Video Capture Tips

Lights

- **Light source.** Before filming, make sure you are facing the main source of light in the area. Opt for natural light if you can. If the main source of light is behind you, your face and body will be covered by shadows. For example, if you're standing with a bright window at your back, turn around, and face toward the window instead.

- **Check for glare**. If you're wearing glasses, be sure to check if your light source is reflecting off your lenses. The easiest thing to do is to remove your glasses. Not an option? Raise your light source to reduce or eliminate the glare.

- **Use additional light if you got have it**. If you have a ring light and your window access is spotty, give it a shot! These lights cast an even light, helping to reduce shadows on the face, giving your skin a smoother look, and brightening your eyes.

Audio

- **Stay indoors.** Recording outdoors is risky for audio. Unless you're super confident in your environment (and skills), or prepared to make multiple attempts when that noisy truck or cheerful bird decides to join your video shoot, stick to filming inside, if possible, to help control your outcome.

- **Sound check.** If filming indoors, take a beat to check if there are any fans/HVAC units, appliances, etc. that may be creating noise that you've grown used to. If they can't be turned off, then close as many doors between the source of the sound and the room in which you are recording.

Camera

- **Grab a friend.** If possible, when using a smartphone have somebody (with a steady hand and from a safe distance) film you. This allows for a more natural camera angle. Filming solo? Use a small phone tripod, or rig a secure set-up like leaning your phone against a sturdy surface to ensure a smooth video capture.

- **Background check.** It's best to have a tidy background that won't distract from your message. Avoid distracting objects, complex patterns (for example, a houndstooth pattern can be dizzying on camera), and intense lighting (avoiding overexposure and scary shadows).

- **Set yourself up for successful angles.** Be cautious to not cut off your head or sides of your body with the camera frame. If you can't see your whole head in the frame, neither can we (or the camera). Aim to have your head in the top half of the frame, leaving room to add captions if needed.

- **Get oriented.** Think about where your video is going to be seen, and pick the frame orientation that works best for your project. In general, horizontal filming is more commonly used, and is easier to format it into more uses than filming with your phone upright (vertically).

- **Find your best framing.** You'll capture your best angle if your camera is sitting just above eye level. This will also promote good posture, helping you put your best foot forward.

- **Eye contact.** When filming from a computer, avoid focusing on yourself in the webcam frame on screen. If eye contact is desired, look directly into the tiny camera source light. If you don't want to provide direct eye contact, focus slightly on the side of the camera source.

- **Hard truth – this isn't the Big Screen.** Do your best to act natural, be yourself, and talk at a slower pace. You won't be perfect on camera and that's 100% okay! Practice before you record, capture more than one take, and be kind to your performance. What really matters here most is the story you are telling.