

Webisode manners. Just good bedside manners from a distance.

Telemedicine is changing the way healthcare is delivered. It's so convenient for patients that once COVID-19 is behind us, there's no doubt they'll want to continue seeing you this way. With the right webisode manners, it'll be a great experience for both of you. Here are some tips to make the visit more productive and polished:

Look the part.

- Wear your lab jacket and ID badge with professional clothing (e.g., tie, blouse).
- Wear solid and non-distracting colors.
- Be mindful of body language.
 - Make “eye contact” by looking into the camera, rather than down at the screen.
If using a laptop, elevate it by placing it on top of books or another stable raised surface.
 - Sit up straight and smile.
 - Avoid turning your back on the camera.
- Adjust the video so that your head and shoulders are in the frame, not just your face.
- If you wear eyeglasses, watch for glare. You may need to tilt the camera up slightly.

Prepare before the visit.

- Make sure you are in a private, secure space in accordance with HIPAA guidelines.
- Be aware of your physical space.
 - Good lighting is important. Avoid having bright lights or sunny windows behind you.
 - Make sure the background looks professional and uncluttered.
 - Avoid having doors visible in the background.
 - Find a quiet place without noise distraction.
- Be familiar with your equipment.
 - Make sure speakers and camera are working — test them before a visit.
 - If you are at home, make sure no one else in your location is using Wi-Fi at the time of the visit (especially streaming movies or shows).

- o If video works but audio doesn't, feel free to keep the video going and use the phone for audio. Just make sure to mute your audio on InTouch so you don't get feedback.
- o If the video quality is poor, try putting the patient on hold and re-entering the waiting room (selecting the "Leave" option). If you're using a PC/laptop, try refreshing the browser during the call, too.
- o Have the patient/parent put their phone or tablet down on a solid surface so the video is stable. You are more likely to hold a signal that way.
- Get to know the patient.
 - o Review the patient's history and have all needed documents, files, equipment and notes in front of you before the visit starts.
 - o Remove any distractions. Close unneeded programs and browsers.

Communicate clearly during the visit.

- Verify a phone number where you can reach the patient in case the video call is dropped and it isn't possible to reconnect.
- Set expectations about the visit and how you can help.
- Acknowledge any family members who are with the patient.
- Explain that you may need to look away to take notes and document the visit.
- Establish rapport — make a personal connection.
- Show empathy with your facial expressions and responsive words.
- Listen intently and explain what you understand or repeat what the patient said to assure them you're listening.
- Look for emotional cues. Does the patient seem engaged in the visit? Are they making eye contact? What is their facial expression? Validate the emotion.
- Discuss any need for follow-up, either with you or another provider.
- Thank the patient at the end of the visit.

Even though you're not seeing your patient in person, webside manners are nothing new. You're establishing empathy and rapport — just like you've been doing since medical school.