microphone and speakers or headset with built-in microphone.					
For groups, screen that is large enough to be viewed by all.					
Appropriate software installed (e.g., Skype or Zoom).					
Support Staff	**CURRENT STATUS**	**ACTION TO BE TAKEN**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION**	**STATUS**
Technology /IT specialists or support personnel familiar with hardware and software requirements may be helpful.					

Facilities & Spaces with access to high-speed internet	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	STATUS
Formal: conference room or private office.					
Less formal: room available with equipment to support Home Visiting team participation.					
Policies that affect technology	CURRENT STATUS	ACTION TO BE TAKEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION	STATUS
Orientation to Distance Technology Process, Policies, Procedures.					
Acceptable Computer use Policy					
HIPAA Compliance					

Appendix C
Videoconferencing Tips for Success – REACH 2013

Meeting Preparation

- Whenever possible, conduct a practice or test session in advance; especially if you are using technology you have not used before or there have been changes to your equipment or internet.
- Arrive well before your videoconference starts to test the videoconferencing system and the interface to your computer. Connect at least 15 minutes before your meeting begins.
- Minimize distracting glare and uneven lighting by pulling the shades on windows and doors and covering glass-framed wall hangings. You should minimize combining outside light with indoor fluorescent lighting to prevent problems with the videoconference camera and the quality of your image.
- Make sure the room has adequate lighting; typically what would be used for standard office work is sufficient. If it's too dark, the other sites won't be able to see you clearly.
- Set up a back channel for communication to the other site(s) such as with Instant Message client, cell phones or email. This allows for communication without interrupting the discussion.
- Wear neutral, muted, or pastel solid colors. Avoid patterns like plaids, stripes, polka dots, very bright colors, and the colors white or red—they can cause distracting effects on screen. Notice what is behind your head – do you have a lamp or plant "growing" out of it? A small shift in camera angle can help.

Communicate Effectively

- Do an audio check before the virtual meeting begins to ensure that everyone can hear you.
- Speak in a normal voice – you shouldn't have to shout.
- Talk directly towards the microphone. Do not turn your head from side to side while talking or your voice will fade in and out at the remote site.
- When you start talking, just keep talking. Try not to ask "can you hear me?" or anything like that. Assume that everything is working fine. You will be interrupted if something is wrong.
- When possible, keep your microphone muted when you won't be speaking for several minutes or more. Un-muted microphones can be the single most important problem communicating during a videoconference meeting.
- Be natural, but limit excess movement to avoid looking jerky on screen. If you walk around while speaking, remain in a small area and walk slowly. Don't turn your back to the camera.

Videoconferencing Etiquette

- When videoconferencing with many sites, start your comment by saying your name and location (for example, "This is Joan at the CDD.") Doing so helps the video equipment switch to your site and also helps other sites identify who is speaking before the video monitor catches up.
- When your microphone is on, be careful with side conversations and do not rustle papers or make tapping sounds near the microphone. Any sounds you make will be heard by the other sites and can be distracting.
- When you are leading the discussion, direct your questions to a specific site, and preferably a specific individual. Expect a few extra seconds of delay in getting an answer because of the technology and distance involved (at minimum, un-muting the microphone). People take longer to get the courage to take the floor in a video conference, so if you are addressing your question to everyone, give at LEAST 30 seconds of empty airspace before assuming that no one will answer. 45-60 seconds can be needed at the beginning of a meeting.
- Do not cause echo. If you are causing echo, it will disrupt the videoconference. If necessary, keep your microphone muted until you have to speak, and then quickly mute it when you are finished. Echoes happen when a microphone is picking up sound from the speakers. The site causing the echo does not hear it.
- Look directly at the camera as often as possible. This will give the remote site the impression that you are looking directly at them. Keep your camera close to your monitor. This makes it appear that you are looking at the camera when you are watching the monitor.