eTherapy placements for clinical psychology students

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What is eTherapy?

- Evidence-based treatments translated onto the web
  - Structured
  - Modularised
  - Beyond words on the page
    - Multi-media and interactive activities

- Evidence base for eTherapies
  - From 1997-2006, 175 studies of approximately 100 eTherapies with impressive treatment outcomes (Marks et al, 2007)
  - Subsequent meta-analyses support effectiveness and acceptability, particularly for anxiety and depressive disorders

- Strong federal government support
  - Cost-effective dissemination
  - Not limited by time or space
  - National eTherapy Centre established at Swinburne University of Technology

- Ongoing development of practice frameworks in Australia
  - DoHA convenes expert committee to develop a Quality Framework for the provision of Telephone Counselling and Internet-based Support Services
The Swinburne Model of online service provision

- Anxiety Online: world’s first automated, evidence-based, virtual psychology clinic
- Comprehensive clinical assessment followed by delivery of CBT-based therapeutic material
- Two formats
  - Self-help (free)
  - Therapist-assist ($120 for 12 weeks)
    - Weekly email correspondence from eTherapist to client
- eTherapists are provisionally registered psychologists with current enrolment in an APAC-accredited post-graduate degree
  - Completed eTherapy training
  - Under the supervision of a clinical psychologist who has completed eTherapy supervisor training
Based on structured diagnostic assessment

- Online Psychological Assessment (e-PASS) – a triage and referral system
- Fully automated online structured psychological triage system covering many of the DSM-IV disorders
- At the completion of the assessment, users receive diagnostic information including an indication of severity PLUS referral recommendation both within and outside Anxiety Online
  - Self-help recommended for mild symptoms, therapist-assist recommended for moderate-severe
Welcome

Anxiety Online is a comprehensive online mental health service offering information, assessment, online diagnosis and treatment programs ("eTherapy") for the anxiety disorders:

- Generalised Anxiety Disorder
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Panic Disorder with or without Agoraphobia

Please take the time to click on the options below to learn more about how Anxiety Online can help you.

Click here to learn more about what Anxiety Online offers

Click here to find out what type of anxiety you have and how severe it is

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Training in eTherapy

- Legal and ethical issues:
  - Maintaining health records
  - Confidentiality and privacy
  - Research policy
  - Duty of care and boundaries of competence

- Clinical Issues
  - Encouraging engagement, managing dropouts, homework, avoidance, client exhibiting signs of distress, disorder specific issues

- Communicating via email
  - Therapeutic alliance, writing style and emailing techniques, language style, symbols and emotional expressions, underlying feelings, emotional content of emails, misunderstandings, magnification, challenging, structuring of emails, reflection and review
Monitoring and evaluation of eTherapist skills

- Traditional face-to-face supervision
- Monitoring of written communications with client
- Pre- vs. post-treatment assessment data
- Monitoring of client’s online activity:
  - Frequency of use of the treatment program
  - Self monitoring of symptoms
  - Client performance on online knowledge quizzes,
  - Completion of homework activities, etc.
Is eTherapy an appropriate training domain for clinical psychologists?

- Therapeutic communication is asynchronous and text-based
- Core therapeutic competencies not covered:
  - Fundamental engagement skills
  - Interpretation of meaning and management of the interpersonal space
Competencies addressed by this form of training

- **Theories and knowledge:**
  - Evidence based psychological interventions

- **Assessment:**
  - Structured assessment of psychopathology, interpersonal and social functioning, risk assessment (Step 1 of applied skills)

- **Intervention and implementation:**
  - Engagement, rapport development, managing rifts in rapport (Step 1 of applied skills)
  - Step 1 of applied skill in rolling out, monitoring, and dealing with deviations from manualised treatments

- **Research and evaluation:**
  - Participation in program evaluation and quality assurance research

- **Professional practice:**
  - Codes of conduct, especially participation in development of new national guidelines for new media

- **Non-psychological components:**
  - Roles, structures and relationships of Australian institutions
Professional recognition of Anxiety Online

- APS has a working group to consider electronic forms of psychological practice
- APS College of Counselling Psychologists recognises eTherapy hours as client contact hours (up to 20% of total)
- APS College of Clinical Psychologists currently recognises eTherapy hours as “other” placement hours
  - Ongoing working group