

**APPENDIX I.**  
**DVOMB POSITION PAPER**  
**REGARDING INTERACTIVE ELECTRONIC THERAPY**

*Adopted August 14, 2015*

**I. BOARD POSITION**

The DVOMB has determined that interactive electronic, online, remote or e-therapy is not appropriate for domestic violence offender treatment for the criminal justice population and is therefore prohibited.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

**A. INTERACTIVE ELECTRONIC THERAPY (E-THERAPY)**

E-therapy is the use of electronic media and information technologies to provide services to participants in different locations<sup>1</sup>

**B. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OFFENDER TREATMENT**

Domestic violence treatment is the assessment, evaluation, group or individual therapeutic contacts, and second clinical contacts, related to the offender's treatment plan as per *Standards 4.0*.

**C. FACE TO FACE CONTACT**

The current Standards do not define face to face contact. Therefore the Board now defines face to face contact as **the Approved Provider and the offender are both in person, in the same room, at the same time.**

Therefore, domestic violence treatment **must be conducted face to face and requires that the Approved Provider and the offender are both in person, in the same room, at the same time.**

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<sup>1</sup> Definition obtained from: (SAMHSA *Considerations for the Provision of E-Therapy*  
<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA09-4450/SMA09-4450.pdf>)

### III. **ADDITIONAL REFERENCES IN THE STANDARDS**

The following sections of the Standards reference face to face contact:

- Definitions section, Appendix C, "Face-to-Face Client Contact Hours."
- 5.06 Levels of Treatment, (VIII.) Level C (High Intensity), (B) (1.) (c), "Face to face contact is required so the Approved Provider can assess the offender's attention level responsiveness, appearance, possible substance abuse, and mental health status. This contact will also assess and promote victim safety."
- 5.01 Basic Principles of Treatment – "Provision of Treatment: Treatment, evaluation, and assessment shall be provided by an Approved Provider at all times."

### IV. **DISCUSSION OF PROHIBITION OF E-THERAPY**

Domestic violence offender accountability is key at all levels of mandatory, court-ordered treatment. Being physically present with an offender becomes critical for ongoing assessment and holding an offender accountable. Additionally, the development of a therapeutic relationship is critical to promoting change in treatment, and face to face contact helps encourage this aspect of treatment.

This policy does not prevent an Approved Provider from managing a crisis by phone with an offender where appropriate. For example, an Approved Provider may determine it is appropriate to manage a crisis by responding to a phone call from an offender, or initiating a phone call with an offender.

This policy also would not prevent an adjunct educational component recommended by the MTT (not a second clinical contact) that the offender accesses online, such as how to build a resume.

The prohibition of e-therapy does not prevent an Approved Provider from having a phone conversation with an offender or emailing an offender about practical matters such as setting appointments, addressing billing issues or managing paperwork, as long as it does not constitute treatment.