

Establishing a Professional Environment during a Virtual Visit

An appropriate telehealth setting limits distractions, maintains confidentiality and builds professional rapport.

1. Eliminate Any Unnecessary Noise

- This could be a television, another phone line ringing, barking dogs, that the microphones are sensitive and can pick up faint sounds in the background. Any extra noises can be distracting not only to the provider, but also to the patient and it could create doubt in the patient's mind as to whether or not they are truly being listened to. Remind the patient if there is any change in audio or video on their end to let the provider know so they can troubleshoot.

2. Be Sure That the Patient is Able to Clearly see the Healthcare Practitioner

- Make sure the camera position is straight on if not slightly above eye level, and the provider is looking straight into the camera. Always dress in a Professional manner. Also, make sure the lighting is bright enough, but not overly bright where it could make you appear washed out. Front lighting is preferred when possible. Natural light is also good as long as there is no glare over you.

3. Avoid having food and/or drink visible during the encounter

- Do not eat or chew gum during an encounter.

4. Have the Right Technology to Provide Confidentiality with your call

- Avoid having the patient explain symptoms via speakerphone unless you are in a private office with the door closed. If you are in a community space or shared office, use technology such as headphones to keep the encounter confidential when possible. There are some exceptions to this recommendation, especially if there are multiple providers working collaboratively to care for the patient.

5. Avoid Settings Where the Encounter is Viewable Through an Open Window

- This may allow for anyone passing by to see the patient which would breach confidentiality.

6. Be Aware of the Backdrop of the Telemedicine Encounter

- Avoid having any personal pictures or other personal items in the camera view. Maintain clean, non-cluttered space to promote a calm, clean setting.