

BEST PRACTICES IN A VIRTUAL SETTING

- **CONSIDERING LIGHTING AND CAMERA PLACEMENT**

Make sure your camera is eye-level

- This helps with engagement & making eye-contact with your viewers
- Some camera angles can exaggerate your facial features and distort your appearance

Lighten your face and darken the space behind you

- You can use many different light sources such as lamps, cell-phone flashlights, desk lights, and ring lights
- When selecting a place to record, avoid locations with low light or too much backlighting (windows in the background are often a challenge for webcams)

- **THINK THROUGH YOUR APPEARANCE**

While no one is expected to be in a three-piece suit & heels, you still need to consider what you look like waist-up

- Do an appearance check before your meeting so you can change things accordingly before your actual meeting starts
- Wear solid color shirts & blouses (patterns may be distracting on the camera)
- Remember you show up differently on camera than you would in person so this may mean more or less makeup, brighter colored clothing, etc.
- Dressing as if you are at an in-person meeting will prepare you mentally where as if you wear loungewear, it will make you more relaxed resulting in being less professional

- **TEST YOUR TECHNOLOGY**

Do not wait until last minute to log on to your scheduled virtual meeting

- You may need to download extra software so you need to be prepared incase that happens

Make sure to have a phone number available or back-up plan incase it does not connect online as plan

- Most virtual meeting sites have a conference phone number so attendees do not have to join via computer

- **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BODY LANGUAGE**

Keep your eyes level to your camera to avoid looking down

- Tape a Post-It note or a photo of a loved one above your computer camera to draw your eyes upwards.
- Drag your own video thumbnail to the top center of the screen

Keep hand gestures above the table

- Our brain gives more weight to nonverbal communication, so keep hand gestures raised above the table and visible to build charisma

- **SPEAKING TIPS**

The pacing of voice reception is different than in person

- Expect and allow for pauses between sentences
- It may take a while for the audio to be transmitted, or the audio starts before the image is transmitted

Smile when you speak

Be as natural, relaxed, warm, animated, and energetic as possible

- **INTERACT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE ANY CHANCE YOU CAN**

Attention rates of your audience will be much lower

- Your audience will have a lot more distractions while they are at home than they would have if they are at the conference

Add polling, visual aids, gamifications, and breakout sessions to your presentation

- Add things such as kahoots, goosechase, and small group discussions will keep your audience's attention throughout the entire presentation

THE CHAT IS WHERE IT IS AT

- Utilize your chat so attendees can ask questions and also talk to other attendees
- Have an assistant to read and address questions in the chat while you are presenting

- **GO SHORTER**

Make your virtual meetings shorter (ex. If you were going to speak for an hour, consider speaking for 30-45 minutes)

- **CONSIDER YOUR BACKGROUND**

Make sure you have a neat/professional background

- A messy background can distract attendees from the content being presented
- Find DECA Zoom backgrounds here
<https://www.decadirect.org/2020/04/14/deca-virtual-backgrounds-for-your-next-zoom-video-call/>
- Find Texas DECA Zoom backgrounds here
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LbGnhDW4-vIRishrHSUSpS3ite8xvM1o>