Virtual Hygiene
BEST PRACTICES

When we work in close proximity with others, no one has to tell us to be well-groomed and dressed professionally – it's natural (for most people) to align with the grooming and hygiene standards of the group. However the world of virtual work presents a new set of "hygiene" challenges and some of us might benefit from a bit of guidance.

1

VIDEO CAMERA

What people SEE has a huge impact on their impression of you, so use a high-quality webcam and be sure it is positioned so that you are centered on the screen. An external webcam will give you more positioning flexibility than your built-in laptop camera.

2

BRIGHT LIGHTING

It is likely that the natural lighting in your home is TOO DARK for optimal visual impact. Your lighting should be bright – VERY bright. Light therapy bulbs that mimic outdoor light can produce an added benefit: a chemical change in the brain that lifts your mood.
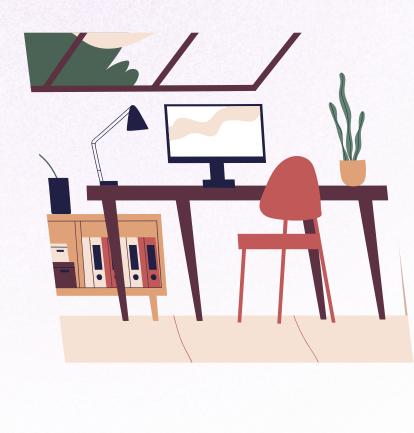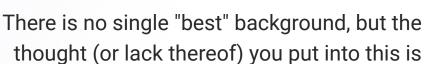
3

HIGH-QUALITY SOUND

A quality microphone will ensure that when you speak, others will hear you clearly and the vocal qualities of your unique voice will be readily discernable. Even if you do not speak frequently, this will help ensure that when you DO speak, others will pay attention.
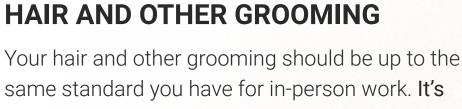
4

BACKGROUND

There is no single "best" background, but the thought (or lack thereof) you put into this is definitely noticed. You may want to show some of the personal elements of your home work environment, or you may want to be totally professional. Either way, put some thought into this, because people DO notice.

5

HAIR AND OTHER GROOMING

Your hair and other grooming should be up to the same standard you have for in-person work. It's easy to "relax" our grooming standards when working remotely, and to convince ourselves that it isn't noticed. But it is.

6

CLOTHING

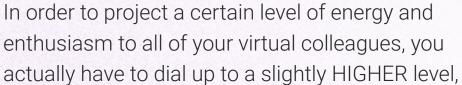What you wear (above the waist) should also up to the same standard you have for in-person work. You can forego the business suit and tie (unless the clients or others are wearing them) but truly casual clothing should be reserved for below the waist.

7

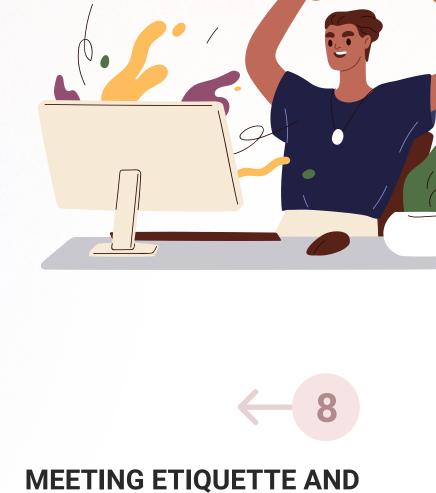### PERSONAL ENERGY

In order to project a certain level of energy and enthusiasm to all of your virtual colleagues, you actually have to dial up to a slightly HIGHER level, because there is a bit of degradation from what you are virtually projecting to what others are virtually receiving. If you want others to perceive a "10" then you are going to have to project a "12".

8

MEETING ETIQUETTE AND ENGAGEMENT

Virtual work typically involves many, many meetings, and it is important to have empathy with OTHER virtual workers. This means showing up on time, ending meetings on time (when you are in control), engaging with enthusiasm and a pleasant personality.