VIDEOCONFERENCING
BEST PRACTICES

Videoconferencing has become a mainstream channel for care delivery. OTN's video solution facilitates hundreds of thousands of clinical and non-clinical video sessions each year - connecting thousands of specialists, clinicians and patients when physical location, access or time constraints create a barrier to care. But, let's face it, being in front of a camera is unnatural, and can make us feel uncomfortable. The goal of videoconferencing is to simulate what happens at an in-person appointment or meeting but, without proper preparation and technical readiness, there can be a lot of distractions and awkward moments.

Make your videoconferencing events more productive, easy-going and engaging by following the best practices below. These practices can improve your experience whether you're an event host or participant, and whether you're using your personal computer, mobile device or a room-based video system.

1 Schedule your video events

For hosted video visits at a health care facility, schedule your clinical and non-clinical video events using Ncompass, OTN's self-scheduling tool. Ncompass gives you full control over your video appointments, and ensures participants are in the right place at the right time. You can make changes to your event up to 15 minutes prior to its start. Your event will automatically start and end at its scheduled start and end time if multiple systems are participating. If you anticipate your event may run over time, schedule your event 15 minutes later than expected. You can always manually end the call prior to the scheduled end time.

2 Be prepared with the right equipment

A video visit with your patients or peer, or video educational event, can be conducted on a personal computer, a mobile device or room-based video system. If you're using your own device, you'll need a webcam, speaker, microphone and, most importantly, a strong internet connection. OTN provides an Internet connectivity test at bandwidth.otn.ca. Test your system before your event, and close any programs on your computer taking up bandwidth.

3 Recognize your surroundings and prepare your backdrop

Have you ever been on a videoconference and get distracted by the messy office in the video? Setting up your room is important to minimize distractions and uphold professionalism. It's best to have a solid background behind you. This could be a wall, door with no windows or a covered window. Limit distractions by having a tidy space around you – you should be the focus, not the bobblehead or stacks of paper behind you.

4 Lighting is key

Always ensure you're in an evenly, well-lit room with no glares or shadows. Natural light is key; however, it may be helpful to close the blinds if you're in front of a window. You can turn on an extra lamp or desk light to ensure your face is well lit. A good place for your primary light source is behind your camera, pointing at you, in the same direction as your camera. Of course, this shouldn't be so bright that we catch you wearing sunglasses!

5 Remember - Privacy, privacy, privacy!

Protecting Personal Health Information should always be top of mind when on video. For clinical video events, everyone in the room at the host site and the participating site(s) should be introduced. "No one should be "hiding" off camera. As a best practice, you may want to consider a roll call for educational events and meetings

6 Always be mindful of your microphone

Play it safe - always assume someone can hear you. You can mute your microphone at any time for things like dictating information, answering a knock on your door, or perhaps you just need to sneeze. If you are hosting a multi-point videoconference, participants should be reminded to mute their microphones when they are not speaking. If you have participants on an audio line, remind callers not to put their phone on hold. Lastly, be mindful of any background noise such as loud air conditioning systems, shuffling papers or typing on your keyboard as this can be extremely distracting.

7 Be Yourself!

Your personality may not shine through on video as strongly as it would in person. It's best to up your energy level more than usual. But, it's important to be natural and conversational in tone. You want to seem approachable without fidgeting or moving around too much to limit distractions.
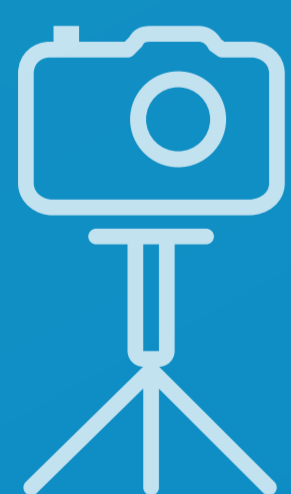
8 Position yourself, and your camera, accurately

While you may have chosen an excellent paint colour for your room, we do not want to see your wall or ceiling - we want to see you! Look directly into the camera and position yourself properly. You want the videoconference to mimic a face-to-face session as much as possible. Make sure you are framed in a head and shoulders shot. OTN's scheduling tool also enables you to choose a unique screen layout for your video. While it can't be changed during the call, you can change the layout up to 15 minutes prior to your video event.

9 Be mindful of the colours you are wearing on camera.

Not all colours are favourable on camera. It's okay to have style, but we recommend wearing neutral, muted or pastel solid colors. Avoid plaids, stripes, polka dots, Hawaiian shirts, and very bright colors as they can cause distracting effects on screen.

10 Keep OTN's contact information nearby

We're here to help! It's a good idea to have the number for OTN's Customer Care team, including scheduling and the technical service desk, handy in case you have any technical or connection issues during your videoconference. The number is 1-855-654-0888.

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