

Top Tips for Delivering Communication Skills Teaching Online

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR ONLINE COMMUNICATION SKILLS TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Top Tips for Delivering Communication Skills Teaching Online

Introduction and Background

It is widely acknowledged that face to face teaching using role-play, feedback & re-rehearsal is the gold standard for communication skills teaching but during the Covid-19 pandemic online methods have been explored and new innovative approaches developed.

To help in these challenging times **EACH: International Association of Communication in Healthcare** has put together a series of practical guides and workshops aimed at helping teachers of healthcare communication, simulated patients and learners consider the challenges and potential adaptations for online communication skills teaching.

It is recommended that, where possible, these guides are used to supplement online training sessions for Facilitators (and Simulated Patients) prior to teaching. The training works well as a 'mock' / practice experiential session where all participants can experience first-hand the likely process, content and structure of a virtual classroom.

We acknowledge that many different virtual meeting applications such as Webex, Microsoft Teams, Jitsi etc are available and that choices are often influenced by academic institutions or financial constraints. However, for the purpose of this document we have chosen the Zoom platform, and its associated functions, as our worked example. We use the term teacher as representative of other titles such as facilitator, tutor or lecturer. The term Simulated Patient (SP) is used for actors, medical role-player etc and learner or student to represent the participant receiving the teaching.

If you have any questions or would like to share your own experiences of online teaching, we would be delighted to hear from you: info@each.eu

Preparation for Course/Session Directors

Structuring online teaching

Participating in online sessions for prolonged periods of time demands considerable concentration and can challenge even the keenest teacher or student to remain engaged.

Top Tips:

When designing your online communication skills teaching pay special attention to time frames. Try to keep your lessons short. For online role-playing, sessions of 1.5-2 hours has been seen to work best in terms of achieving a good balance between opportunities to role-play and group engagement / concentration.

If you are teaching for longer periods of time recognise the need to factor in regular breaks.

Optimising group size

Given the time constraints of online learning you may need to review your class size.

Students may be unfamiliar with learning online and may feel inhibited about role-playing in front of other learners. The larger the class the less time there is for individual students to role-play and feedback.

Top Tips:

Where possible try to aim for a maximum of 5-6 student in any online experiential session.

If you usually work with larger groups, then consider dividing your groups in half and running consecutive sessions (e.g., Reconfiguring a 3 hour face to face teaching session for 12 students into 2 x 90 minute session for 6 students). Alternatively use break out rooms to subdivide larger groups into smaller groups.

Teaching plans

In order to accommodate a shorter time frame for an online session, teaching plans, learning objectives and simulated patient roles may need to be simplified prior to teaching.

Top Tips:

If you usually have a variety of different simulated patient roles in a given session think about the practicalities of delivering this same range online.

Consider having just one or two roles to offer learner variation but avoid the logistics of needing to change roles too often in shortened session.

Maximise the time available for role-playing by reducing the amount of theoretical content. This is made possible by students completing the necessary theoretic content beforehand using e-learning, narrated PowerPoint presentations or by analysing videos demonstrating the skills they will be practicing in the role-play session.

Provide a map of resources for learners

Students often rely on their peers or face to face discussions to guide them on what learning is expected. In times of social distancing these support mechanisms may not be readily available.

Top Tips:

Provide learners with a guide as to what the expected learning outcomes are and direct them to additional resources available to support this.

Provide access to pre-recorded video examples of specific skills which learners can use as a guide before sessions or as a revision aide before exams. The EACH website has a teaching tools database which may help with finding resources.

<https://each.international/resources/teach/>

The challenge of different time zones

During periods of social distancing many learners will be working from home and may therefore be in different time zones.

Top Tips:

Information about each learner's location can help the teacher to schedule the most suitable time for teaching and therefore maximise attendance.

If delivering a series of learning events, consideration should be given to varying the class times to give all learners an opportunity to participate.

Think about whether particular components of the teaching can be recorded or made into e-learning packages so learners unable to attend can access the teaching materials at their convenience.

Review, review, review

This format of teaching is new for many of us so, after the first one or two sessions, take time to ask your students to evaluate the teaching and identify:

- What is working well?
- What might be done differently to enhance your learning experience?

Facilitator Guide to Running Communication Sessions Online

Preparation for the Session

- To ensure that the session is ready to deliver on time it is recommended that both the teacher and simulated patients meet online at least 15-20 minutes before the students join. This not only helps to identify any potential technical difficulties but also allows time for briefing the simulated patient and answering any questions about the proposed learning.
- Ensure phones, email notifications and other devices are off/on silent during the class to avoid sound interference.
- Reduce background noise wherever possible (use headphones if available).
- Be aware of background lighting/view – if you can, try to provide a neutral background and resist the urge to use the range of artificial backgrounds available, as these can be distracting.

Initiating the Session & Supplementary Ground Rules for Working Online

Introductions - What's in a name?

Introductions play an important part in setting the scene for any teaching event, but for online teaching lengthy introductions may be unnecessary, particularly if your group of learners has met before and already know each other well.

If you have not met the group before, as a minimum it is important that you introduce yourself and ask the students to introduce themselves to you, using their preferred name. Always have the Simulated Patient introduce him or herself to the group.

Top Tip: Introductions

Whilst students are introducing themselves check if their 'video name', displayed at the bottom left of their 'video tile', matches their verbal introduction. If students have signed in using initials or an email address, please invite them to rename themselves so that you can address them correctly throughout and invite them into discussion during the session. This habit not only mirrors good clinical practice but also builds rapport.

To rename yourself hover over your name, right mouse click and select option to rename. Enter the name you'd like to appear in the class

Checking in

Even though time is of a premium there is value in checking in to see how everyone is doing. This is particularly pertinent given the impact of Covid-19 and social distancing, where students might be feeling isolated from peers and teachers.

Top Tip: Building Rapport

Engaging learners and building rapport by encouraging each student to have a 'voice' (early in the session) can significantly impact on their willingness & ability to participate in the remainder of the session.

Ground rules

The ground rules for face to face communication skills training are well established and include important considerations such as confidentiality, respect, participation and the principles of constructive feedback. In considering online communication skills teaching these same ground rules still apply, but some additional items should be added.

Top Tips: Additional items for discussion under ground rules

- All video cameras should be on during group discussion so that the teacher can see all members of the group, noting who wants to speak and how others are reacting to discussion (non-verbal cues).
- During discussion and feedback microphones should be unmuted to encourage spontaneous group interactions & dialogue. During role play all microphones should be muted.

If learners are experiencing background noise then they may like to have their microphone on mute throughout and just hold down the space bar to join the discussion.

- Students should view the class in **Gallery view** (all participants showing) to help with both group cohesion and flow of conversations. Negotiate practice of raising hands (either physically or by using **reaction** icon available at bottom of the screen).
- Outline the use of the **chat** function. Individual students can be nominated to monitor the group chat and be invited to summarise questions and comments periodically to the rest of the group.

Please note: It is very difficult to facilitate experiential learning & monitor chat simultaneously so having a student take on this role can be really useful.

- Chat function should be set so that participants can only chat with the 'host' or 'everyone'. No private messaging, especially during role-play as this may impact of feelings of safety or vulnerability for the role-playing student.
- Reduce background noise by encouraging use of headphones, switch both mobile phones and emails off. Emphasise that there should be no recording or screen capture by students unless permission is explicitly obtained.
- Discourage use of virtual backgrounds which can be both distracting and reduce the authenticity of role-play.
- For students who are uncomfortable watching themselves on screen offer the option of **hide self-view**.

Setting the scene for learning

Prior to starting role-play it can be useful to engage the group in a short reflection about the communication topic for the session (e.g. history taking, breaking bad news etc.)

This reflection can help to identify specific challenges, in relation to this task, as well as helping learner's to set their own agenda.

Top Tips: Facilitating discussions and setting the agenda

For online reflection & discussion several tools can be used:

- Pair/Share – place learners into smaller groups for discussions using the **Breakout room** feature of zoom. Students can share key points from discussion on returning to the larger group.
- Use the **White board** function or online discussion boards such as **Padlet** to brainstorm and share the groups ideas on specific communication skills or frameworks.
- Use the **Chat function** to invite learners to share their learning objectives/individual ideas/challenges/etc
- Teachers or students can **Screen Share** to show PowerPoint slide/s on relevant content.
- Show a pre-prepared **Video** as a trigger for learners to analyse.
- Use the **Polling** option to quiz students about their previous learning or understanding of a topic or their confidence in terms of the role-play task.

Facilitating Role-Play Online

It is important to describe exactly how role-play will be organised in the online classroom and whether you are expecting all students to role-play during the lesson or if you will be looking for volunteers.

If all students are to role-play it may be helpful to agree an approximate time for each person. Reiterate that students can request **'time out'** at any time and that opportunities for retrying specific aspects of the consultation, as a result of feedback, can be built in.

Top Tips: Preparing for role-play

- Have all learners except the role-playing student (and the simulated patient) turn off their video and mute themselves during the actual role-play to avoid distractions and interruptions.
- Encourage non role-playing students to tick the **hide non-video participants** in video settings, so that just the simulated patient and role-playing student are visible on the screen.
- Clarify whether this encounter represents an in-person consultation or a telehealth consultation.
- Acknowledge that virtual role-play may feel less than authentic but is good practice as it reflects an important skill set likely to be part of future clinical practice (telemedicine).
- To aid authenticity the teacher or simulated patient can change the screen name to the 'patient' being interviewed. Brief clinical details e.g. Tom Walker, hospital admission with central chest pain can be shared in chat.
- If the student role-player feels uncomfortable watching self on screen they can use **hide-self view** option.

Identify the learner's individual agenda and prepare the group to watch the role-play.

As with usual teaching practice in face to face sessions, briefly describe the clinical case and identify the tasks for the interview e.g. establishing rapport, taking a history or giving information about a particular condition. Before starting the role-play ask the role-playing student what skills they want to practice and what they might want feedback on. Based on the learner's agenda assign feedback tasks to other learners in the group.

See [Appendix 1](#) for further information on a structured approach to feedback

Top Tips: Ensuring high quality feedback

- To help maintain learner engagement during roleplay assign specific observation tasks to individual students. As the teacher, make a note of each student task so that you can facilitate subsequent discussions & feedback.
- Ensure that at least one person is looking out for the role-playing student's agenda points.
- If relevant, acknowledge that not all students will give feedback every time so as not to overwhelm learner.
- You might like to ask one student to focus solely on the patient perspective by '**pinning the patients**' video tile to their screen and observing the verbal and non-verbal cues.

Watch the encounter and remember to take notes yourself of what you are observing and what feedback you want to give.

Managing feedback - Start with your learner

Start by asking the role-playing student to share their feelings about the encounter and help them to refine their agenda to guide feedback.

Questions could include:

- How did that go?
- What in particular would you like feedback about?
- What do you think you did effectively and what would you change?
- What parts were particularly tricky or challenging?
- Did you achieve what you set out to achieve?

Top Tip: Feedback

You could also add the question to the learner about how it felt to role-play online.

Managing feedback - Involving the group

Ask the group to turn on their video/audio and invite feedback based on the role-playing student's self-analysis (above). Request feedback from the simulated patient and remember to pick up on observation tasks allocated to individual students.

Check out at regular intervals how the feedback sounds to the learner who role-played and offer them an opportunity to re-try a small section or utilise a different skill as required.

Top Tip: Feedback

For brief re-rehearsal ask learner if they prefer other participants' cameras on or off.

Closing the session

Revisit learning outcomes and student's agenda points, generated at beginning of session, and discuss if these have been met. Ask learners to identify one take home point.

Top Tips: Closing

- Reviewing agenda items and take-home points. This can either be done verbally or using the chat function/online discussion board.
- Consider having group complete evaluation – either through polling or embedded link with particular emphasis on what worked and what could be improved with online approach.
- Ensure that the students have a clear idea of the plan for next steps. This might be when their next teaching session is or how to continue to develop their skills at a time when clinical contact is limited. Direct them to other learning resources if available.

Technology

One of the biggest challenges for delivering online teaching is mastering the technology. For the purpose of this guide we will be using Zoom as our working example.

Online Features to Enhance Your Teaching

Devices

Using a Laptop or Desktop computer offers a greatly enhanced experience over a tablet or phone and we would strongly recommend using one for your sessions if possible.

Views

There are 2 main video layouts on zoom

- **Speaker view**– This is the *default* setting on zoom. Speaker view automatically displays the person who is speaking in the large video window.
- **Gallery view** - This is the *preferred* setting for communication skills teaching as it allows you to see displays of all participants in a grid pattern on one screen. Not only can you see all learners, but they can see each other too, leading to an enhanced sense of working together as a group.

To switch from Speaker view to Gallery view go to the upper right corner of your Zoom window and click on the grid icon.

Also ask learners to make sure that they select **hide non video participants** button which can be found by clicking on video settings using the arrow next to the video camera icon- bottom left of screen. By enabling hide non video participants only the role-playing student and simulated patient will remain on the screen once videos are switched off.

To find out more visit the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362323-How-Do-I-Change-The-Video-Layout->

Think about your background

Use a plain neutral background and resist the urge to use the range of artificial backgrounds, such as outer space etc, as these can be quite distracting and reduce the image quality. These are also look rather odd when role-playing a consultation.

Adjust your lighting and don't sit directly in front or beside a bright light source, or else all the audience sees is a bright light and a shadowy figure. Experiment with moving lamps and your camera until you can see your brightly lit face on the screen!

Be yourself

Although it feels artificial being on a screen try to deliver the teaching in your usual animated style. Hand gestures and variations in pitch, pace and tone can assist with maintaining learner engagement.

Breakout rooms

Breakout rooms allow you to divide your group up by placing them into smaller, separate rooms for either pair/share or small group discussions or role-play practice e.g. in triads.

As the tutor you have the option to divide the students into break out rooms either automatically (randomly generated) or manually (you decide who works with who).

If you wish to decide which students you want to work together in your session it is easiest to manually assign them to breakout rooms/groups at the beginning of the session. You, as the teacher, can visit any of the breakout rooms to answer questions or observe practice. You can also broadcast a message to all breakout groups, including reminding them of their task while in the small groups.

Breakout rooms can be used during the session to re-calibrate role-players and deal with upset students if required.

To find out more visit the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-breakout-rooms>

Screen sharing

Both teacher and student have the ability to share documents and PowerPoint slides via the screen share icon which can be found in the bar at the bottom of your zoom screen (see below).



To share a document or presentation with your students select - "New Share" and the screen will automatically show all of your open documents. Select the one you want and wait a few seconds for it to upload and the students will be able to see what you can.

Top Tip:

If you are planning to share any resources open and minimise these before the session begins so they can be easily accessed.

Worthwhile noting that when you are sharing your screen your video tiles will be moved to one side offering you a limited view of your students. You can enlarge your view of video tiles in screen share by dragging the edge or bottom of the tile box.

To end your screen share meeting simply select "Stop Share"

To find out more access the link below.

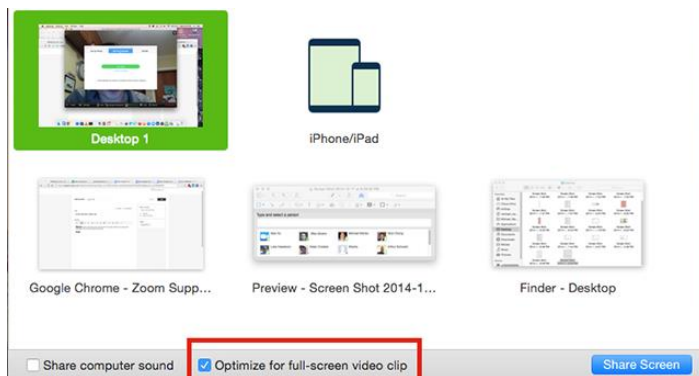
<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-Sharing-your-screen>

Sharing videos

You can share a pre-recorded video with your students to illustrate specific skills or as a trigger for role-play. To enable this feature:

- Click the Share Screen button located in your meeting controls.

- Select the screen you want to share and select both Share computer sound and Optimize for full-screen video clip.

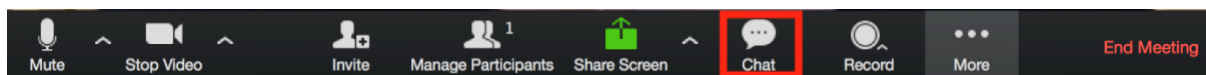


- Click Share Screen
- Start playing your video in full screen while sharing your screen

To find out more access the link below.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/202954249-Optimizing-a-Shared-Video-Clip-in-Full-Screen>

Chat function



The in-meeting chat allows you to send chat messages to students within the class and can also be used to quickly gather student comments on discussion topics. Chat allows the teacher to send a private message to an individual or the message can be sent to an entire group (everyone).

Due to the sensitive nature of role-play, we strongly recommend that the teacher configures the settings for online classes to only allow sending messages to all.

When typing a message into the chat box press enter to send your message. See notes above regarding student volunteering to monitor chat box.

To find out more access the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203650445-In-Meeting-Chat>

Polls

The polling feature for online classes allows you to create single choice or multiple-choice polling questions. If you are planning to use polls it is advisable to write them in a word document before teaching so that you can copy and paste questions as required during teaching.

You will be able to launch the poll during your class and gather the responses from your teachers. Polls can be a useful way to measure confidence levels pre and post teaching session.

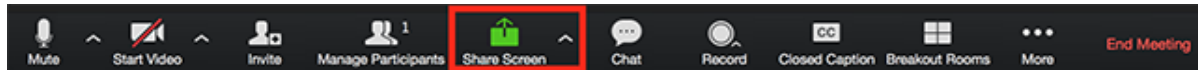
Polls can be conducted anonymously, if you do not wish to collect participant information with the poll results.

To find out more access the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/213756303-Polling-for-Meetings>

Whiteboard

The whiteboard feature will allow you to share a whiteboard that you can write or type on. This can be a useful tool for agenda setting or brainstorming. To use the whiteboard click on the share screen icon (below)



The whiteboard icon is displayed



Whiteboard

To find out more access the link below:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205677665-Sharing-a-whiteboard>

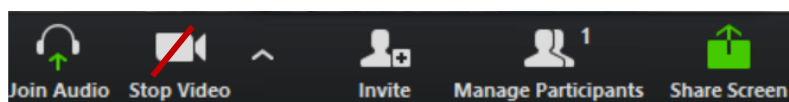
Troubleshooting- When Things Go Wrong

As we all know there is the potential for things to go wrong when using any type of technology. Below are some of the frequent questions that teachers have raised so far about using Zoom. Do let us know if you have other questions to add yourself.

My video camera isn't working

If you cannot get your video to start working, look at the bottom left hand corner of your screen to see if a red line is showing. If it is, click on the video camera icon to remove the red line, this will open your camera. It will take a few seconds.

To stop your camera, click on the video camera again, the red line should appear. Clicking on this during role-play means you will stay connected to the class via audio but cannot be seen. Your profile will show as a blank screen with your name in the bottom.



If camera problems persist make sure that all other programs that utilise the camera are closed. If all else fails try restarting your computer.

There is echo in my class

Generally, if you are hearing echo, it means that there is a device nearby that is channelling your audio back.

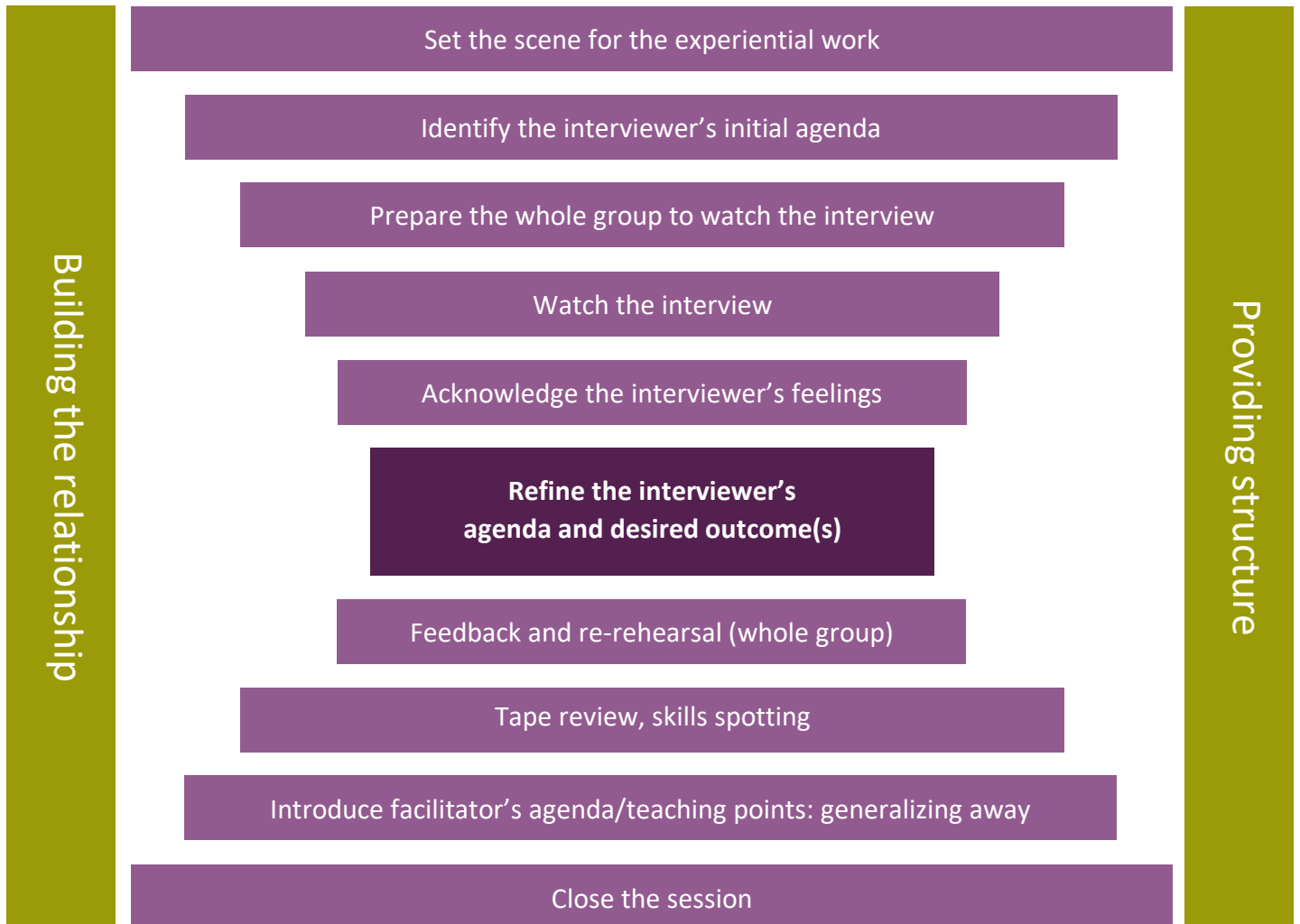
- Try to identify the participant causing the echo:
- Tutor can mute the students one at a time
- Tutor can mute all, and unmute one at a time
- Students can mute him/herself
- Ask that all students only use one device during the class
- Advise that wearing headphones reduces echo

Can I use a headset?

Yes, as long as the device is compatible with the computer or mobile device that you are using.

For some computers you or your students might have to adjust the external headset. To adjust the headset you have to go to `System preferences`. Here you can change the audio-/microphone system from computer-based to external headsets.

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I. DESIGN AND PREPARATION OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION SESSIONS		
	PRINCIPLES FOR IN PERSON OR ONLINE COMMUNICATION SKILLS SESSION	ONLINE ADAPTATIONS AND TOOLS
Session objectives	Learning objectives help identify the expected outcomes of the session and guide the teaching methods you plan to use	Online learning should ideally be no longer than 2 hours at most to maintain attention. You may need to condense your objectives to just those that can be reasonably achieved using virtual methods. If longer than 2 hours build in times for short comfort breaks.
Supplemental materials		Consider supplemental materials (Documents, PPT slides, video examples) that can be reviewed outside of the sessions to enhance learning. Accessing materials prior to the session can help prepare learners for role-play during session. During the session itself materials can be shared in real time by posting link to relevant resources in chat. Post session materials can aid further learning, increase recall e.g. evidence base relating to specific skills or models.
Session participants and group size	For experiential learning, group size should allow each participant time to learn through practicing and receiving feedback. For example, 5-6 students per session	Online, the larger the group the less engagement and chance for individual practice. Because time needs to be limited consider learner groups no larger than 5-6 . If you usually work with larger groups, then consider dividing your groups and running consecutive sessions.
Accessibility and technology	For in-person groups, make sure all materials (handouts, skills cards) and necessary technology (computer, projector, flipchart/pens, video recording) are available. Test them before session starts.	Consider with what devices your learners (and facilitator and SP) will be connecting to the session. Encourage participants to join by computer rather than phone or tablet to be able to use full Zoom features more easily. Have learners test use of technology including video, microphone, headphones beforehand to allow problem solving prior to session. Some Browsers such as Chrome allow for a more stable Zoom connection.
Co-facilitators	If using co-facilitators, arrange a discussion ahead of time to establish how roles and tasks will be divided.	Co-facilitators are especially helpful when teaching online, where one person leads the session and the other monitors such things as waiting room, chat comments, etc. Person with these tasks could even be a learner. Helpful to ensure co-facilitators are made 'co-host' at beginning of session to enable access to all functions.
Security		Set security settings e.g. no private chats in chat function, if preferred, ensuring codes are required to join a session and no recording of sessions without explicit attendee permission.
Facilitator and simulated patient (SP) training and preparation	Meeting with facilitators and SPs is important to discuss what is expected and practice key steps before a live session. Facilitator(s) and SP should plan to meet at least briefly before a session begins to discuss any questions about the session and agree level of complexity/emotions etc	Providing online training for facilitators and SPs in addition to written guides can be important for increasing their skill and confidence in transferring this teaching online. It is recommended that facilitators and SPs meet online at least 15-20 minutes before the learners join. This not only helps to identify any potential technical difficulties but also allows time for discussion and answering any questions about the day's learning
Before session starts	Facilitators review session guide and that room is set up appropriately	Set-up the Zoom meeting early to make sure audio, video etc. is working. Facilitators should try to work in a quiet area and with a non-distracting background. Check your video image is clear and that you are positioned with the light focused on your face, looking directly at the screen.

II. INITIATING A COMMUNICATION SKILLS SESSION			
STEPS	PRINCIPLES FOR IN PERSON OR ONLINE COMMUNICATION SKILLS SESSION	ONLINE ADAPTATIONS AND TOOLS	ZOOM INSTRUCTION LINKS
Introductions and checking in	<p>If a new group, everyone (you, learners, SP) should introduce themselves.</p> <p>If an SP is there from beginning, have them introduce themselves out of role</p> <p>Some facilitators recommend a brief check-in such as <i>“How is the week going”</i> or <i>“How is school going”</i> as a way to gain participants full attention.</p>	<p>Introduce yourself. Make sure learners’ names appear on their Zoom profiles. Have learners introduce themselves if not already known to you.</p> <p>Check that all participants can see and hear effectively. During Covid-19 in particular, it can be helpful to briefly check in with <i>“how are you coping”</i>. This could be done verbally or using the Chat function, where students can reply with their thoughts.</p> <p>If recording the session, inform participants of how it will be used (e.g. shared with students who could not attend) and gain consent.</p>	<p>How to change profile name</p> <p>- can hover over your video tile and right click to see rename option</p> <p>Participants should use gallery view so they can see everyone</p> <p>Using Zoom Chat function</p> <p>How to record a Zoom session</p>
Orientation to session/ground rules	<p>Provide an outline of session objectives and how the session will run (e.g. Identify challenges, everyone will practice briefly, get feedback and re-rehearse)</p> <p>Discuss the ground rules for session including confidentiality, respect, participation and the principles of constructive feedback.</p>	<p>Additional ground rules for Zoom sessions:</p> <p>Using headphones will decrease outside noise and echoes</p> <p>Encourage everyone to keep their video on but muted – unless otherwise instructed – as this will increase engagement and ability to see student reactions.</p> <p>When they want to contribute, encourage raising of hands (physically or using nonverbal reactions in participants tab in Zoom)</p>	<p>Either at bottom of zoom screen or in participants/chat window can click video on/off and mute/unmute</p> <p>Using the non-verbal reaction tools in Zoom</p>
Beginning session content	<p>Prior to beginning the role-plays, it can be useful to engage the group in reflection about the communication topic for the session (e.g. history taking, responding to emotions, etc.).</p> <p>Options for doing this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learner experience with topic - Anticipated challenges with communication task - Presentation or co-creation of a framework for addressing issue (e.g. SPIKES for bad news telling) 	<p>For online reflection/discussion several tools can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pair/Share – put students into breakout rooms in smaller groups to discuss issues and then return to large group to share. - Use white board function to write down and save group ideas or framework - Use chat function for learners to write ideas/challenges/etc - Show PPTs with content/framework information - Show a video as a trigger that learners can analyze - Poll learners about their experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up Breakout rooms • Sharing a whiteboard • Chat function • Sharing your PPT screen sharing • Maximizing video viewing • Using Zoom polling

III. ROLE PLAY SET-UP			
STEPS	PRINCIPLES FOR IN PERSON OR ONLINE COMMUNICATION SKILLS SESSION	ONLINE ADAPTATIONS AND TOOLS	ZOOM INSTRUCTION LINKS
Setting the scene	Describe details of how the session will work, including whether or not all learners will have the chance to role-play and for how long. Remind the learner they can “timeout” if needed or you will stop them when enough learning has been generated.	Consider having all learners except the one conducting the role play (and the simulated patient) turn off their video during roleplay. This can help the interaction feel more authentic. Acknowledge that role-play, especially virtually, may feel less than authentic at times. Clarify if this encounter is meant to simulate an in-person encounter or a telehealth visit.	Ask Learners to select Hide non-video participants in the video settings menu, found next to the video camera icon.
Case information	Describe patient case: Either facilitator or SP “I have come to clinic to be seen about my foot”. Describe student role: Are they a student interviewing patient or pretending to be a qualified physician?	The facilitator or SP can change their screen name to that of the ‘patient’ being interviewed to avoid confusion. Provide any additional information such as a letter from the referring GP. This can be done electronically beforehand or by sharing brief case description in chat.	How to change profile name - can hover over your video tile and right click to see rename option screen sharing
Recruiting learners to role play	Recruit by asking for volunteers, selecting the learner based on challenges identified earlier, or order in which they are sitting	Recruitment can be done the same as in person. Chat can be used to record the intended order of role-play.	Chat function
Identify learner’s initial agenda	After sharing the task (for example, starting the first few minutes of the interview) ask the learner what they would like to try and what they might want feedback focused on.	Consider using the whiteboard function or Chat to write down the learner’s agenda	Sharing a whiteboard
Prepare group to watch the encounter	Encourage all learners to take notes on their observations in terms of effective behaviors as well as areas they have questions about or that could benefit from change. Assign specific observation tasks to learners such as the role player’s agenda and common skills such as non-verbal, questioning style, developing rapport, etc.	To enhance online engagement and participation in feedback, assigning specific observation tasks is particularly helpful to maintain learner engagement during roleplay and subsequent discussion. The facilitator should note which task is assigned to each student. If relevant, acknowledge that not all will give feedback every time. This is helpful in avoiding overwhelming the learner.	
Watch the encounter	Take notes during encounter and encourage students to note specific communication behaviors. Watch the timing. You might stop at an appropriate moment which has been decided on ahead of time.	Have all but the SP and student role player turn off their videos and mute themselves. Encourage all learners to have their screens in Gallery view and use the hide non-video participants setting. This will ensure that just the simulated patient and role-playing student are on screen.	If wanting a learner to observe and feedback specifically on patients verbal and non-verbal cues, ask them to ‘Pin’ the Patient Zoom view

IV. FEEDBACK AND RE-REHEARSAL			
STEPS	PRINCIPLES FOR ANY SESSION	ONLINE ADAPTATIONS	ZOOM INSTRUCTION LINKS
Acknowledge learner's feelings	Start by asking the learner their feelings about the encounter.	Could include their reflections on how they felt it worked doing the interaction virtually?	
Refine learner's agenda and desired outcomes	Once the above is done, the support the learner in refining their agenda as a way to guide feedback. Question options include: What in particular they would like feedback about? What they did effectively and what they would change? What parts were particularly tricky? What were they trying to accomplish?	Same as in-person	
Feedback and discussion of alternative approaches	In response to the learner's agenda, options for starting feedback include: - Asking SP first (if issues raised were relating to the SP reactions). - Asking specific learner in group if they were asked to focus on a particular area.	Have all learners turn video on and unmute for this section. Encourage turning to SP first for what they noticed and using group in particular for brainstorming other approaches. May be particularly important to watch for cues from role playing learner, and check in explicitly about how they are feeling about feedback	Either at bottom of zoom screen or in participants/chat window can click video on/off and mute/unmute
Re-rehearsal and feedback	Set time limit for the to learner choose one aspect of their role-play to re-rehearse.	For brief re-rehearsal ask learner if they prefer videos off or on.	
Sequential role play for multiple learners	Using steps described above, another learner can either re-start the role play from the beginning or the learner-SP encounter can continue from where it stopped. The new learner can summarize what they know so far for the SP prior to moving on from there.	Same as in-person.	

V. CLOSING THE SESSION			
STEPS	PRINCIPLES FOR ANY SESSION	ONLINE ADAPTATIONS	ZOOM INSTRUCTION LINKS
Generalizing learning and skills	Add any additional insights from your practice, course objectives etc. If a list of challenges was generated at the beginning of session, re-visit this and discuss any gaps.	Add any additional insights, including any substantive information on PowerPoint etc. Return to white board to review challenges and discuss	Zoom screen sharing Sharing a whiteboard
Take home points	Ask learners to identify one take home point to enhance their retention.	Learners can give take home points online either verbally or using chat or tools such as Padlet.	Zoom Chat function Padlet https://en-gb.padlet.com/
Evaluation	Evaluating sessions provides insight into the session's impact, strengths and areas for improvement	Consider having the learner group complete an evaluation. This can be through polling or an embedded link. Place particular emphasis on what worked and what could be improved.	

