WTP NIEHS COVID-19 Response

Technology Tips for Virtual Meetings and Interactive Online Sessions

Meeting logistics
- Have a moderator to troubleshoot and monitor the chat box
- Practice the technology beforehand
- Ensure security settings of your platform and have a plan of what to do if there is a security breach

Beginning the meeting/training
- Start with a quick check-in or ice breaker. Use these suggestions, or find more in the references below.
  - What was your first job? And name one hazard that you faced.
  - What is the story of your name?
  - Have you seen anything lately that made you smile?
- Create a space for announcements and celebrations
Be an engaging presenter/facilitator

- Ask a question
- Be spontaneous to keep the audience stimulated
- Make frequent changes to keep the audience engaged
- Use two speakers or engage with an attendee
- Do a health and safety critique or hazard analysis of a photo or video
- Ask the audience to complete an assignment and send it to you
- Answer questions – ask for them before the event and during
- Use storytelling
- Use humor
- Consider use of videos for engagement, but remember that they can be troublesome over a virtual platform. Here are some tips:
  - Test the tech ahead of time
  - See if your platform has options that make video sharing more successful. For example, Zoom has options to “Share computer sound” and “Optimize for full-screen video clip” while sharing a video.
  - Remember to sign out of YouTube or present in incognito mode
  - Send a link to participants to view the video on their own. It gives the participants some independence and offers a break and change of pace.

Use interactive software

- Conduct a survey or poll (available in most online meeting software packages, or companies such as Kahoot! or Slido)
- Use the software to do knowledge checks during the training and share the results
- Use breakout rooms for small group discussions (available in Zoom and GoToTraining)
- Encourage the chat function – some people prefer this, and it can lead to an engaging discussion that you can save
- Do an online brainstorming or sticky note activity using platforms such as Ideaflip, Padlet, or Google Docs.
- Use a whiteboard for brainstorming (available on Zoom)

After the meeting/training

- Do a “temperature check” – especially if it’s recurring or continuing another day
- Send a follow-up email

REFERENCES

Tips + Resources for Virtual Gatherings, from the American Evaluation Association
7 Ideas for Making Your Webinar More Interactive, from ClickMeeting
5 ways to make your webinar interactive, from Medium
How to Make Webinars More Interactive, from MyOwnConference
Icebreakers for virtual teams, from Lucid
Top 25 most popular icebreaker questions, from Medium
35 Tools for Online Brainstorming and Decision Making in Meetings (2020 update), from Lucid

NOTE: Inclusion on this fact sheet does not constitute an endorsement by NIEHS.