

ABSTRACT
TRAINEES' EXPERIENCE OF VIDEOCONFERENCING PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING:
A CONSENSUAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

Tin Weng Mak, MA
Marquette University, 2025

As videoconferencing psychotherapy (VCP) becomes an increasingly common component of mental health service delivery, little is known about how trainees experience VCP training during their graduate education. Gaining insight into trainees' lived experiences is essential to understanding how they navigate virtual care and how training programs can better prepare future clinicians. This study employed Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology to explore how trainees experienced their VCP training and how it shaped their clinical development.

Fifteen master's- and doctoral-level trainees were interviewed and provided rich accounts of both the helpful and challenging aspects of VCP training. Through the use of CQR, the research team identified core themes grounded in participant narratives, reflecting both common and nuanced experiences. Participants described how interactive learning, such as group discussions, hands-on practice, mock sessions, and live feedback, fostered technical skills and increased their confidence. Many voiced that opportunities to practice with peers and receive real-time feedback eased their anxieties and allowed them to feel more capable when conducting virtual therapy. Training focused on ethics, confidentiality, client safety, and creating a professional virtual presence was particularly valued.

At the same time, participants expressed concerns regarding overall insufficient VCP training. Many felt they were expected to take on virtual caseloads with minimal preparation, leading to heightened anxiety, self-doubt, and difficulty building therapeutic rapport in virtual spaces.

Participants advocated for the integration of VCP training throughout academic coursework and clinical placements. Their reflections highlight the importance of experiential learning, ongoing feedback, and attention to diversity and inclusion. Findings contribute to the limited body of research on VCP training and offer practical recommendations for future training, supervision, and research.