

Telepsychology: EFPA recommendations for ethical practice

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Overview



Background

Ethical Challenges

Recommendations
& general
principles

Specific guidance

Background

Growth in digital services

Solely online,
as well as blended

EFPA guidelines to update ethics
codes to consider impact of
technological innovations.



Ethical challenges

Impoverished communication

Security considerations

Competencies & evidence

Cross-national issues

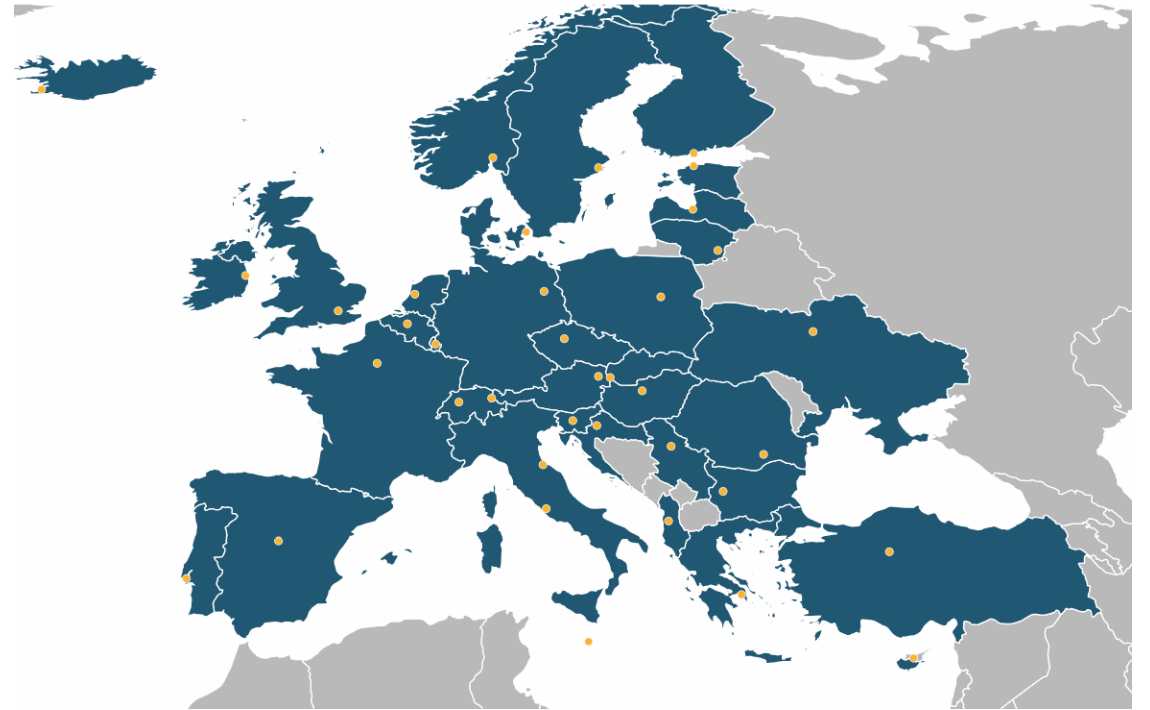


Recommendations & general principles

Each organization should produce a statement.

Ethical dimensions are nonetheless always the same.

Different mediums and communication settings may pose specific challenges.



Security

Identity of the psychologist

Psychologists can make use of internet & social media to establish online presence.

Should be easily identified as such.

“I could “simply” enter my patient’s names and their contact information on their special marketing platform, and it would contact my patients with a request for reviews for me.”

Security

Identity of client / users

Should normally be required.

If anonymity is preferred,
additional caution should be exerted.



Security

Protection

Best practices around data security (e.g. MFA) & encryption.

Training in cybersecurity

Clear protocol in case of breaches.



Confidentiality

Recognition of limits

Communicate clearly on relevant legislation and limits to confidentiality (e.g. subpoena of records)

Maintain records

Keep appropriate back-ups

Provide clarity regarding (mutual) registration and storage



Confidentiality

Maintenance of records

Keep appropriate back-ups.

Clarity regarding (mutual) registration and storage.

Presence of 'third parties'.



Special characteristics of services via the internet

Mode of delivery & turnaround time

Role of AI

Geographical location and implications

Need for training & CE

Need for suitable working environments



Special characteristics of services via the internet

Psychological assessment

User support

Separating private and professional data

Exploring optimal 'dosage' of tech



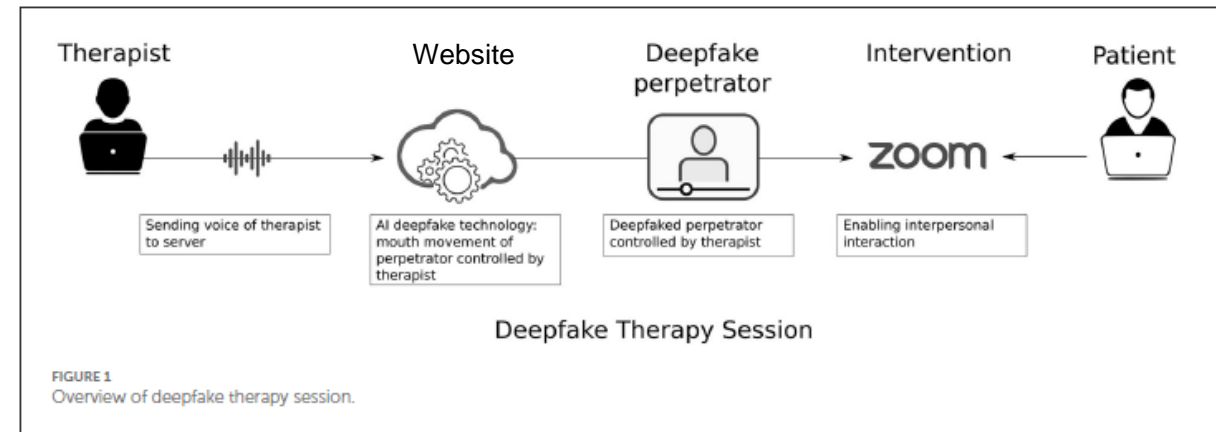
Appropriateness

Explore tech, but with caution if evidence base is limited.

Be aware of varying affordances.

Practice within range of competences.

Avoid exaggerated claims on success of service.



Conclusion

Rapidly evolving field requiring monitoring of practice & frequent reviewing of ethical codes.

Online presence of national associations.





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Reference

EFPA Board of Ethics & Project Group on eHealth (2023). Psychological services via internet and other digital means: recommendations for ethical practice. European Federation of Psychologists' Associations. <https://www.efpa.eu/psychological-services-internet-and-other-digital-means-recommendations-ethical-practice>