

Communicating Clearly & Empathetically in Virtual Settings

DigHealth –
Micro-credentials in digital health for Ethiopia and Somalia

Proj. Ref. Num. 101179425

Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education

Learning outcomes

At the end of this module, you will be able to:

Identify unique patient needs

Reduce anxiety

Empathetic listening

Online communication

Set the Stage

- ✓ Ensure good audio/video quality
- ? Greet patient warmly, use their name
- ● Acknowledge virtual format: 'I know it can feel different meeting online, but we'll go step by step together.'

Use Clear, Simple Language

- ❓ Avoid medical jargon (e.g., 'high blood pressure' instead of 'hypertension')
- 📁 Give one instruction at a time
- 👁️👁️ Demonstrate if possible

Active Listening & Empathy

- [?] Maintain eye contact (look into camera)
- [?] Use verbal affirmations: 'I understand', 'That sounds uncomfortable'
- ❤️ Reflect feelings: 'It sounds like this is making you anxious'
- [?] [?] Allow pauses, don't rush

Adapt to Patient Needs

- ✓ Check understanding: 'Can you show me what I just asked?'
- ? ? Adjust pace for elderly or anxious patients
- ✎ Offer alternatives: written/pictorial instructions
- 🌐 Be culturally sensitive

Unit

Empathetic phrasing

- ✗ 'You're not doing it correctly'
- ✓ 'Let's try that again together, I'll guide you'
- ✗ 'That's not serious'
- ✓ 'I understand it feels worrying. From what I see now, it doesn't look dangerous, but let's keep monitoring it.'
- ✗ 'You need to calm down'
- ✓ 'I hear that you're worried. Let's slow down and go step by step.'



Summing up

1

Build trust

It is important that patients trust you and your decisions.

2

Reduce patient anxiety

Patient who is less anxious will listen better to your advices and will follow procedure if needed.

3

Ensure more accurate assessments

Good psychological and medical tests enables you to be more accurate in your conclusions.

4

Communication is an essential skill for telemedicine

Telemedicine success depends on communication skills and knowledge.



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Thank you!

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