PHN-PREP
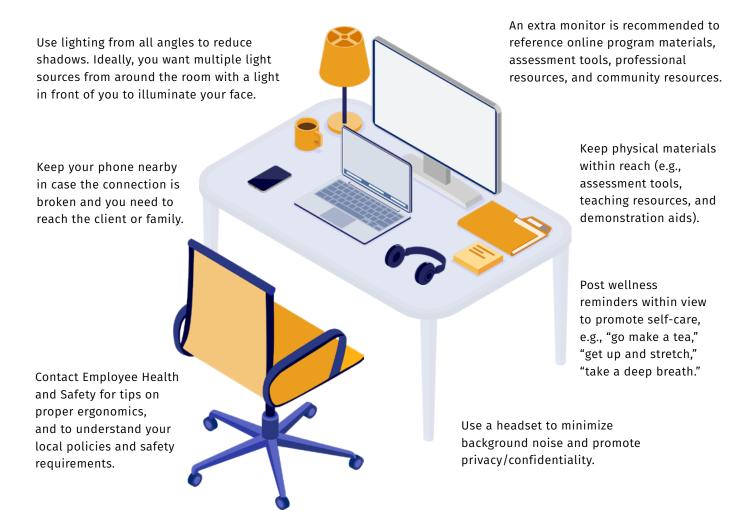### Public Health Nursing Practice, Research & Education Program

Tips for Setting Up A Virtual Visiting Workspace

The outreach or visiting work of public health nurses (PHNs) often occurs in locations that are external to places that clients call "home" or include modes of interaction beyond in-person encounters. During the COVID-19 pandemic, PHNs working in home visiting programs in Ontario shared their experiences of using different modes to conduct the 'visit'. This resource shares tips for setting up a virtual visiting workspace either in a nurse's home or their office workstation.

A well-designed and functional environment for virtual visiting influences the quality of the experience. Careful arrangement of the workspace will support connections between the PHN and client, so that interactions are the focal point.

Use lighting from all angles to reduce shadows. Ideally, you want multiple light sources from around the room with a light in front of you to illuminate your face.

An extra monitor is recommended to reference online program materials, assessment tools, professional resources, and community resources.

Keep your phone nearby in case the connection is broken and you need to reach the client or family.

Keep physical materials within reach (e.g., assessment tools, teaching resources, and demonstration aids).

Post wellness reminders within view to promote self-care, e.g., "go make a tea," "get up and stretch," "take a deep breath."

Contact Employee Health and Safety for tips on proper ergonomics, and to understand your local policies and safety requirements.

Use a headset to minimize background noise and promote privacy/confidentiality.

Reflect on what the client can see in the space behind you. How may it enhance or detract from the purpose of the encounter?

Avoid having an open door in your background to prevent interruptions and promote privacy.

If you do not wish to share your personal space, some platforms allow you to upload a photo of a professional office background.

Place a "do not disturb" sign on the outside of the door so that others know you are conducting a virtual visit.

Avoid bright lights or windows with curtains or blinds opened in the space behind you.

Provide eye contact by looking at the camera, not at yourself.

Ensure your employee ID is visible (e.g., pinned high on lapel versus a lanyard out of view).

Considerations for Virtual Visits from Workstations Located in Public Health Workspaces

- Conducting virtual visits from open cubicles may reduce a client's sense of privacy.

- Where possible, arrange to have a meeting room (with a door) converted to a space where virtual visits can be conducted.

- In this space, PHNs appreciate having a computer and two monitors, a strong internet connection, and a phone to facilitate their visits with families.

- Encourage PHNs to wear headphones to increase client confidence that no other person can overhear the client's contributions to the conversation.