

Tele-Presence 5: A ritual of connection for virtual visits

Strategies to foster humanism and meaningful connection during virtual encounters



Prepare with intention

Pause, refresh, and focus between virtual visits, familiarizing yourself with the next patient

- Stand up and take a deep breath between visits
- Perform a brief chart review, emphasizing key elements of the social history
- Minimize distractions to focus on the person you are about to see



Listen intently and completely

Remain visible, lean in and maintain eye contact, communicate through facial expressions, avoid interruptions

- Sit up, lean forward, stay in the frame, and look directly at the camera to maintain eye contact
- Nod and use facial expressions to communicate that you are listening
- Pause before responding to account for lag time and prevent interruptions



Agree on what matters most

Establish a virtual visit agenda that incorporates patient priorities and goals

- Ask about your patient's priorities and expectations, and share your own goals for the visit
- Use open-ended questions and utilize teach-back to assess understanding
- Reassure your patient that you are there for them, despite the virtual nature of the interaction



Connect with the patient's story

Engage virtually with the patient's home environment and social support

- Invite your patient to comment on their visible personal items such as pets, photos, or furnishings
- Ask individuals who are present to introduce themselves to learn about the patient's social support
- If appropriate, inquire about the patient's home environment and safety



Explore emotional cues

Look for and validate emotional cues in facial expressions, body language, and changes in verbal tone and volume

- Tune into patient emotions evident through body language and tone or volume of speech
- Ask the patient how they are feeling about their health concerns and other stressors
- Name and validate observed emotions

Share your **#telepresence5** practices on Twitter and learn more about Presence 5 at <https://stan.md/39oIGqZ>