

FNTI's Guide to Virtual Learning Etiquette

1. Turn on your webcam!

If possible, turn on your webcam to support a high level of continued engagement between you, your instructors, cultural advisors, student success facilitators and each other. Seeing each other helps us to be centred in maintaining relationships and how they support teaching, learning and healing in the ways you've come to know at FNTI.

If you're using your webcam, make every attempt to use attentive body language: sit up straight, don't make big extraneous movements, and don't let your eyes wander too much.

2. Reduce noise levels

Mute your microphone when you're not speaking! Unless you live alone, your house is probably pretty noisy these days. Your computer's microphone is very sensitive to noise, and background noises are easily picked up, which can be distracting to everyone else in the virtual classroom. Muting your microphone when you're not speaking gives other participants the ability to chime in and share their thoughts without distraction or frustration.

Using an external microphone/headset can also be very helpful in noise reduction. Please be sure to test your technology in advance of your meetings to reduce lost class time.

Leave the keyboard alone -- take notes the old-fashioned way. Whether you're diligently taking notes like a model student or sneakily chatting with your bestie, the sound of your typing is distracting. It's not only distracting everyone else in the meeting (because your laptop's internal microphone is inches away from your keyboard), it's also preventing you from devoting your full attention to the meeting. Opt to pick up your notebook and pen instead. Don't forget that key takeaways will be posted to your program resource page.

Share your virtual learning schedule with your household to make attempts to reduce background noise and distractions that may cause disruption to your attention span or that of your online virtual classroom.

3. Appearance

Take a few minutes to mirror the same appearance that you would present for an in-person class. Added bonus: psychology reveals that the act of getting ready for work/learning remotely puts you in the right headspace to be aware, engaged and productive.

4. Be aware of your surroundings

Adjust your computer setup to centre your device's camera on you so that you can be easily seen and heard.

Avoid sitting in front of a bright window seeing as the glare may make it hard for you to be seen in this medium.

Avoid busy and/or virtual backgrounds in your physical and digital environment. They can pose distractions from a healthy learning and sharing environment. Adjust your computer setup so that you limit the background distractions as much as possible.

5. Speak up

Don't be afraid to project your voice, too! Your team will appreciate being able to hear you without having to strain their ears or turn their volume all the way up.

6. Stay seated and stay present

It may be tempting to check your cell phone for a call or text, reply to an email or carry on a side conversation during a dull moment but **do everything that you can to avoid it!** You might miss out on key teachings or an opportunity to give input.