Why Administrators Need To Know About Trends

While some trends in education and therapy are nothing more than fads and can be easily brushed aside, others could be game-changers for both your school and your professional career. It behooves every administrator to know the difference between them and become more informed about those trends that are essential to know.

New opportunities for growth

One of the marks of an excellent principal is openness and desire to bring the school to a new level. Sometimes this is achieved by enhancing existing services and programs, and other times by implementing something completely unique. Staying on top of educational and industry trends is invaluable in this process.

Do you look out-of-date?

When parents or staff inquire about new programs or upgrades to existing services that are trending only to find the administrator ill-equipped to respond to those inquiries, the result could tarnish the administrator’s reputation. It isn’t necessarily about this or that trend, but rather about whether or not the administrator is current and engaged.

Earn respect

When an administrator is on top of current educational and therapeutic trends, it won’t be long before the administrator is recognized and acknowledged by colleagues as a source of knowledge. Aside from being sought out for advice, the administrator’s enhanced reputation will invariably strengthen his/her influence within the school.

Teletherapy Critical Trends

To fully grasp what is trending in the online therapy industry in 2020, we must first take a look at a more foundational trend - the telehealth explosion, which is driving the growth in teletherapy. It is no exaggeration to assert that telehealth is rapidly transforming the entire healthcare sector in ways that will change the industry forever.

The Telehealth Explosion

The global market for telehealth is growing very fast, valued at $49.8 Billion in 2018, and is projected
to reach $266.8 Billion by 2026. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) is projected to be 23.4% between 2018 and 2026. North America dominated growth with USD 21.2 Billion and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Factors contributing to this explosive growth are:

**Eliminating Geographical Barriers**

Telehealth has successfully overcome the distance barrier and is ensuring healthcare delivery in remote locations. The healthcare needs of significant numbers are mostly unmet. Meeting these needs through telehealth is a significant factor driving the market.

**Reducing the Cost of Care**

Another critical driver of the digital healthcare revolution is the need to reduce the cost of care.

U.S. healthcare spending grew 3.9% in 2017, reaching $3.5 trillion or $10,739 per person, which accounted for 17.9% of the country’s GDP. These costs will continue to rise as the Baby Boomers age and further tax the healthcare system.

Telehealth reduces the cost of care by eliminating the physical barriers that prevent patients from managing their health over time. Patients using digital services like remote patient monitoring, automatic appointment reminders, and remote physician consulting using live video and audio, will reduce the cost of care.

**Improving Patient Engagement**

Telehealth is improving patient engagement, as well. Instead of waiting for symptoms and illnesses to arise, patients can use digital healthcare management tools to monitor their health. Together with eliminating physical distance as a barrier to speaking with a healthcare provider, the ways that people interact with the healthcare system are changing.

**Information and Communication Technology**

Telehealth uses information and communication technology to overcome distance barriers and improve access to healthcare. Information and communication technology provides the capacity to address the challenges in offering high quality, accessible, and affordable healthcare services in both developed and developing countries.
The Quantitative and Qualitative Impact on 3 Major Therapies

Speech-Language Therapy Industry Growth

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in December 2019 reported that “The demand for speech-language therapy is on the rise, and the labor market is struggling to keep up. This is driving an ongoing shortage of certified speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in the workforce. Today employment of speech-language pathologists is projected to grow 27 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations.” This is in contrast to just 3 years ago when the predicted growth was 18% for roughly the same period.

Growth Drivers

“As the large baby-boom population grows older, there will be more instances of health conditions such as strokes or dementia, which can cause speech or language impairments. Speech-language pathologists will be needed to treat the increased number of speech and language disorders in the older population.”

Increased awareness of speech and language disorders, such as stuttering, in younger children, should lead to a need for more speech-language pathologists who specialize in treating that age group. Also, an increasing number of speech-language pathologists will be needed to work with children with autism to improve their ability to communicate and socialize effectively.”

Also, medical advances are improving the survival rate of premature infants and victims of trauma and strokes, many of whom need help from speech-language pathologists.”

The Increasing Demand for Online Speech Therapy

Due to the uneven distribution of SLPs, particularly acute in rural areas, online speech therapy or teletherapy, is the only way that many schools can hope to find an SLP to serve their children with speech or language deficits. As the data clearly shows, the trend is for there to be a continuously increasing demand for more SLPs in general and those adept at teletherapy or telepractice as it is known in particular. And the end is nowhere in sight.
Speech-Language Therapy
Quality Upgrades

Raising Therapy Standards: Evidence-Based Practice

One of the most significant transformations in healthcare over the past two decades has been the shift to evidence-based practice. This model uses the latest research and historical evidence to implement improved care. Practicing evidence-based medicine offers clinicians a way to achieve the Triple Aim’s objectives of improved quality, improved patient satisfaction, and reduced costs.

There is a growing trend to use Evidence-Based Practice in the delivery of speech-language pathology as well. It will most likely become an essential future component of delivering speech-language therapy due to its ability to provide more favorable patient outcomes.

Clinical expertise/expert opinion

External scientific or clinical evidence

Client/patient/caregiver perspectives

Evidence-based practice in speech-language pathology is the integration of:

The benefits of evidence-based practice regarding speech-language pathology are:

Uses near real-time data to make care decisions. SLPs staff now have better access to data and more knowledge because of improved technology. With this improved access to data, SLPs can use evidence-based practices to provide better client care based on near real-time data.

Improves outcomes. The most important reason for the interest in evidence-based practices is that it works. Data that shows if clinicians diligently use the best clinical evidence and expertise, they’ll realize better outcomes in every way.

Technological Advancements and Innovation

As the Speech-Language Pathology industry grows in response to increasing demand for its services, innovative solutions continue to emerge to meet these demands. Technology has been at the forefront of this innovation in many ways. These technological advances don't replace the speech therapist nor decrease the centrality of her role. Instead, they are tools that will enhance the therapy that she delivers.

Digital Downloads instead of Games

Games are heavy, take up space, and are difficult to carry around. Digital Downloads make it easy to find materials to treat specific skills in the moment. The convenience of downloading is precisely what is needed when it is required, can't be beaten. SLPs, who are often working out of cars, need their materials to be only one click away.

Virtual Reality

Perhaps the most radical changes to speech therapy will be in the world of Virtual Reality. It is only a matter of time before Virtual Reality is tweaked to bring children to places previously unimagined. Think about children being able to experience their deficit and its correction in Virtual Reality. The possibilities are endless.

Tablet

Practically every SLP has a tablet. Increased tablet use is more than just those in the profession, keeping pace with the technology. There is a wealth of tablet apps that make assessment and treatment simple. While there are seemingly unlimited apps available, apps, including articulation, language, and AAC apps, are of particular benefit. Articulation apps can be used to reinforce the correct articulatory placement to produce a
targeted sound. Using this app is much more fun than reading paper flashcards.

Some favorite receptive and expressive language apps include those that help children follow multi-step directions or learn fundamental language, spatial, and quantitative concepts.

SLPs increasingly are using tablets and Android-based tablets for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) purposes with a wide variety from which to choose.

3D Printing

3D printers are now mainstream. From 3D printed hearing aids to 3D printed assistive devices – the sky’s the limit. As time goes on, 3D printing will become more sophisticated and affordable.

The world of 3D is encroaching into other realms as well. Regarding speech therapy, the applications are limited only by the human imagination. Therapists will now be able to take their clients beyond the “page” and share real-life duplications.

Smartphone

One of the most familiar advancements is that which most people have quickly learned that they can’t live without - the smartphone. Apps that didn’t exist just 10-15 years ago have completely changed the way therapists work with clients.

Aside from apps, there are other smartphone benefits as well. Oral Motor Skills, critical to proper speaking and feeding, can now be mastered with the aid of a smartphone camera, which enables the child to observe his/her mouth, making certain sounds.

Using a smartphone, therapists can film short clips of the child’s progress during therapy. Parents can see their children’s development for themselves. And with these short clips both therapist and parent can monitor the child’s improvement over time.

Occupational Therapy Industry Growth

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in December 2019 reported that “Employment of occupational therapists is projected to grow 18 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. Demand for occupational therapists is expected to increase as the vast baby-boom generation ages, and people remain active later in life.

Occupational therapists also will be needed in a variety of healthcare settings to treat patients
with chronic conditions, and noninvasive outpatient treatment for long-term disabilities and illnesses, either in their homes or in residential care environments. These patients will need occupational therapy to become more independent.

On the other end of the spectrum, more Occupational Therapists are required to work with children to help them learn how to hold pens and pencils. According to senior pediatric doctors, children are increasingly finding it hard to hold pens and pencils because of the excessive use of technology.

Overusing touchscreen phones and tablets prevents children’s finger muscles from developing sufficiently to hold a pencil correctly, they say. And for those in rural areas, there are increasing opportunities for online occupational therapy jobs.

**Occupational Therapy Quality Upgrades**

**Nanotechnology**

The exploding field of nanotechnology (Engineering of Functional Systems on a Molecular Scale) may soon have an impact on evaluating a person’s gait or eye movements to track brain function easier, less-intrusively, and more comprehensively. Sensors thin as tissue paper and the size of a small bandage will track how a special needs child walks home, instead of requiring an office visit. Just imagine the possibilities.

**Childhood Obesity**

O.T.s can help in the battle against childhood obesity as well. The prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents is currently 18.5% affecting 13.7 million in that group, an increase from 13.9% in the year 2000.

After-school programs that focus on flexibility, stretching, balance, and mobility will complement existing programs that are solely focused on weight loss, (which often alienate a young audience). By incorporating Tai Chi, Zumba, Yoga, and meditation, the children are more likely to stay engaged.

**Mental Health Therapy Industry Growth**

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in December 2019 reported that “Employment of substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors is projected to grow 22 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations.” Similarly, The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in December 2019 reported that “Overall employment of psychologists is projected to grow 14 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth will vary by occupation.” The trend is the need, and opportunity, for more mental health professionals. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/life-physical-and-social-science/psychologists.htm#tab-6

**Drivers: Increase in Anxiety and Depression**

A study published in 2018 entitled, “Epidemiology and Impact of Health Care Provider-Diagnosed Anxiety and Depression Among U.S. Children” found 2.6 million U.S. children diagnosed with anxiety, a significant increase in recent years. Academic staff members and mental health counselors have also noticed the rise in anxious students in recent years. Many have said that anxiety is often underestimated and does not get the same attention as depression and suicide ideation.

In a study published in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology in 2019, it was found that individuals reporting symptoms consistent with major depression over the past year increased 52 percent in teens and 63 percent in young adults over a decade. By 2017 twenty percent of teenage girls had experienced major depression in the last year.
Rates of psychological distress described as “feeling nervous, hopeless or that everything in life is an effort” rose by 71 percent among people aged 18 to 25. Suicidal thoughts plans and attempts also increased. Death from suicide increased by 56 percent among 18- to 19-year-olds between 2008 and 2017.

**Mental Health Therapy Quality Upgrades**

**Teletherapy**

Online therapy or teletherapy has been one of the most impactful innovations in the mental health field in recent years. Teletherapy counseling initially intended for those with severe anxiety disorder or agoraphobia (fear of traveling out into crowds), is now widely embraced by the entire industry. Now more counseling sessions than ever before are being conducted via various online communications services. The benefits are significant:

- **COST**: Online therapy can be offered at a reduced price because online therapists don't incur as many operating costs, so they don't need to charge as much.

- **CONVENIENCE**: Valuable time is saved from eliminating the commute to a therapist's office. With online therapy, you can chat anytime and anywhere.

- **STIGMA**: Because of the stigma of mental illness, clients worry about peers seeing them around a therapist's office. Online therapy offers more confidentiality.

**Virtual Reality**

Clients love video chatting with therapists because of the personal interaction without the commute. This interaction with the therapist may soon be able to become more intense and even immersive. Virtual reality, still in the early developmental stages, could soon become a valuable therapy tool. It could allow the therapist and client to experience their physical environments merging.

**Increased Collaboration Between Doctors and Therapists**

Symptoms such as insomnia and unexplained aches often stem from mental health issues. Traditionally, the doctor will prescribe medication rather than refer the patient to a therapist. The medication might help reduce symptoms, but only therapy addresses the underlying issues and promises the possibility of a long-term solution. The trend is becoming for more primary care facilities to integrate their care with mental health professionals. Since most people who suffer from mental health issues consult a primary care doctor before or instead of seeing a therapist, integrating mental health professionals with primary care physicians will lead to more successful outcomes.

**Apps that Help People Manage Their Mental Health**

Using a mobile app to text a therapist is a great way to manage mental health and tackle many issues at once. People also use apps that help them monitor a specific behavior or problem-related to their mental health. Mobile Health Interventions is one of these apps. Users can set up automated systems that help them reach goals related to mental health, such as motivation and gratitude.

**It's All Trending Upwards**

As the trend towards greater use of teletherapy continues to grow, more kids will be able to live healthy, productive, and happy lives despite their particular deficits. And, not only will more children be served, but the trend is that the quality of the therapy they receive will continue to improve as well, bolstered by the accelerating trend of technological advancement in the industry.
GLOBAL TELEThERAPY, through its expansive teletherapy services, plays a pivotal role in alleviating therapist shortages. We recruit, screen, contract, and manage top-quality certified speech-language, occupational, and mental health therapists. We ensure that they are appropriately licensed and credentialed in the school district's state, and assure that they are available when needed. Their performance is monitored, ensuring the very best care.

Every child is assigned to a particular clinician, who is responsible for that child's therapy. This arrangement promotes a trusting and consistent relationship between the online therapist, child, parents, and teacher. Global Teletherapy fosters close collaboration among teachers, school resource professionals, administrators, and parents through their acclaimed school relationship managers. We use the same platform to deliver our therapy services as others around the world do when they conduct their online meetings.

Teletherapy, in its adherence to all industry standards and policies, as well as state and federal laws (e.g., licensing), does not compromise a therapist's responsibilities in delivering services. Session privacy, student data, and information are protected as our system is secure, encrypted, and HIPAA compliant.