

ONLINE MEETINGS, EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Being on time, being mindful of our body language, and paying attention are things we appreciate when we meet online as well as in person. Here are some other tips to make sure our online meetings, events and workshops are successful.

1. BE READY.

Before joining a meeting check your software, camera, and mic are working. Make sure your device is charged or plugged in.

If you are using a platform you haven't used before give yourself extra time to download the platform and get it running. If you're the host, also give yourself time to figure out the different functions.

Make sure you are appropriately dressed (such as by wearing what you would if you were attending in person).

2. DO INTRODUCTIONS.

Doing introductions creates a welcoming environment and encourages participation. As the host, you can introduce yourself first (and maybe ask an icebreaker question), and then ask others to share.

If people aren't comfortable talking, don't have a mic or there are too many people to have everyone speak, you can ask them to type in the chat box. You can also have people state their name before commenting or asking a question.

3. HAVE A BACKGROUND THAT IS AS QUIET AND WORK-APPROPRIATE AS POSSIBLE.

If you are using a camera, a clutter-free, work-appropriate background helps people to focus and not get distracted. Also try to attend the meeting from a quiet area to avoid any background noise.

Platforms like Zoom allow you to add a virtual background. These can be helpful if you don't want people to know your location or if you are in a messy or busy location.

It might be helpful to let the people around you know that you will be in an online meeting and how long you expect to be.

4. LOOK INTO THE CAMERA WHEN TALKING (NOT AT YOURSELF).

Ideally, try to have your camera at eye level so you can look directly into it. This will make it seem like you are looking at the other participants on the screen.

5. REDUCE DISTRACTIONS.

Multi-tasking or eating during a meeting can be distracting and make other participants feel disrespected. Putting your phone on silent and minimizing the notifications popping up on your device can also help everyone stay focused.

Taking notes on your keyboard can be noisy. If you need to take notes, mute yourself or use a pen and paper.

6. BE AWARE OF YOUR AUDIO AND VIDEO SETTINGS.

It is usually a good idea to mute your mic when you are not speaking to help minimize background noise. Before you speak, check that your mic is unmuted and you are close enough to it so everyone can hear you. Also, make sure your camera is on if you want people to see you when you speak.

If you notice that someone in the meeting is speaking but their mic is muted, let them know.

7. IF YOU'RE THE HOST, ARRIVE EARLY AND STICK AROUND.

If you are the meeting host, arrive early so you can let people in and/or greet them. At the end of the meeting, wait until everyone else has left before hanging up, so everyone can leave at their own pace and get any final words in before disconnecting.

8. HAVE A BACKUP PLAN.

If possible, it is good to have a backup plan in case you experience technical problems. The plan could include calling in from your phone or if you're the host switching the meeting controls to someone else.

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