

The Traumatic Stress Research Consortium (TSRC)

at the Kinsey Institute, Indiana University

February 2021 Newsletter

The TSRC client survey

September 2020 marked the launch of the TSRC client survey, a project that aims to describe the experiences of thousands of therapy clients worldwide. Since its inception, the client survey continues to evolve. New questions have been added to capture dissociation and shut down during traumatic events, to improve our ability to document those experiences. As results continue to come in, preliminary results from the client survey will be shared in this and future newsletters.

We are seeking hundreds of therapy clients for our survey. We invite you to help your clients share their experience.

Access the online survey here:

<https://www.traumascience.org/client-invitation-letter>

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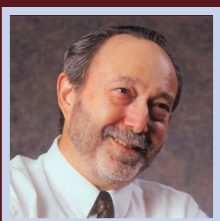
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In this newsletter

Teletherapy continues to be a necessary choice for many clients and therapists during the pandemic. Though widespread in use, many questions remain about client experiences with teletherapy. In this newsletter, we wanted to share some timely preliminary results from our client survey that capture client perception of convenience, comfort, and connection with their therapists after switching from in-person sessions to teletherapy.

Our Team

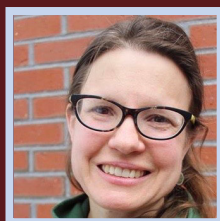
The TSRC is an international group of clinicians and researchers exploring the science of safety and connection



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Founding Director



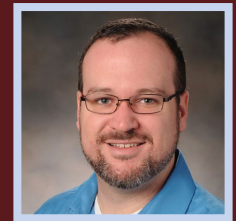
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Client survey: Attitudes about video therapy



The TSRC client survey gathers information on experiences of adults who are in therapy. Clients do not need to identify as trauma survivors or have a trauma history to participate. Over the past months, we have reached out to our professional network members to connect their clients to this research effort. So far, we have had 122 responses, with data continuing to come in thanks to the efforts of our trauma professional network. To see how you can share the survey with your clients, please see the link on the first page.

About the survey participants

In this newsletter, we are reporting preliminary results based on data collected since we launched the client survey in September. Responses have come from 14 countries, with the most common countries being the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Participants are predominantly female (80.5%) and spanned a range of ages from 18 to 70 years old.

Out of the 122 therapy clients who completed the online survey, 79.5% have reported a change in therapy as a result of the pandemic. The most common change has been a transition from in-person to video therapy (70.3%), the experience that we will focus on in this newsletter.

Telehealth questions

The full TSRC client survey covers a broad range of client experiences and history, including questions about their experience with telehealth experience during the pandemic. In the survey, clients who have switched to therapy via video were asked about how their living situation and technology limitations affect their therapy experience. Clients were also asked about differences in comfort and convenience compared to in-person therapy, as well as how their sense of connection to their therapist may or may not have changed.

Preliminary findings: Comparing video therapy to in-person therapy

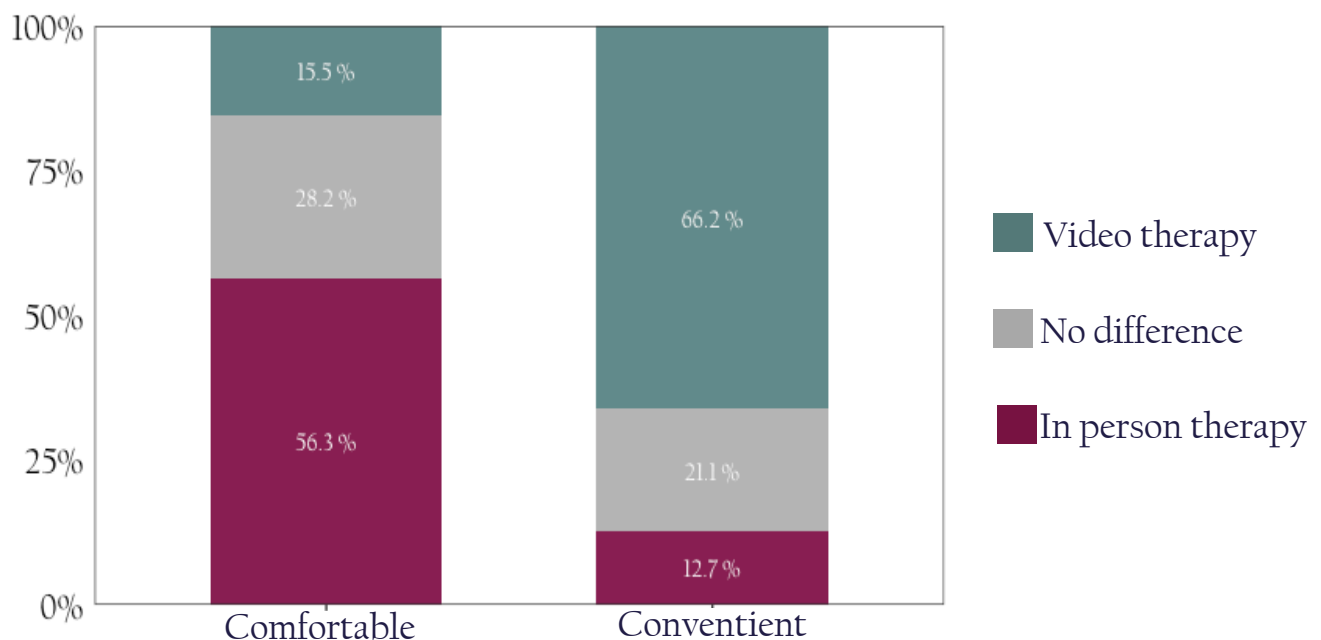
Clinicians who currently offer video therapy may be encouraged to see that our initial results show that many clients have had positive experiences with it.

- 66.2% felt that video is a more convenient form of therapy delivery, compared to in-person therapy.
- 69.5% did not agree that their computer equipment interfered with effective therapy.
- 68.1% did not agree that their living situation gets in the way of effective therapy.
- 38.1% of participants agreed that video therapy is as effective as in-person therapy, and 23.9% were neutral about the difference in effectiveness.

However, for a significant number of clients, video therapy feels like a compromised form of therapy.

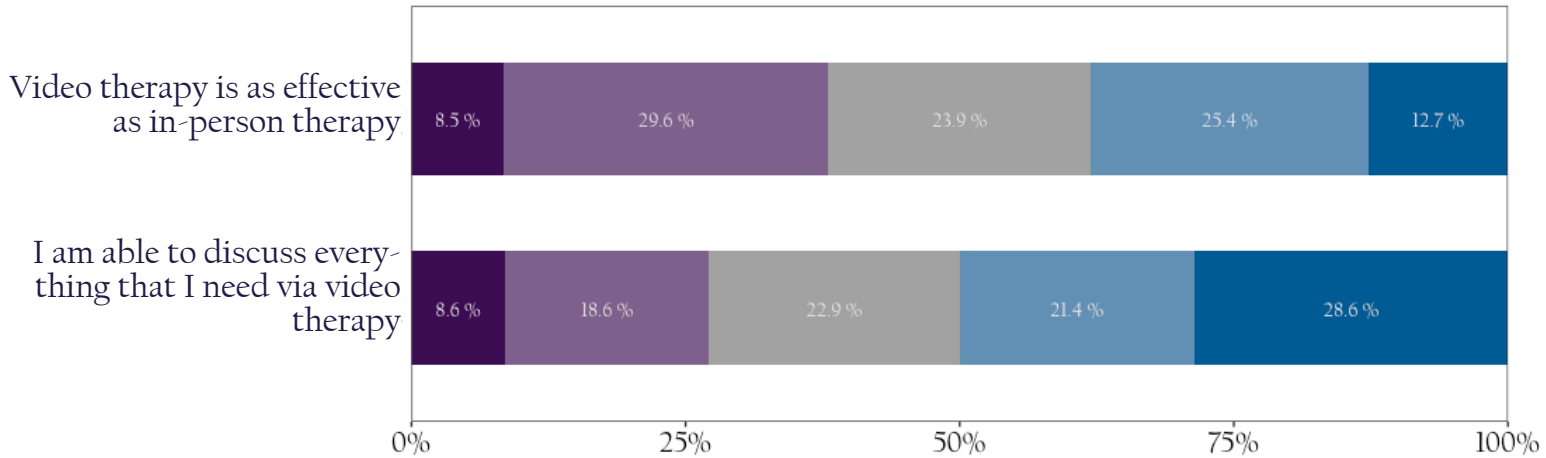
- Nearly half (44.9%) reported feeling less connection to their therapist compared to in-person therapy.
- 38.1% disagreed that teletherapy is as effective as in-person therapy.
- 56.3% said that in-person therapy is more comfortable than video therapy.
- For some clients, therapy was impeded by clients' home situation (31.9%) or computer equipment (30.4%).

Which therapy method is more...



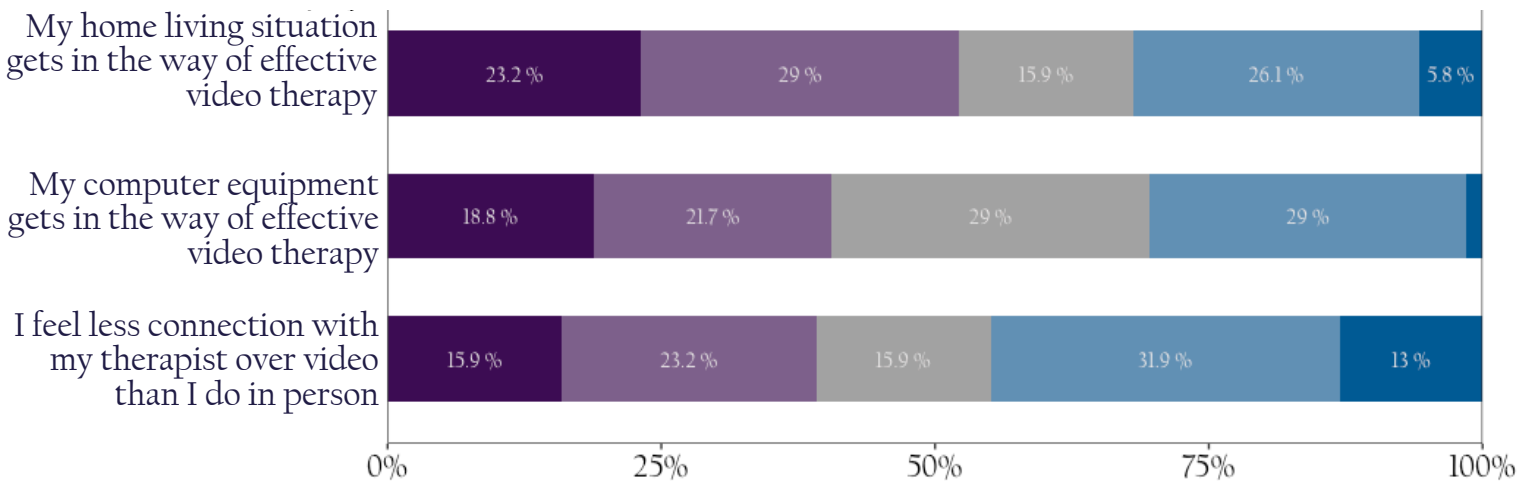
Perceptions of Video Therapy

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Agree
 Strongly agree



Barriers to Video Therapy

Strongly disagree
 Disagree
 Neither agree nor disagree
 Agree
 Strongly agree



Interpreting the findings

Many clients and their therapists are experiencing video therapy for the first time as a result of the pandemic. This change inspires questions about how this therapy delivery impacts client experience. Our data so far suggest that video therapy may be acceptable for many clients with high convenience and little disruption from computer equipment or home environment. Many therapists offering video therapy will likely breathe a little sigh of relief to hear that, from the client perspectives, video therapy can work well.

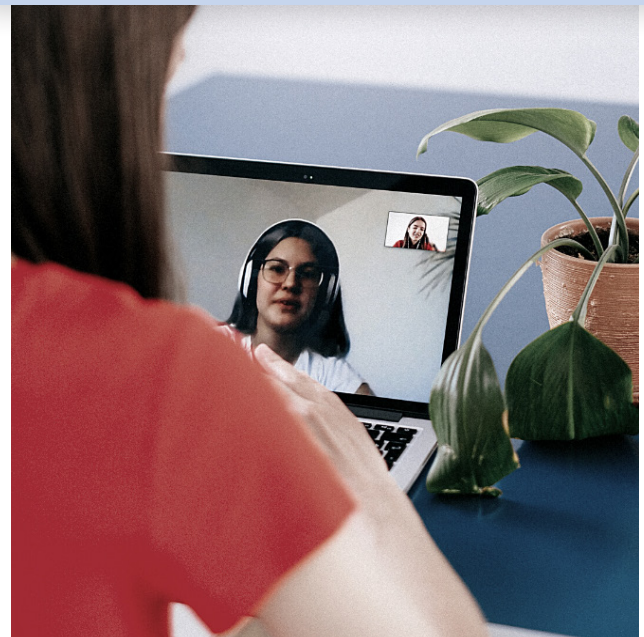
It's also important to note that video therapy poses obstacles for a significant number of clients. Close to half of our survey participants said they feel a diminished connection to their therapists, and more than half find video therapy less comfortable. Further, technology issues and disruptive home environment may negatively impact therapy, especially for those who have limited internet access or have lack of privacy. This leaves a lot of room to explore possibilities for how to make video therapy work better.

Our results show that the question may not be whether teletherapy is effective, but for whom it is effective. Clinicians may want to take stock of which clients are responding most positively to telehealth and try to understand what makes that therapeutic experience so beneficial for these clients. Conversely, clinicians should also consider who is not responding well to telehealth and work with those clients to see if there are solutions that can help increase comfort and effectiveness.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused major changes to the way that therapy is delivered. Though many will be relieved to return to therapy as usual, it is likely that telehealth will remain an attractive option for some clients and clinicians. Work done to optimize teletherapy and understand which clients may benefit from it could help the effectiveness of telehealth in the long term, as its application becomes a part of the clinician's toolbox in the future.

Looking ahead

Our client survey continues to evolve, and we are still in the initial stages of outreach and participation. As we gather more data, we look forward to sharing our findings on a wide range of client experiences, informing diagnosis and treatment, and uncovering patterns that can help us better understand the interaction of the brain and body in wellbeing, recovery, and resilience.



About the Consortium

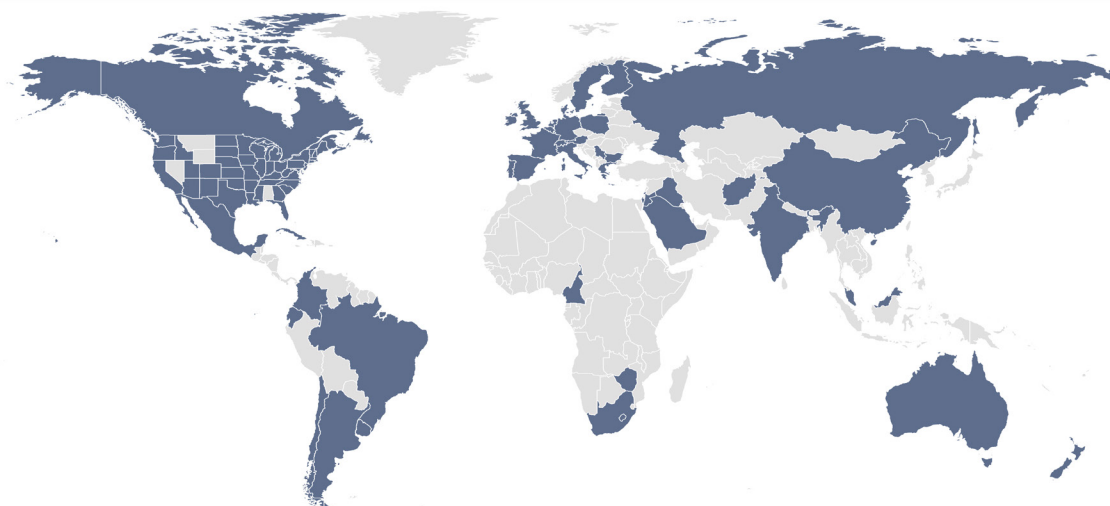
The TSRC is an international group of clinicians and researchers studying the science of safety and connection. We are committed to furthering our understanding of the personal trajectories of trauma survivors taking into account mental and physical health, social wellbeing, resilience, and personal meaning. Our research orientation is grounded in Polyvagal Theory, developed by Dr. Stephen Porges, which explains how threat can retune our autonomic nervous systems into states of defense.

Since launching in 2018, membership has grown to more than 900 trauma workers and continues to expand every day. Two-thirds of our members are located in the US, with one-third spread over more than 40 different countries. The map below shows the location of consortium members across the globe.

Our survey for trauma professionals, launched two years ago, is ongoing with more than 600 responses and counting. Preliminary results from the trauma professionals survey were reported in previous newsletters.

Help grow our membership!

Invite your colleagues to join the TSRC network. Register at trauma@indiana.edu



Study spotlight: Somatic methods in trauma therapy

The TSRC is partnering with the European Association for Body Psychotherapy (EABP) and United States Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP) to better understand the landscape of body-based therapies and their application to trauma. The study is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind. It will examine methods, their perceived utility for trauma, professional and personal experience, and client characteristics. Given the rise in interest about body-oriented trauma therapy, the results will be important for understanding clinician's engagement of the body as a part of trauma recovery and promoting wellbeing.

Thank you to our donors

The consortium is grateful to the U.S. Association for Body Psychotherapy (USABP), the Dillon Fund, the Chaja Foundation, Dr. Christopher Walling, and two anonymous donors for generous gifts in support of our research and outreach mission.

Subscription Information

You are receiving this newsletter because you are an active member of the Traumatic Stress Research Consortium (TSRC). If you wish to unsubscribe, please email us at trauma@indiana.edu with the title “UNSUBSCRIBE”.



Contact Information

Email us at trauma@indiana.edu or learn more at <https://kinseyinstitute.org/research/traumatic-stress.php>

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