

# Videoconference Etiquette Tips

Videoconferencing (i.e., talking to others using video) is new to many people and, even if it is not new, many of us have not learned what is appropriate and effective behavior during a videoconference. This is a guide that can be helpful to you when attending the Social Skills Training telehealth group as well as other types of video calls (e.g., family call, doctor's appointment).

## Setting Up Your Videoconference

- ◇ Use a tablet or computer, if possible, rather than a cell phone so that you can see the individual(s) with whom you are speaking more clearly.
- ◇ Make sure your tablet or computer is plugged in during the videoconference or fully charged prior to the videoconference because videoconferences can quickly drain a battery.
- ◇ Do not use speakerphone if the speakerphone has poor sound quality.
- ◇ It may be useful to use earbuds or headphones, if you have them, to be able to hear better and for convenience.
- ◇ Make sure that the camera is framed directly on your face and, ideally, at eye level (you can usually check this by looking at the self-view), and you can ask others if they can see you well.

## Being Mindful of Your Environment

- ◇ Attend the videoconference in a private, quiet, and appropriate place (e.g., not a bathroom).
- ◇ Ensure that the room you are in for the videoconference is well lit so others can see you clearly.
- ◇ If you have background noise, use the mute button unless ready to speak.
- ◇ Do not use speakerphone if the use of speakerphone would cause confidentiality concerns (e.g., during a group therapy session, doctor's visit, or private/sensitive conversation).

## Communicating Effectively

- ◇ When talking, frequently look at the camera on your computer as this gives the impression of talking directly to others.
- ◇ It's helpful to pick up on reactions by looking at your screen for the facial and physical expressions of others.

## Communicating Effectively

- ◇ Speak slowly since there may be a delay when computers process the audio and video information.
- ◇ Focus on the conversation (e.g., not multitasking such as doing chores, reading, looking at your phone, etc.).

## General Good Practices

- ◇ Be on time for the videoconference.
- ◇ Be properly dressed (e.g., in clothes you would wear if visiting a friend or going to a doctor's visit).
- ◇ Be sitting up when participating in the videoconference so others can see and hear you well. You would want to be seated in a similar position as if the person or persons on the video were in a chair across from you.
- ◇ Avoid bobbing or moving in your chair. For example, moving in and out of the camera may be distracting and others may find it hard to see you.
- ◇ Stay in one location, and do not move around. If you do need to move, you can let others know you have to move (say this verbally if there is a pause in the conversation or write a message in the chatbox). Turn off your camera and microphone while you move to the new location, and then turn your camera and microphone back on. Let others know you returned.
- ◇ Avoid extraneous sounds like finger tapping and moving papers since microphones pick up these sounds.
- ◇ If you need to leave the call (for a moment or to end the call), you can let others know verbally when there is a pause in conversation, or you can write a note in the chatbox.

## Additional Tips:

- ◇ It can be challenging to read nonverbal cues during a videoconference so, if you are uncertain about what someone is trying to communicate, you may want to consider asking them to clarify.
- ◇ It is normal to find videoconferencing tiring since it is hard to read nonverbal cues and there is more information to process than in a regular phone call. Consider scheduling a break after a videoconference.
- ◇ Try to have fun! Enjoy this other way of interacting and communicating!

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