

Remote supervision at BGBW

Julia Audick (M.A.)
Central Social Work Department



Baden-Württemberg

BEWÄHRUNGS- UND GERICHTSHILFE

The Situation at the beginning

- Due to the Corona Pandemic, Probation and Judicial Assistance stopped personal client contacts with only a few exceptions in march 2020 (e.g. High risk offenders)
- Our mandate and services were continued to be offered
- At this point of time, we did not have any video tools
- → Contacts to clients took place by telephone



Supervision of probation during the crisis

How is
subordination to a
probation officer
designed in times
of crisis???



The study consists of...

Evaluation of electronic client documentation (51 file notes)

- **randomly** with two files per month within the 9 BGBW facilities
- additional evaluation of memos provided by employees who participated in the survey **voluntarily**

A questionnaire (52)

- in which probation officers were asked about their assessment under these circumstances



The inspection of files

Who made the contact
(Probation
officer/client)?

Had agreements been
made with the clients?

Which topics were
discussed ?

Was the telephone
contact corresponded
to the defined
intensity of care?

Was the case ongoing
or in the initial survey
phase?



Results of the inspection of files

Who made the contact (probation officer/client)?

- April: 67% (probation officers)
- Mai: 62% (probation officers)



Results of the inspection of files

Which topics
were discussed?

- wide range of topics also in the context of the telephone consultation
- accumulation in both months in the field of employment/activity
- Conditions and instructions were also frequently discussed
- The need to talk about the financial situation, the social environment and health issues is also reflected
- Decrease of the topic of risk management between April and May.



Positive experience with initial survey interviews through telephone contacts?

- due to the open-minded behavior of a client, an initial survey could be completed. This came as a great surprise to me. The attitude of the client was very positive
- I myself asked more direct questions and received detailed answers
- Clients are more relaxed and not as tense as in a personal conversation
- the initial assessment on the phone took less time than during personal contact, a working relationship could be established more quickly and topics marked with shame could be discussed more easily



Difficulties with initial survey interviews through telephone contacts?

- Some of the interviewees are decisively lacking the facial expressions and gestures of their counterpart. This makes the course of the conversation more difficult and one has to listen much more closely or pay attention to one's own wording in order to prevent misunderstandings
- difficult to build up trust, and clients react very suspiciously to answer questions in person or even tell their life story to someone they do not know
- *"It is difficult to judge whether what is being said has been received. On the other hand, clients also tell more because they don't see my reaction."*



What other experiences have you made with regard to telephone counseling?

"Some telephone calls were surprisingly long. Clients were more relaxed in their familiar surroundings" or "clients who I did not expect to hear from me, clients who I thought would have problems with the situation coped well with it. Mood is more relaxed on the phone, the struggle for appointments is eliminated, calls from the home office have a familiar atmosphere, and clients touch on private issues of their own accord."

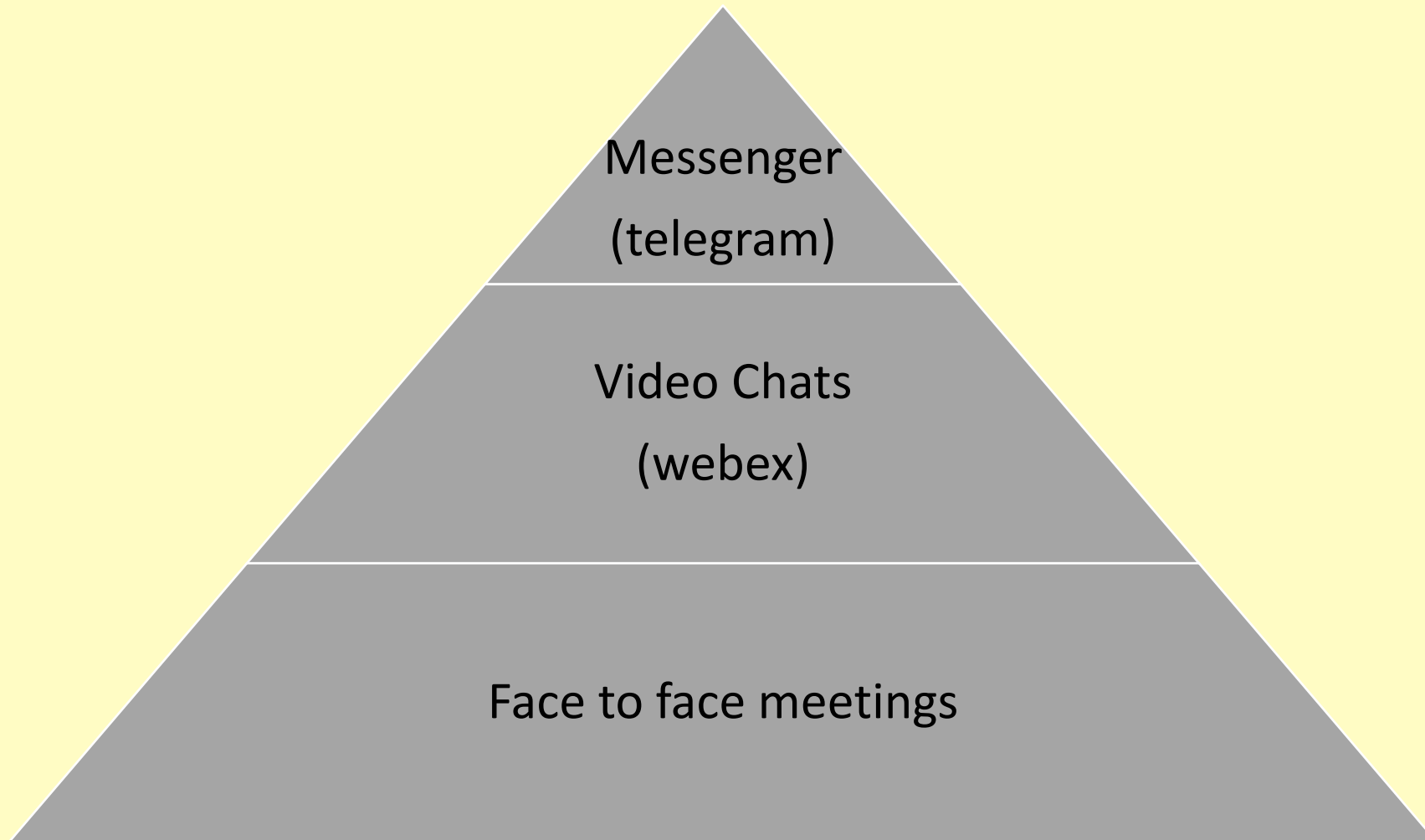
"It is uncomplicated and very practical, clients can sometimes be reached more reliably than if they have to come to appointments. It works much better than expected. All topics can be discussed very well; especially for purely organizational matters, personal meetings are not necessary. There is no need to travel, which is a great advantage. It would be desirable that in future more emphasis is placed on telephone consultation."

Summary and outlook

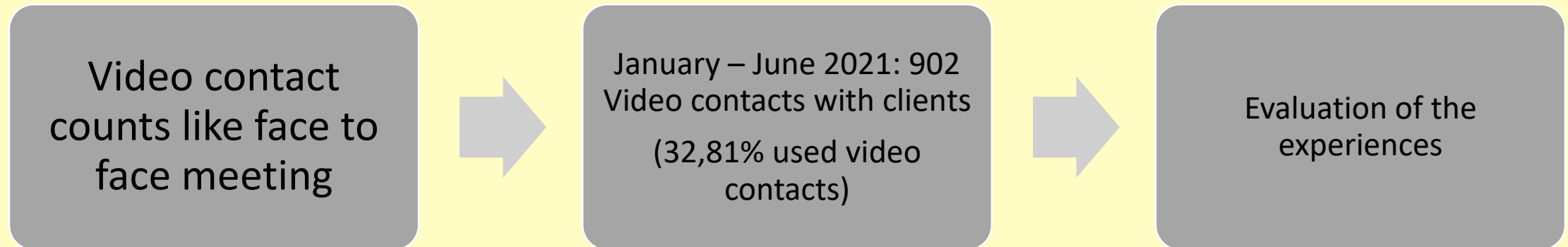
The assessments of the asked practitioners allow the conclusion for the BGBW that telephone consultation and/or consultation by video chat could be a serious option for suitable cases in future.



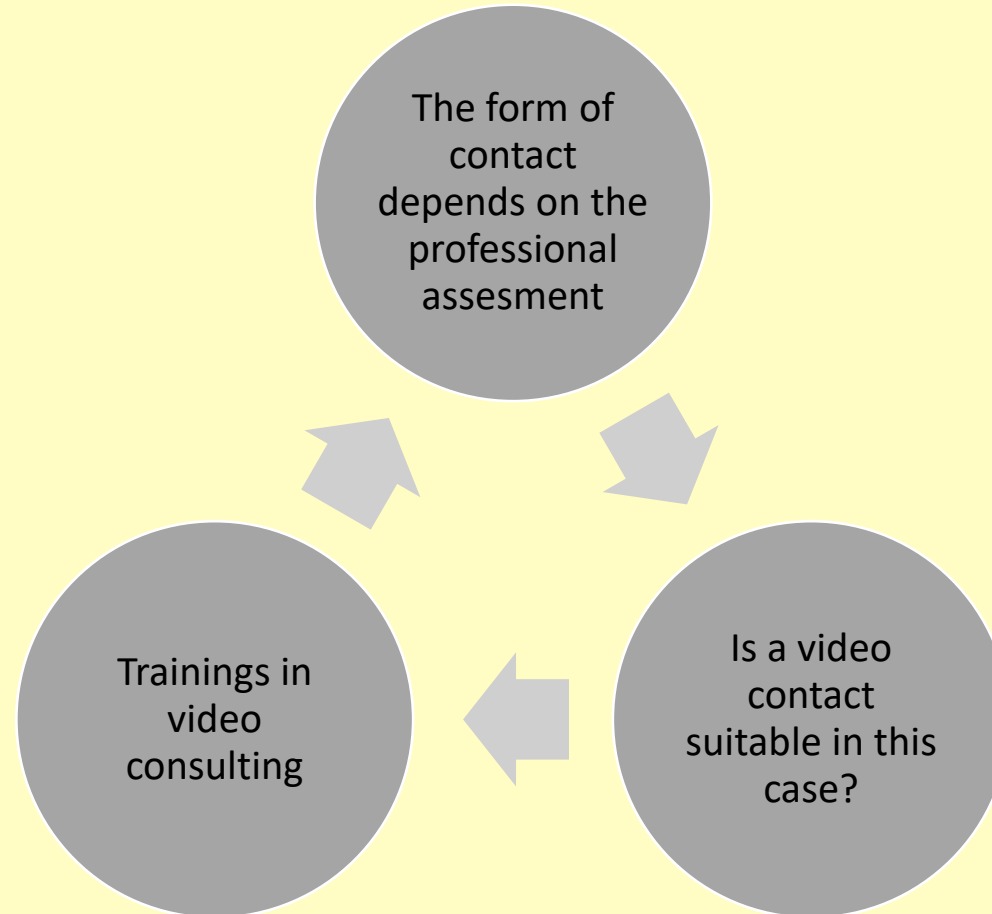
How have things developed?



Will we return to the old situation of face to face meetings?




Will there be hybrid forms of contacting service-users?




Will technology take over?

Digitization will open up new opportunities in the field of social work



These must be evaluated in the light of the interests of all those involved (Clients, professionals, law enforcement agencies)



Other important Topics are data protection, technical equipment or professional framework conditions

Video contacts

What is our practical
experience with
video contacts?



Advantages of video contacts for our clients

Appointments are more compatible with work or family life
(More frequent appointments are possible)

Long journeys can be avoided
(Cost and time saving)

Clients are in their familiar environment during the conversation
(Reducing fears in conversation)

More relaxed atmosphere due to the distance

Possibility of virtual flat viewing with probation officer



What prerequisites should clients bring with them?

The environment should be free of disturbances during the appointments

Data protection must be guaranteed (Do partners/family members know about delinquency and probation?)

Clients need a certain level of technical know how

Clients need the technical equipment (video-capable device, stable connection)

The video-tool should be as userfriendly as possible (no complicated download or registration)



Advantages of video contacts for our probation officers

Appointments are more compatible with work or family life
(More frequent appointments are possible)

Long journeys can be avoided
(Cost and time saving)

Clients come less often without an appointment

More relaxed atmosphere due to the distance

More flexible time management



What are the challenges for probation officers?

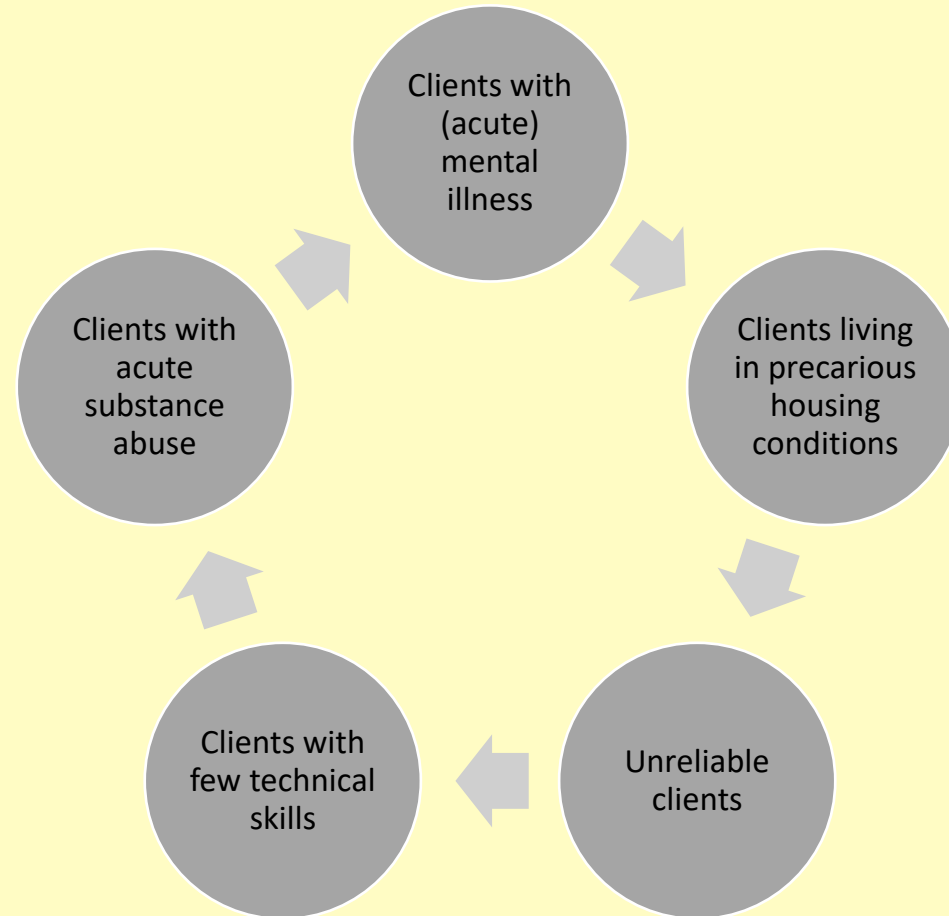
Appointments need to
be prepared more
carefully

How do I make sure that
what I said reaches the
client over distance
(and the other way
round)

How to deal with the
distraction and
disturbances in the
client's environment ?



For which clients are video contacts less suitable



Messenger tools

What is our practical
experience with
messenger tools?



The positive effects of using messenger tools

(Result of 71 evaluated questionnaires to probation officers)

Easy way to
stay in touch
(Probation
officer is more
present in
everyday life)

Fast and
regular
exchange

Chat can be
used as a kind
of “to do list”
for the clients

Contact can be
made directly if
there is a
concern

Easy data
exchange is
possible

Voice
messages

Questions do
not have to
be saved
until the next
conversation



Vielen Dank für Ihr Interesse!

