TELEGENETICS TIPS FOR PRACTICE AND SUPERVISION

Sourced from the collective mind of #gcchat and assembled by Leslie Ordal, MSc, CGC (@GenCounsNews)

PREEMPT TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Shut down all non-essential apps and software.

Videoconference apps take up a lot of bandwidth and processor power. Closing all applications you don't need during the session can reduce "lag" and cut the risk of crashes.

CONTRACTING COUNTS

Acknowledge the awkwardness.

Let patients know that these kinds of sessions can feel strange. Normalize it and say up front that it's okay if the call cuts out or there's a lag in response time. Make sure to confirm how long they have for the call, so you're not rushing at the end.

SLOW DOWN

Adjust your pace.

Speak slowly and pause more often than you would in person. This helps prevent talking over each other and gives the patient opportunities to stop and ask you to repeat something. Check in much more frequently to make sure they've understood you.

ASK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Adapt to the lack of non-verbal cues.

It can be hard to read body language or facial expressions. You may need to be more direct in asking patients about how they're feeling, not just about how much they've understood.

UNDERSTAND PRIORITIES

Remember what else is going on.

Many if not all patients will be dealing with COVID-19. They may not be thinking as much about the reason for their appointment. Adjust your counseling accordingly.

REMOTE STUDENT SUPERVISION

MAKE A PLAN

Just like an in-person session.

Most of the rules of case prep still apply. Decide on a way for the student to signal they need help during the session (chat message, speaking to you directly ["(Name), do you have anything to add?"], etc.). Let the patient know if they can ask you questions directly.

USE INSTANT MESSANGING

Use a separate messaging app to prompt

Use an app like WhatsApp to prompt your student during the session. It's less distracting than having you jump in verbally and helps the student feel more ownership of the session. Using a separate app (not the built-in chat function in Zoom, etc) means you won't accidentally message the patient too!

MINIMIZE DISTRACTION

Mute yourself and go dark.

Not counseling the patient? Put yourself on mute and if possible, turn off your video entirely. It frees up more screen "real estate" and is less confusing to the patient to focus on one person. Same goes if you're counseling and your student is observing.

TAKE NOTES

Sound familiar?

Again, like an in-person session, take notes. You can email these to your student afterward as part of your feedback. If you're not the primary supervisor, discuss cc'ing that person on emailed feedback so they can keep track of overall progress.

DEBRIEF ON VIDEO

Even if you email feedback, debrief live.

Just like in person, have a live conversation with the student about how the session went, so you can see their facial expression, body language, etc.

REMOTE STUDENT SUPERVISION, CONTINUED

STRATEGIC SKILL BUILDING

It's okay to focus on education.

Psychosocial skills are harder to work on in the telegenetics setting. When setting goals for the rotation, consider a focus on education, explanation, and other non-psychosocial skills, especially for less experienced students. However, every student is different and some may be ready to work on their advanced counseling skills.

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Don't skimp on deserved praise.

Telegenetics is intimidating and can be difficult even for seasoned GCs. Help build your students' confidence and make a conscious effort to recognize their successes while you give them feedback for improvement. Remember the extra stress and anxiety in all of our lives right now.

CHECK IN FREQUENTLY

Don't be out of sight, out of mind.

Unlike working in person, you won't have the chance to casually assess how your student is doing. Increase the frequency of check-ins and 1-on-1 sessions. Make sure your student has other rotation-related tasks to work on to help keep them engaged.
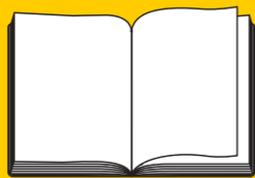
UNSUPERVISED STUDENTS

A consideration for very advanced students.

Is your student capable of seeing patients solo? Make a plan in case they get stuck or otherwise need to join the session, whether it's inviting you in ("I'd like to ask (Name) to join us to for a moment") or sending you a chat message.