

Virtual Online Meeting

Technology Tips

- Having a camera is a prerequisite.
- Verify Wi-Fi speed and security.
 - Confirm that your Wi-Fi network is secured (not applicable for hardwired internet, i.e. a router directly connected to your computer).
 - You'll need high speed internet access. Check your internet speed, if it's slow try to find a better spot to host the meeting. To check, visit [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net).
- Turn your camera on and have your camera at eye level. The eye contact helps to create a more personal connection.
- Headphones or headsets with a microphone can be helpful for ample audio.
- Find a platform you feel comfortable using. You can review virtual meeting platforms by referring to our resources guide [here](#).
- Pre-set your meeting to mute participants' microphones upon entry to help avoid background noises.

Background Setting of Your Meeting

- Choose a space that is safe and confidential for the privacy of yourself and group members.
- Make sure you sit in a well-lit and quiet place. Limit backlighting for the best experience.
- Be mindful of any activity going on behind you. Think about having solid wall behind you or turning on the virtual background.

Virtual Engagement

- Before starting your meeting, you may find it helpful to ask your participants for audio cues and visual cues with facial expressions, head nods, etc. Virtual meetings are different than in-person meetings because you may not have the body language cues that naturally help move conversation along.
- It may be helpful to begin your meeting with an ice breaker to give members a chance to get used to the virtual setting.
- When delivering a presentation, sharing images or videos, give your attendees a moment to absorb what you've shared.
- Embrace the pause: take a moment after the end of your comments to allow for attendees to engage before moving on.

In-Person Meeting

Meeting Location

- Provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for group meetings.
- Choose an ADA accessible space that offers privacy for group discussions.
 - **Parking:** Accessible parking spots including spaces that can accommodate a lift-equipped van that are close to the entrance. Accessible entrance for drop-off and pick-up.
 - **Safety Recommendations:**
 - Location is easy to find
 - Location is well-lit and safe
 - Location is air-conditioned/appropriately heated
 - **Entrance/Doors:** If there are entrances/doors that require stairs, ensure there is an elevator and/or ramp access that is slip resistant.
 - **Meeting Room:** Any meeting spaces should allow for participants with restricted mobility to have a fully accessible range of seating locations near the speaking area. Fully accessible rooms should be set up with an aisle down each side of the room, as well as an aisle down the center, with 4.5 ft. distance between each table.
 - Some resources for groups are available on electronic platforms. Prioritize a meeting room that has technology access and Wi-Fi if possible.
 - **Restrooms:** Be sure these are located close to the meeting space. All restrooms should be ADA compliant with open outside doors and have a clearing of at least 32", mobility devices should be able to make a 360 turn, accessible stalls in all restrooms have grab bars behind the toilet and side wall, and faucets that can be operated with a closed fist.
- Typical ADA accessible locations to evaluate are local libraries, churches, hospital conference rooms, community centers, etc. Work with your Staff Partner to help identify a best fit for your group meeting.

Discussion Engagement

- Before starting your meeting, be sure to read or post the Self-Help Group Disclaimer and the Diversity & Inclusion statement.
 - It may be helpful to begin your meeting with an ice breaker or casual/social conversation such as "What was something fun you did this week/weekend?". This can allow for members to feel comfortable and in a safe space for sharing as your meeting may progress into heavier topics.
 - If you are hosting an educational meeting, you or a guest speaker may deliver a presentation, share images or watch a video. Your Staff Partner can help identify educational resources available through the Society as well as potential guest speaker ideas.
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- Be sure to give your attendees a moment to absorb what you've shared and embrace the pause. Take a moment after sharing thoughts or new information to allow for attendees to process and engage before moving on.
- Make sure to establish group standards and rules for engaging and that all members of the group are aware of any rules or recommendations.

