



## Leadership Guidance for Supervising Teleworking Counselors

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**Purpose:** During this COVID-19 crisis a lot is being asked of all staff. But we are asking even more from our leadership in terms of accountability. As we are increasingly forced to move to a teleworking environment where it is more difficult to monitor and respond to client and staff needs and to ensure consistent and professional services are provided, Supervisors will need to modify and adapt their approach in many ways to ensure what we do as a program remains relevant and effective. This guidance is intended to outline basic expectations for Supervisors as they oversee the work of counselors who are teleworking and as they also begin to work remotely.

### **Basic Expectations:**

Supervisors will still be functioning in their counselor capacity and are responsible for all the same counseling and case management activities as are their counselors.

Supervisors will need to remain available to the maximum extent possible for their own clients, their team, and the clients of their counselors during regularly scheduled work hours. You may need to alter any alternative or flex schedules during this time. This should be discussed with your District Director.

Supervisors need to take extra, active steps to ensure that counselors remain active and engaged with their clients. teleworking as a counselor reduces the levels of communication with clients, and can easily result in clients feeling short changed, ignored, unheard, or dismissed. Consequently, counselors need additional support and reminders to remain extra-attentive, proactive, and empathetic with their clients.

Supervisors need to have a clearly defined and communicated structure for work both for themselves and their staff. This includes:

- Define schedules and specific work hours for each member of their team
- Specify your specific hours you are physically working in the office and/or available.

- Share with staff the best ways to contact you (e.g. IM, email)
- Establish best lines of communication (I.M., email, phone, video) with each staff
- Establish guidelines for response time to supervisor inquiries
- Plan and create a schedule for checking in with all team members
  - Daily online face to face (Facetime, Google Meetings, etc.)
  - Phone and IM contact as needed daily
- Schedule daily Google Hangout check-in team meeting.
- Conduct Weekly team meetings (Google meetings)
- Assign and follow up on staff trainings (weekly)
  - SABA
  - CEU training
  - Professional Development training (e.g. DWS Learning Portal)
  - Refresher trainings on identified areas from Quality Assurance reviews and expectations for timelines to make corrections and/or changes to case files
- Maintain monitoring of calendar appointments to insure consistent distribute of work effort
- Track liaison responsibilities for each staff and check in routinely (monthly or more frequently) regarding distance outreach and efforts to maintain liaison relationships

Supervisors also need to effectively monitor the ongoing quality and volume of their team’s work to ensure that clients are being served and paid work time is being used effectively. This means Supervisors should be engaging in additional quality checks and progress tracking that includes:

- Spot check Aware narratives to insure ongoing documentation
- Quickly but thoroughly completing monthly client record reviews
- Daily Follow-up on the dashboard reports including provision of support and feedback to team on areas that need attention

Supervisors should also check in with Office Specialists on daily office needs (scanning, attaching, billing) and ensure counselors maintain ongoing daily communication with their office specialists while teleworking.

Supervisors will need to make sure counselors are meeting in a scheduled and structured way at least once per week with their OS for billing and other essential daily office needs related to case management and billing.