



# VR Counselor Teleworking Guidance

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As you know, in response to the Covid-19 Virus, we have been developing a teleworking plan. There are some key things that you need to be aware of to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our clients and the agency while teleworking. If approved, teleworking is only temporary as a response to the COVID- 19 crisis. This is outlined in the Temporary teleworking Agreement that you recently signed and can be terminated at any time.

## **Ability to Telework**

To be approved for part or full time teleworking you must have the ability to do so in a reliable, consistent, and appropriate way. You are responsible for maintaining:

- High speed internet access
- Jabber phone communications over VOIP with your work #
- A workable space that provides confidentiality for client calls and computer access within your home per the teleworking agreement. To emphasize this point, when in communication with your clients from home, you must do so in a fully quiet and confidential area. Clients should expect that you are treating their case in the same confidential manner that you would be if you were working in your office with the door shut.
- Compliance with DTS Acceptable use Policy with all DWS equipment and during scheduled work time. Due to network capacity limitations, at no time should your work computer or VPN connection be used to stream non-work media such as Netflix, Hulu, etc.

If you are approved for teleworking work, you will sign a teleworking agreement and an internet/phone usage agreement for which there is some reimbursement for the utilization of your home Internet.

## **Necessary Agency Equipment**

Performance of most duties while teleworking will require a state issued computer/laptop with access to AWARE and Google Docs, GlobalProtect VPN, e-signature pad, softphone software, headset and/or a phone for call-forwarding. Any additional requirements will need to be requested through your District Director.

## **Your Work Schedule**

- You are still responsible to work your scheduled 40 hour shift each week. Working from home does not lower the expectations for your availability or for the level of service we provide our clients. You need to be responsive to calls and emails from your clients, along with communications from your supervisor or support staff. You must maintain an accurate calendar of appointments, case management tasks and other activities. You must also be logged on to Google Hangouts and Jabber.
- During weeks when you are teleworking you may not have prior “flex” schedules unless this has been agreed to by your District Director and still ensures the smooth operation of our overall program and continues to meet the needs of our clients.
- Additionally, you are not authorized to count work time outside of your scheduled work hours unless you have prior approval by your District Director.
- If teleworking part-time, you will still have specific, assigned days to work in the office. You must be in the office on that day. Advance notice will be required if you do not plan on being in the office on that day. In-office days must take place between 8am-5pm. No flex or adjusted schedules for office days are permitted during this crisis as we will be operating the office with a skeleton staff.

## **Expectations while Teleworking**

Your ability to telework should not create a significant decrease in service or availability for our clients. Clients should still expect quality, efficient, and timely contact and responses from their counselors. You will be held to the same standards of quality service that you would give if you were in the office.

During days of teleworking work, as a VR Counselor, you are expected to be able to perform the following tasks independently through the use of available technology:

- Daily individual and team check-ins with Supervisor/Team via Google Meeting
- Coordinate all required tasks you are unable to perform (listed below) with your Supervisor or OS to insure the needs of clients are met in a timely manner
- Maintain a calendar documenting work performed each hour
- Participate in team meeting conference and video calls
- Staff cases and case issues with Supervisor (via phone or video)

- Maintain a calendar of appointments and engage in active outreach to insure clients are able to attend scheduled phone meetings to participate in their case
- Conduct meetings with clients via phone to complete initial interviews, provide counseling and guidance, and direct clients to appropriate referral services
- Review medical records and make eligibility decisions for completed applications in AWARE
- Access the Client Service Manual to utilize in performance of VRC duties
- Complete all normal client record documentation requirements in AWARE
- Participate in Supervisor directed CEU and Professional Development training
- Complete all required learning portal trainings
- Respond to emails from the agency, vendors, and clients in a timely manner as listed in UPM.
- Be consistently available during work hours to answer all work related phone calls, IMs, and emails,
- Prepare authorizations
- Follow up on client progress in restoration and training activities (phone & email)
- Follow up via phone with job coaches/CRPs regarding SE clients
- Report work time accurately in payroll system

#### **Coordination and communication with in-district staff**

While teleworking you will need to remain in contact with in-office support staff and coordinate with them in order to perform the following aspects of your job:

- Receiving physical mail
- Scanning and attachment of records and other hard copy documents
- Obtaining scanned copies of signed applications for intake and eligibility processing
- Obtaining signatures on IPEs, Amendments, and Financial forms
- Printing and mailing of closure letters
- Completing invoice/authorization review for payment

#### **Limitations on work while teleworking**

While teleworking you will be unable to perform the following tasks:

- Meet with clients who require an in-person counseling session
- Work directly with clients who do not have access to a phone
- Exchange electronic information (including signatures) with clients who do not have access to a computer
- Conduct group orientations for clients interested in VR services
- Scan or attach hard copy documents
- Perform site visits for SE/SJBT job coached clients (site visits may be conducted on your in-office days).

### **Additional Duties while teleworking**

Some of these duties may need to be conducted during your in-office days, as approved by your supervisor. Due to limitations on tasks that can be performed from home, there may be times when you do not have sufficient work for an entire day. At these times, your supervisor may assign you additional duties that can be performed from home to assist the ongoing staff and client needs in the office. Such duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Making client reminder calls
- Following up on medical record checks
- Reviewing medical records for clients and providing “recommendations” for eligibility determinations to other counselors.
- Conduct individual welcome sessions via telephone

### **Maintaining a full work schedule**

In addition to what is listed above, there are several activities that you can do to help get your hours in. Increasing regular contact and check-ins with clients, coordinating with CRP's, completing mandatory training and other training, Service J, completing the "red" on the Counselor Level Dashboard, etc. If you run out of work activities, you should staff the situation with your supervisor so they can assist you with some additional activities to insure you can remain working productively during your scheduled work time. Remember, leave must be used for the hours you are not working.

### **Crisis Contact Information**

Attached to this document is a **Desktop Emergency Contact List**. During this ongoing COVID-19 crisis you may encounter an increased number of clients who are in significant non-VR related crises. In order to be effective in assisting our clients get the immediate help they need that is outside our scope of expertise, please keep this contact list readily available so that you can assist your clients in getting the resources that they may desperately need. Remember, many individuals are losing jobs and are experiencing things that they have never before had to deal with. We do not know what types of emergencies may come up so please familiarize yourself with this list and use it appropriately.

## **Desktop Emergency Contact List**

### **Suicide Prevention Hotline**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

<https://utahsuicideprevention.org/>

### **Unemployment Insurance**

801-526-4400

<https://jobs.utah.gov/ui/home>

### **Abuse Hotline**

1-800-897-LINK (5465)

<https://www.udvc.org/>

### **Mental Health Services**

24 Hour Crisis UNI Crisis Line (801)587-3000

<https://slco.org/behavioral-health/need-immediate-help/>

### **Housing Resources & Assistance**

<https://www.utahca.org/housing-case-management/>

### **Homeless Resource Centers**

(801)990-9999

<https://www.slc.gov/hand/homeless-services/homeless-services-resource-centers/>

### **Food**

Utah Food Bank (801)978-2452

<https://www.utahfoodbank.org/>

### **COVID-19 Screening Resource Line**

1-800-456-7707

<https://coronavirus.utah.gov/>