

Communication Strategies for Telehealth

Before initiation of any telehealth services, get familiar with the platform you will use!

Know it! Practice it! Feel confident!

Steps	Strategies
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself and your role as it relates to the patient. • Explain what will happen in the session. • Provide an affirmation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “You showed dedication to your health using this new technology.” – “I noticed you haven’t been here for a while and you logged in today. I am happy to talk to you again.”
Establish Rapport with Patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the technology, empower the patient in using it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “I know this may be a new kind of experience - we’ll work out the kinks together.” – “This is your 15 minutes, and this is your time to share with me what is going on. How can I help?”
Start Appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with an open-ended question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “How are you today? What brings you to this visit?” – “How can I help you?”
Encourage More Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt listening skills for the platform. Even with video, patients may not see as much of your movement. • Convey that you are listening with intention. • Verbal cues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “mmm, interesting.”, “tell me more”, “ah-ha” • Body language (if there is a camera): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eye contact, nodding head, and arms unfolded, thumbs-up and other positive/reinforcing gestures.
Look for Barriers and Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “It sounds like ... is happening.” – “You appear confident using the technology.”
Empower Patients in Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “So, from what you have told me.... What would be the best outcome for you?” – “Is it alright if we continue to meet virtually for the time being?”
Care Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person-centered approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “From what we have discussed, this would be what I would suggest..., how do you feel about it?” – “How would you like to keep in touch while we are virtual?” [secure message, calls, video calls, etc.]
Teach-back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach-back: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Sometimes with virtual visits it’s easy to miss things - can you repeat back the plan we’ve discussed?” – “I just want to make sure that I did a good job explaining how to take your medication. Can you tell me how you will take it?”
Summarize & End the Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “I know this is a different way to have an appointment, it seems you’ve been able to connect, sign on and share your concerns.”
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open-ended question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Tell me how having an appointment using telehealth worked for you.” – “What would you change or do differently?”