Dressing a Wound, Step-by-Step:

1 **Clean self, clean area**
- Wash hands or use sanitizer
- Put on gloves
- Find whatever clean/dry area you can, can lay down paper towels etc.

2 **Clean wound**
- Debris in wound?
  - If harmless/shallow, go ahead and clean off.
  - If deeper or sharp, leave in, dress over carefully, and get medical help (risk to both people involved)
- Wash with saline/sterile water
- Clean with alcohol/iodine/chlorhexidine wipes
- Dry the area

3 **Apply ointment to wound bed**
- Antibiotic ointment – will not treat an existing infection but can help prevent a new one
- Aquaphor/vaseline OK too

4 **Gauze or nonstick pad (or bandaid if small)**
- Wound too wet?
  - Extra gauze layers will pull moisture & pus out of the wound;
- Wound too dry?
  - Plenty of ointment
  - If no ointment, can wet the bottom layer of gauze with sterile saline or sterile water. Try to avoid water from other sources, better just to leave dry (infection control)

5 **Gauze wrap**
- For limbs: Wrap towards the heart (start toward/hands feet and move to the middle) to prevent blood pooling in extremities

6 **Ace bandage** (or other sturdy wrapping material) on top, especially for folks staying outside

7 **Clean Up** all material before you take your gloves off, then wash hands again

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Moisture Control

Signs of Wet wounds:
- Wound bed is full of fluid (duh)
- Area surrounding wound bed is macerated:
  - Looks like skin after a long bath
  - Whitish
  - Puffy

Signs of Dry wounds:
- Cracked skin
- Scaling/flaking
- Gauze/bandaids sticking to the wound when you pull them off

Extra Points

For abscesses:
- If already open/draining; OK to drain before dressing. CLEAN FIRST
- If not open, do not puncture (risk of making infection worse) outside of sterile environment like clinic or hospital.

For cellulitis:
- Do not need to dress unless open wound present, but can cover for comfort or protection from future damage.

For bleeding wounds:
- Can use pressure dressing: roll up a piece of gauze and wrap over it