The Prevention Practitioner's Resource Guide for Virtual Events

May 2020

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Introduction

The Great Lakes PTTC designed *The Prevention Practitioner's Resource Guide for Virtual Events* to support substance misuse prevention professionals and volunteers who are shifting their prevention work to virtual platforms during these unprecedented times. Our substance misuse prevention work cannot stop during this time of great need. Consequently, this document was designed to help preventionists continue their work through virtual settings. We hope this guide will be timely, relevant, and useful to you.

The resource guide includes the following sections:

- Section 1: Selecting Which Technology to Use
- Section 2: Getting Ready
- Section 3: Facilitation Considerations
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- Appendix: Resources

Section 1: Selecting a Virtual Platform

With the many activities that substance misuse prevention professionals and volunteers conduct, it is essential to take time to identify which form of technology will help you achieve each of your goals.

Types of Engagement

The first step to selecting which technology to use is to identify what type of engagement you need with your participants. The following are three to consider.

Meeting Facilitation

Participants may be part of a group (e.g., a substance misuse prevention coalition, colleagues, school, prevention provider) and the facilitator's job is to:

- Open the session (welcome, purpose, outcomes, introductions, connector, norms)
- Provide guiding questions to bridge and build discourse between and across participants or between participants and a presenter
- Close with summary and organization of the conversation, next steps, thank yous, and closeout

Note that as a facilitator, your voice should be the least heard except for during the opening and closing. Your job is to set participants up for engagement.

Presentations

Participants are usually joining to gain knowledge and information (e.g., a training on the Strategic Prevention Framework), and the presenter's job is to provide content and direct instruction. Presentations usually take the form of a webinar.

Workshops

Workshops are recommended for in-person training. Virtual workshops can be effective, though this is the most demanding form of virtual learning. We recommend that you lead a virtual workshop with a co-trainer. Most virtual workshops are recommended to last between 60-90 minutes. A virtual workshop might be used for prevention activities such as parent education classes.

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Virtual Platform Reviews

Once you have determined the type of virtual engagement you need, research technology platforms and apps to identify which one best meets your needs. The following sample chart was created for a virtual team to help select them which platforms and modalities to use for various outcomes.

Please note that the opinions in the chart reflect this specific team members' feedback. When comparing platforms for your organization, you and your team members may have different experiences, opinions, and preferences.

Virtual Platform Comparison

Platform	Pros	Cons
Adobe Connect Webinars, panels, presentations *Purpose/Features:* Presentations, chatbox, screen share, easy for multiple presenters to access, webcam usage, uploading handouts	• Intuitive for new users • High-quality video streaming for presenters • No longer requires Adobe Flash Player • Separate chat functions for participants and presenters • Presenter/meeting host can mute audience members	• Requires a technology host who starts the meeting, records the meeting, and addresses any technology issues that participants experience during the session
Zoom Discussion hours, meetings, coaching and consulting, small group workshops, webinars (panels, presentations, breakout rooms) *Purpose/Features:* Coaching or consulting for groups of 10 or fewer, meetings	• Screen sharing • Easy calendar invite abilities with Outlook • Useful for brainstorming sessions with Zoom's on-screen whiteboard feature • Start using for free. Zoom's pro plan supports breakout rooms to help participants talk in smaller groups	• Unpredictable video quality • One chatbox can be confusing or lead to errors (the facilitator and participants have to be keenly aware of when they are sending a message to the whole participant list, to the presenters, \or one particular person
Ring Central Facilitation, presentation, coaching, consulting, group meetings. *Purpose/Features:* Video conferencing, recording available, chat, whiteboards, meetings on your schedule, up to 200 participants	• Each staff person has their own line • RingCentral Meetings' video conferencing feature is powered by Zoom and is essentially identical • Video conferences, share screens, exchange files • Users can join by phone	• Unpredictable video quality • One chatbox can be confusing or lead to errors (the facilitator and participants have to be keenly aware of when they are sending a message to the whole participant list, to the presenters, \or one particular person
Skype Collaboration (workshops), meetings, calls *Purpose/Features:* Coaching or consulting for groups of 10 or less, meetings	• It has been around for many years, which may increase participants' familiarity with it • Live captions and subtitles are available • Video conferences, screen shares	• Group calls are free, but you can only meet with up to 10 people • No meeting controls (you can't mute a noisy participant)

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Social Media Platforms

Facebook Live and Instagram Live are social media platforms that you can use for virtual events. Note that both of these platforms are one-way communication tools. Participants can see only the presenter, but they can post comments. Twitter offers an opportunity for interaction through live Twitter "chats." Social media platforms can be useful in place of public events you had planned, such as awareness campaigns designed to increase community readiness for prevention. The following are tips for using these options.

Facebook Live Tips

- Generate interest before you go live. Let your viewers know when to tune in, and what key messages you'll be sharing. Think of this like a campaign: the more you market beforehand, the better the turnout.

- Create a virtual flyer, including a one-or two-sentence description, engaging photo, and the date and time.

- Tag/call out other organizations that you may be addressing or hope will join when you go live. For example: "Hey @non-profit, we'll be discussing [#topic] and hope you'll join the conversation!"

- Since Facebook Live lets you target certain events and groups with your promotions, keep your content focused. Identify two or three key takeaways and guide the conversation around those points.

- You can record your Facebook live horizontally or vertically. Choose the visual composition that makes the most sense given your scenario.

- Timing is key. Determine when your audience will be online and more likely to engage. You can check Facebook Insights data, and think about real-life scenarios (after school, or after work).

- Facebook Live viewers can join at any time, so be sure to offer content continually throughout the viewing. For example, "Hey, if you're just joining us, welcome to our broadcast. We're currently talking about [topic] and we've just covered [previous topic]."

- Increase engagement online by addressing comments that appear live on air. This builds a culture of sharing and engagement. Responding to comments in real-time encourages others to ask questions.

- After your Facebook Live concludes, check out your analytics. "Peak Concurrent Viewers" is the metric that represents the highest number of concurrent viewers watching the live video.

Instagram Live Tips

- To start an Instagram Live, click on your Story profile photo and toggle over to the "Live" camera setting.

- Once you go live, your friends and followers online will receive a notification that says, "[Username] has started a live video."

- While you're streaming live, both you and users can share and view comments.

- To end the Live broadcast, tap the top right corner. Save the video file in your camera roll or share it to your Instagram Story. (Note: Comments and reactions won't be saved).

Twitter Chat Tips

- Generate interest before you go live. Let your viewers know when to join the Twitter Chat, and what key messages you'll be sharing. Think of this like a campaign: the more you market beforehand, the better the turnout.

- Create a unique hashtag to accompany the Twitter Chat. Instruct participants on how to use the hashtag to follow the chat.

- Assign a moderator to start the chat, post questions, and keep the conversation on track.
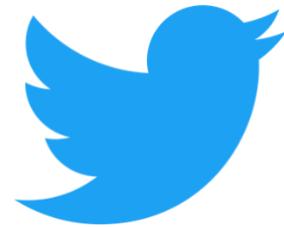
Online Discussion and Collaboration Platforms

Your organization or coalition might need to turn to an online discussion or collaboration platform to continue your prevention work. For example, by using an online collaboration platform, a prevention coalition working on a positive social norms media campaign can share and review the drafts of the campaign products efficiently—eliminating the endless email exchanges that can happen when developing products.

The chart on the next page includes a few platforms you might consider using.

Platform	Description	Features and Considerations
Google Groups	Discussion groups for people/teams. Discussions are organized and searchable	• Threaded conversations – either through web interface or email • Limited to conversation threads • Must use Google Drive to share files • Requires a Google account to sign in
Slack	Designed to facilitate efficient collaboration across teams	• File sharing and storage • Chat and threaded conversations • Searchable message archives • Voice and video calls
Asana	Project management tool	• Storage relies on secondary applications, such as Dropbox, Google Drive, and Box • 100MB limit per individual attachment • Chat features allow users to sort, filter, and un-follow conversations • Calendar and collaboration tools • Pre-made templates for workflow
Basecamp	Project management system that gives a high-level view of multiple projects, as well as the smallest details	• Provides project details including to-do's, timelines, communication, and documents • Stores 100 GB of files • User-friendly and simple • Share working products for others to view and comment • Sends daily updates via email • Calendar and collaboration tools • Lacks reporting features
DropBox	Web-based file-sharing system for photos, videos, and documents	• Updates to content-sharing syncs across devices • Sends automatic updates when files edited in a shared folder
Yammer	Platform for collaborating privately with colleagues. Employees sign in with a company email address, and can use the platform via web, desktop, or mobile	• Microsoft platform • Use your Outlook inbox to view, prioritize, and manage Yammer • Chat capability • File sharing and uploading • Collaborate with external partners • Mobile app

Additional discussion and collaboration platforms that you might want to research include Bitrix24, WizeHive, Clinked, and Group Spaces.

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Section 2: Getting Ready

Once you have selected the technology platform(s) you are going to use, it is time to ensure your physical space and technology are ready.

Physical Set-Up

Your physical set-up can have a big impact on the success of a virtual event. Consider the following as you prepare for a virtual event. **Tool: Physical Set-Up Checklist, Appendix**

Lighting

Good quality lighting makes a difference and allows participants to see you clearly. Set up at least two light sources pointing at your face. Avoid backlighting: If there are windows behind you, close the blinds/ shades that can create shadows across your face.

Camera

Correct camera framing and angle help participants feel like you are speaking directly to them. Position the webcam at eye level, at a distance that shows your head and shoulders. You don't want your whole face to take up the screen or be so far from the camera that you cannot be seen clearly.

Background

Consider a simple, non-distracting background that helps promote a professional image. Set up a wall with simple art or sit in a space with a bookshelf behind you. Some platforms offer virtual backgrounds that can help. Do you need to close a closet door or door to the room?

Your Visual Supports

What might distract you as a presenter? What might you need in front of you to keep you encouraged and energized?

Attire

Your presentation and attire influence nonverbal communication. Dress professionally but be comfortable. Avoid busy patterns, such as stripes or polka dots.

Your Memory Aids

Have your notes readily accessible. Tape talking points near your webcam or have your notes on the screen. This will help you maintain eye contact with the webcam, rather than looking down at notes.

Essentials

Have other key essentials within reach: glass of water, reading glasses, tissue. If your phone is near you, make sure it is in silent mode.

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Technology Set-up

Set up your technology in advance of the presentation. Checking your speakers, audio, and internet connection will help to ensure a successful event.

🔧 **Tool: Technology Set-up Checklist, Appendix**

Test your computer speaker and microphone.

> All programs allow the user to test internal speakers and microphones before joining a session. Make sure that you can both hear the audio and be heard.

Choose an audio conference option.

> Choose the audio conference option that will give you the best connection: phone call or computer audio. If your computer audio is not stable or your internet connection is slow, choose the phone call option.

Use a headset microphone.

> Sound quality is always better with a headset mic, which helps reduce background noise and prevents an echo. Use a headset mic or earbuds, whether you are joining by computer audio or phone call.

Check your internet connection.

> Make sure to have a stable internet connection. A slow connection will affect the session with frozen screens and inconsistent audio, or, even worse, a dropped connection.

> If using a laptop, use a wired connection rather than WiFi to ensure a stable connection.

> If you have to rely on WiFi and/or the connection is bad, consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency.

> Turn off other programs requiring access to the internet if your internal connection bandwidth is limited.

Turn off notifications on all of your apps and phone.

> Or better yet, just quit all unnecessary programs on your computer. There is nothing worse than sharing your screen and having a personal text alert pop up on your screen.

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Know the Video Conference Features

The presenter and participants should be acquainted with the various tools and features of the platform.

Tool: Video Conference Features Checklist, Appendix

Sound

Learn how to mute and unmute the microphone. Some platforms have shortcuts: in Zoom, you can press and hold the spacebar to temporarily unmute yourself. You can automatically mute yourself and turn your video off before joining. This gives you time to ensure you are sitting where and how you want to be when joining a meeting and sets the default as "mute."

Display name on screen

If the organization uses a general account, sometimes your name may show up as the organization name. Once you log onto the platform, you can change your screen name.

Chat feature

The chat feature is a useful way to share messages, videos, files, screenshots. Depending on the platform, chats can be sent to the entire audience, individual participants, presenters, and/or organizers.

Polling

Most platforms offer polling as a way to gather collective input from participants. If polling is not available, there are other options such as Poll Everywhere, + 1 Polling, and or a simple "thumbs up" gesture if participants are also on video.

Be intentional about what is on the screen

The screen is your virtual real estate: What do you need your audience to focus on? Is it what you are sharing (PowerPoint, image, document) or the faces of other participants? Remember to stop sharing your screen if the information is not necessary for the discussion.

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Prepare for Potential Hackers

In "Zoombombing," someone unauthorized takes over the Zoom learning space audio and video controls to share their screen with inappropriate materials and audio. To prevent Zoombombing:

- Don't use a personal meeting ID
- Always use a meeting password
- Use the waiting room feature
- Mute audio and disable video for meeting attendees
- Turn off screen sharing for everyone except the facilitator/co-facilitator
- Use the "lock meeting" feature once all meeting attendees have joined

Mute and Video Dynamics are Everything

Mute and video issues will make or break a virtual event.

If the meeting includes more than 10 people who are not accustomed to virtual events, mute participants automatically when they join. Ask people to "raise their hands" (either literally via video or by using the "raise hand" function in the participant box) to indicate they want to speak, and have the host manually unmute them.

Advise participants to mute their microphones if they are not speaking and unmute the microphones when they wish to speak. Participants may be joining calls from all kinds of different locations, many of which may create background noise. Encourage participants to mute themselves if they're not speaking to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noise. Using the "raise hand" feature or simply seeing the microphone unmuted will give the group a visual cue for when someone wishes to speak.

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A Few More Tips

The best solutions aren't always technical ones.

If you need a quick response from participants, ask for a visual thumbs up or thumbs down. If you see participants' interest wane, ask a silly question or invite participants to stand up and sit down to stretch their legs.

Breathe through it.

Teaching and technology are ripe for blunders, mistakes, and challenges. Give yourself grace. If, as a presenter, you breathe through it, participants are likely to be less bothered and stressed.

Bring your sense of humor.

Virtual events rarely occur without any glitches. Use the mistakes and glitches as opportunities to laugh, as a reminder to everyone not to take ourselves too seriously as we learn and use new technology.

Remember...

- Technology can make even the most confident feel incompetent or frustrated. Be ready to navigate these feelings in yourself and others.

- Age doesn't mean anything: People of all ages can use virtual platforms successfully.

- Digital equity is foundational. Don't assume everyone has Wi-Fi, hotspots, or a safe and quiet place to participate in virtual sessions. Check with participants regarding their access to devices and technology. For those lacking access, identify options such as loaning devices and hot spots. If device and technology accessibility challenges can't be addressed, then consider other meeting options such as conference calls.

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Section 3: Virtual Facilitation Considerations

Welcome to facilitating virtually! This section covers the sticky stuff: The art and craft of facilitating through virtual platforms. Virtual facilitation is a special skill!

Set the Facilitator Up for Success

If possible, it is ideal to have a host, facilitator, and presenter during virtual events.

- **Host**. The host is the person who monitors the technology, the person to whom participants can send an email or chat regarding technology issues, and the person who mutes and unmutes participants experiencing significant background noise. The host can also help with recording if needed.

- **Facilitator**. The facilitator is the person who is online at least 15 minutes before the session, greeting guests, liaising with the host and presenter, and usually introducing and closing the learning. This person can help presenters with time checks, monitor the chatbox for questions and comments, and add resources during the presentation (polls, handouts).

- **Presenter(s)**. The presenter delivers the content and/or moderates the session.

Sometimes the host, facilitator, and presenter roles get combined. When possible, we highly recommend using a team approach to virtual events, especially when hosting large groups.

If having a host is not possible for large events, **identify a colleague or participant** to moderate the chat and make sure important questions and comments are addressed. Even for smaller sessions, it may be worthwhile to ask a participant to take on the role of "chat monitor" to voice questions that the facilitator has missed.

Facilitating Virtually

Consider the following as you prepare to facilitate a virtual event.

Prepare well

- Choose which platform and tools to use (see Section 1).
- Set up your space: water, back up plugs for your computer, phone, etc. Ensure that if you are on video, preview what participants will see behind you (see Section 2).
- Practice and do a content run AND a technology run-through. Even if you think you are comfortable with the content and the platform, do it. It never hurts.
- Take a moment to ground yourself before starting. Facilitating or presenting virtually can be challenging. It's hard to gauge your participants, there are many elements out of your control (no matter how well you prepare), and all of that can create anxiety or other feelings that might block your ability to present smoothly.

Plan how time will be used intentionally

It can be hard on the eyes to look at a screen for long periods, and hard on the participant to sit and watch both the facilitator and often themselves as well. Just as you would do for an in-person experience, and even more importantly when virtual, create a virtual experience that is time sensitive, bound, and attuned.

Break up any conversation flow into 15–20-minute segments. A good rule of thumb is to ask participants to do something once every five minutes.

- If you are presenting content, pause and provide participants time to make meaning of their learning (chatbox reflections, polls, etc.).
- If there is a panel or segments of the presentation, pause between presenters and ask participants to share (by chatbox usually) one learning, takeaway, or "ah- ha!"
- If there is a co-facilitator, designate one of you to code the themes of participant input (e.g., "Many of you are writing about the challenges of engaging youth"). The colleague could also take participant chatbox input and make it into a word cloud and then send it to the primary presenter to share out at the end.

Be kind to yourself and to participants with the time. We recommend no more than 90 minutes per virtual event session.

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How will it go? Flow matters!

In any format, your structure should always include:

1. An opening: Technology platform review, welcome, norms, objectives, and agenda;
2. Middle: Content, questions and answers; and
3. Close: Next steps, thank yous, and, if applicable, feedback forms or surveys.

Using the chatbox:

- You can choose how to use the chatbox as a facilitator. Don't be distracted by the chatbox: Present your material, and then move to the chatbox.
-
- Let participants know when you will be pausing to respond to questions in the chatbox: "I will pause every 15 minutes or so to review and respond to questions," or, "I will respond to questions at the end of the session," or "The chatbox is for you. I will not respond to questions but encourage participants to do so.

- Just as a presenter wouldn't stop mid-sentence during an in-person training to respond to a hand, the same goes for virtual. You can choose when and how you want to respond, as long as you communicate that to participants.

Are you ready? Presenter energy = participant energy

Virtual engagement requires at least 10% extra "oomph" to keep participants engaged and interested.

- Vocal intonation is crucial. Speak slowly but with diversified patterns, engage in humor (if appropriate), speak with warmth (always appropriate), and repeat lines that you want participants to hear and internalize. Practice beforehand! Try practicing with a colleague or even in front of a mirror. Listen for "ums" and other verbal habits that can distract your audience.
- When possible, have two presenters that can rotate speaking roles. This helps presenters to maintain the energy, and it also provides variety for participants.

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Are you fostering a warm virtual environment?

- Virtual hosting is just like hosting a dinner party at your home. Identify who is going to be welcoming people (so that you avoid having multiple people sitting in silence waiting). Welcome people as they enter, greet with energy, and connect participants to one another.

- Names matter! Mention names as much as possible: "I see that Erin is writing in the chatbox that she recommends Botvin's Life Skills as a school-based strategy to address favorable attitudes toward use."

- Make connections between participants, even in the chatbox: "Kris and Maureen are both bringing up questions about how to define cultural humility." Even better, encourage participants to connect: "Maureen, I see that Kris is offering youth engagement best practices. Perhaps the two of you could exchange information in a 1:1 chat and connect offline."

Are you setting participants up for successful engagement?

Be specific when you ask a question of participants or have a request.

- This includes the mode of response. Are you going to call on one person? Two people? If so, say so. Let participants know how much time they have to respond and in what format: In the chatbox? Verbally?

- This includes, if possible, on your platform, what you suggest for the view. If you are using Zoom, do you want participants in "gallery" view so they can see colleagues in "speaker" mode so they are only looking at the presenter or minimized so that they don't get distracted by looking at themselves?

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Do you have group guidelines in place?

Establish norms for the virtual learning space. Even if you've worked together for years, norms help people settle into shared expectations for the session. The following is a sample list of group norms for remote meetings:

- **ONE REMOTE, ALL REMOTE.** If even one participant can't be there in real life, everyone joins from their own device to ensure everyone's ability to participate fully.

- **PLUG IN AND STAY PUT.** Participate from a quiet spot with reliable internet. Plug in chargers and headphones if possible.

- **CAMERAS ON.** Show up and engage, just as you would in an in-person meeting.

- **HIT RECORD.** Record meetings for folks who can't attend, have technical difficulties, or just want to review portions of the agenda later.

- **USE A PARKING LOT.** Post questions for presenters to the chat, and trust that they will be addressed at regular intervals throughout the presentation.

- **ONE MIC.** Mute when you're not speaking to reduce background noise. For large groups, raise your hand when on video to indicate you'd like to speak.

We highly recommend checking for agreement with norms. While you may want everyone on video, that may not be the most equitable or safe option for some people. While you may want all participants to avoid multitasking, that may not be possible for reasons beyond your or your participants' control.

How will you end the session?

Always end virtual learning sessions with what happens next:

- How and when can people access the recording, if the session was recorded?
- If there are notes that will be sent out, how will they be accessed and disseminated?
- Review any tasks that participants agreed to complete after the session.

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Creating Content for Webinars and/or Presentations

To keep participants engaged in a virtual presentation, you will want to present visually appealing content that includes opportunities for interaction.

Consider the following guidelines when creating webinars or other presentations for virtual environments.

Start with the "why."

Why are we here? It is in response to an event, or to align with a project goal?
Use examples that connect to the lives of the participants as much as possible.

Bring an equity lens.

Incorporate information and perspectives into presentations related to serving culturally and linguistically diverse populations, achieving cultural and linguistic competence, and reducing disparities.

Offer practical tools that people can use immediately in their work.

Focus on practical, in-depth, useful "how-to" information, not the history or excessive detail about the particular program, system, or approach. Participants want strategies, knowledge, and skills that they can apply.

Avoid lengthy presentations.

Avoid having presenters rush through material or try to cover too much information in too short a time.

Define acronyms or other prevention terms that may not be widely understood.

"SPF" is commonly used for the Strategic Prevention Framework, but some audience members may associate the acronym with sun protection. Define all acronyms at first use, just as you would in a print publication.

Follow best practices for PowerPoint presentations.

Limit the number of slides in your presentation and the number of words on each slide. Avoid reading from your slides—using your slides as a teleprompter. (More about best use of PowerPoint below.)

Include interactive features.

Structure the presentation to incorporate a variety of tools to engage participants, such as polls, white boards, and breakout rooms.

What's the takeaway?

End the presentation with the "Top Ten Takeaways" or lessons learned.

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PowerPoint Best Practices

Consider your audience

Think of PowerPoint as a tool to *enhance* your virtual presentation and support your message, rather than tell the entire story. Studies have shown people cannot read and listen well at the same time. Keep your audience in mind when designing your slides.

Keep it simple

Limit the number of slides and the number of words on each slide. Shutterstock, the stock photography provider, recommends leaving lots of "white space" on a slide and following the *6 x 6 rule: no more than six bullets per slide and no more than six words per bullet.*

Don't read from your slides

When you're giving your presentation, avoid using your slide deck as a teleprompter. Reading word for word directly from your slides is bound to decrease audience engagement.

Many books, videos, and articles offer guidelines on how to design and present PowerPoint presentations, and we include links to a few in the appendix. But following the three simple tips below and making the audience perspective your top priority will help you create and deliver a successful PowerPoint presentation.

Essential PowerPoint Tips
- Keep the audience in mind
- Don't put too much text on a slide
- Don't read directly from your slides

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Considerations for Ongoing Meetings

For groups such as prevention coalitions that will have ongoing, routine virtual meetings, keep the following considerations in mind, along with those discussed above:

- Take the time to create **group norms** for your virtual meetings. Review group norms at the beginning of each meeting and ask if anyone has requests for changes or additions to the list.

- Allow time for **introductions** for groups where participants have not met previously in a virtual meeting.

- **Check in periodically with the "quieter" participants** who are not as inclined to jump in to discussions. It can be intimidating to enter into virtual discussions because two people often talk at once, or end up talking over someone else. Provide an opening for the more reserved participants.

- **Leave time at the end of the meeting** to review decisions made and action steps to take and by whom after the meeting.

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Section 4: Participant Considerations

Priming Participants

Just as we want to ensure that our presenters, hosts, and facilitators have an ideal experience, we want to set up our participants for an optimal experience. This is often called "priming." Here are some tips to ensure participants come to the virtual room ready, willing, and excited.

Send preparation emails that include a calendar reminder and details about the kind of technology and interaction you are expecting:

- Are participants expected to be on video?
- Will you be on video, but participants can be by audio?
- If on video, how can participants ensure that they first are muted and off video when they sign in?

Preparation emails can also include explicit modality expectations. If someone is expecting to interact but ends up in listener-only mode, this can be frustrating. The reverse is true: if someone is expecting to be in listener-only mode but ends up being invited to be on video and verbally engage, this can be frustrating.

Priming can also include pre-work assignments: one or two readings, podcasts, or other webinars for participants to check out before joining the session. Do not expect that all participants will complete the pre-session activities, but provide them for those participants who are eager to learn.

Essential Video Conferencing Skills for Participants

To engage fully in a video conference, participants need to feel comfortable using the technology — and the best way to become comfortable is through practice. If possible, schedule a session for interested participants to practice their skills. Specifically, have them:

▭ Turn on/off their video cameras

▭ Mute/unmute their audio

▭ Change their name on the screen

▭ Chat privately and to everyone

▭ Share their screens

▭ Change their display view (from speaker view or gallery)

▭ Change their background

▭ Annotate on a whiteboard or document that is shared

▭ Raise their (virtual) hand

Video Conferencing Etiquette

The following are some video conferencing tips to share with participants to help virtual events run more smoothly and effectively.

When participating in a video conferencing, DO . . .

- Make sure your webcam is at eye level. The easiest way to do this on a laptop is to place the laptop on top of a tissue box. Video conferences are more effective when people can see each other's facial expressions and body language.

- Sit in front of a wall or other non-lit surface so you won't be in a shadow.

- Speak clearly.

- Mute your phone/microphone when you are not speaking.

- Keep body movements to a minimum.

- Stop the video if you need to move locations or step away.

- Close out of any windows on your computer that might distract you or that you don't want to show accidentally.

- Be yourself and have fun!

When participating in a video conferencing, DON'T . . .

- Make distracting sounds (e.g., shuffle papers, type, eat, yell at family members)

- Carry on side conversations

- Cover the microphone

- Multitask

Privacy Considerations

- Do not post pictures of your virtual sessions online, especially if the picture shows faces, unless you receive written permission from each participant.

- If participants are concerned about their surroundings being visible during the virtual event, encourage them to use a virtual background (available on some platforms such as Zoom).

- Avoid sharing confidential information by encouraging all participants (including presenters) to close all applications, emails, and documents before logging on to the virtual session if screen sharing will be used.

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Youth Participant Considerations

If youth will be participating in your virtual event(s), check with your technology platform to ensure youth are allowed to use the platform.

For youth under 16, consider obtaining written permission from their parents/guardians so the youth can participate in virtual meetings/events.

Review your platform settings to create the safest setting possible for youth. Consider using the following settings:

- Require a meeting password
- Disable "Join before host"
- Mute participants upon entry
- Enable waiting room
- Disable private chat
- Prevent participants from saving chat
- Automatically save all in-meeting chats by host
- Allow host to put attendee on hold
- Allow host to remove an attendee
- Use breakout rooms only if a minimum of two adults are in each breakout room with youth
- Disable far end camera control
- Mask phone number in participant list

For virtual meetings/events that are open to the public: Use Facebook Live or Instagram Live so that unknown individuals cannot connect with the youth.

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Appendix

Need Help with the Basics?

The following are helpful videos to watch if you are new to virtual platforms. If the platform you are using is not included below, simply do an Internet search, and you will find many videos and instructions to teach you what you need to know.

- Zoom Video Tutorials
- Webex How to Videos
- GoToMeeting Get Started Videos
- Skype Help Getting Started
- How do I go Live on Facebook?
- How do I start a live video on Instagram?

Other links to great virtual learning tips:

- 8 Virtual Facilitation Lessons Learned
- 10 Ways to Use A Spectrogram Online
- 3 Ways to Use Polls in Meetings
- Managing Breakout Rooms in Zoom
- Creating Polls in Zoom
- Part I: Supporting Prevention Efforts Through Virtual Settings Two-Part Webinar Series: Understanding How to Leverage Telehealth Technology For Prevention Services
- Part II: Supporting Prevention Efforts Through Virtual Setting Two-Part Webinar Series: Legal and Ethical Considerations for Telehealth Prevention
- Virtual Meetings 101: Zoom Engagement Tools
- Virtual Meetings 101: Getting Things Started Right
- Podcast Episode 28: Transitioning to Virtual Services
- Podcast Episode 29: Adapting to the new normal

PowerPoint
How to Avoid Death by PowerPoint, D. Phillips, TEDxStockholm (20 minutes, 31 seconds)
Garr Reynolds Presentation Tips
Duarte's 5 Rules for Creating Great Presentations (5 minutes, 34 seconds)
Create Slides that People Will Remember: Nancy Duarte (2 minutes, 34 seconds)

Glossary
Digital Glossary, Common Sense Education

Accessibility
- Section 508.gov
- Microsoft Office/Make Your Content Accessible

Related Reading
- Pew Research Center/Broadband
- Pew Research Center/Social Media Fact Sheet

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Tools

Physical Set-Up Checklist

Technology Set-Up Checklist

Video Conference Features Checklist

Physical Set-Up Checklist

1. Lighting

▭ Two light sources for presenter's face

▭ No backlighting: window shades/blinds closed

2. Camera

▭ Frame/angle ideal for audience to see presenter

▭ Webcam at presenter's eye level

▭ Webcam shows presenters head and shoulders

3. Background

▭ Background is not distracting; room or closet doors closed

▭ Select background available from platform (e.g., Zoom)

4. Presenter's View

▭ No visual distractions for presenter

▭ Presenter has visual supports to stay engaged

5. Presenter's Attire

▭ Professional, comfortable attire

▭ No distracting prints (stripes, polka dots)

6. Memory Aids

▭ Notes/talking points are easily accessible

▭ Notes/talking points posted near webcam, so presenter maintains eye contact with webcam

7. Essentials

▭ Eyeglasses, tissues, class of water accessible

▭ Phone in silent mode

Technology Set-Up Checklist

1. Test computer speaker and microphone

— I can hear participants.

— Participants can hear me.

2. Select audio conference option

— Computer audio **OR**

— Dial-in phone audio

3. Ensure sound quality

— Headset mic selected **OR**

— Ear buds

4. Check internet connection

— Internet connection is stable.

— Wired connection selected vs. WIFI (recommended for laptop)

— Webcam/video turned off to improve internet connection

5. Turn off all apps and phone

— Quit all unnecessary applications on your computer

Video Conference Features Checklist

1. Sound

— I know how to mute/unmute the microphone.

— I know how to control the sound volume.

2. Display name on screen

— The correct name displays on the screen.

3. Chat feature

— Private (respond to one individual)

— Public (respond to all)

4. Polling feature

— Polls are set up for this presentation.

— Polls will be set up spontaneously during the presentation.

5. Presentation

— Audience will focus on presentation on screen OR

— Audience will focus on faces of other participants

6. Connect the audio

— Audio bridge connected (Adobe Connect)

7. Recording

— This presentation will be recorded

— Participants will receive information on when and where recording will be available.