**Online Meeting Facilitation Tips & Resources**

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***BEST PRACTICES***

*FOR BRINGING OUT PEOPLE’S BEST SELVES & REMOVING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION*

**BEST PRACTICES: MEETING PREP**

* **Know who is coming.** You’re going to be a better facilitator if you have an expectation of who will be in the (virtual) room. For big meetings, think about your audience; for smaller meetings, check in with folks & get RSVPs.
* **Plan your agenda.** You can carefully time everything out, or just have a prioritized list of bullet points to go through - figure out how much planning you need to feel good going into a meeting. Make sure your facilitation plan accommodates people joining by computer, app, and phone for Zoom calls.
* **Prep tools for accessibility.** Use RSVPs to proactively ask about accessibility needs. Have closed captioning & other tools on hand.
* **Offer resources in advance.** Think about sharing an agenda and/or goals to set everyone’s expectations. Set people up for tech success. Send any readings or materials that folks might want to digest ahead of time (and know that not everyone will read them).

**BEST PRACTICES: FACILITATION**

* **Make time for intros.** Especially for digital meetings when we don’t have the organic in-person time at the beginnings & ends of meetings to chat and appreciate each other, intros are never a waste of time. Building relationships with other folks is one of the joys of organizing, and nothing else will matter if people don’t feel good about the people they’re sharing space with. If you can, do spoken intros, either popcorn-style for small groups or by calling on folks for large groups. For a one-time training or if the group is too big to do out-loud intros, chat intros or reading through a list of names can be an alternative when needed.
* **Assign roles.** It’s not healthy for you or for the movement for you to do everything! Delegating helps create collective investment in the space.
	+ Examples of meeting roles: facilitator, note taker, chat monitor / doc support, breakout leaders
* **Be humble.**
	+ Ask for clarification - if you as the facilitator are unsure, others likely are too, and the conversation is going to go better if people understand one another.
	+ You don’t need to have all the answers. Be clear about what you do know, and help the group find answers together for what you don’t.
* **Be mindful of pace.**
	+ Working well together and accomplishing things together builds bonds and builds trust, so you dowant to keep the work moving forward.
	+ It is also important to take time to be human, hear what’s happening in peoples’ lives, say hi to peoples’ kids and cats when they come on screen, and accept when people may need to be multitasking during digital meetings. Meet people where they’re at.
	+ Take time to address tensions with curiosity when they come up, rather than letting them fester. It is especially easy in digital meetings to rush or blow past things, which sends a signal that you don’t value the input of your group. Instead, be deliberate, be curious, and assume that by bringing up a tension a person is offering the group wisdom.
* **Narrate slides and don’t overuse your tech.**
	+ Narrating your slides by describing pictures and not relying on folks being able to read every word makes your meetings more accessible to folks who are visually impaired, on the phone, or otherwise unable to see your slides.
	+ Interactive slides and other live digital tools can complement a meeting, but meetings are richest when the human interaction, not the tech, stays the focus.
* **Repeat information.** Help people process by reading things out twice and repeating key concepts, especially before asking for feedback.
* **Be mindful of power dynamics & voices.**
	+ Digital & phone meetings tend to exacerbate the dynamics of who takes space and who is quieted. We don’t have visual cues, body language, or people’s physical presence. It’s even easier for one person to hog the mic, it’s often harder for folks to jump in or casually signal they want to speak, and it’s easy for folks to check out.
	+ Consider using phrases like *“I want to hear from those who haven’t spoken yet,”* or facilitation tools like asking a go-around question everyone answers, more often and more intentionally than you might in in-person meetings.
	+ Create space by being okay with silence. Think about naming this by saying something like *“I’m going to be quiet for a minute in case there’s anything else folks want to say before we move on.”*
* **Make direct asks & delegate.** Trust that people are here because they’re looking to be a part of something, and invite them in by offering them ways to take ownership of the work. Especially on digital calls where it’s easy for folks to be passive, make direct asks.
* **Repeat accomplishments.** Celebrate what you’ve accomplished on your call together by naming it at the end of the meeting. Affirm people for being present. Especially when we lack the social time that bookends in-person meetings, close out with appreciation and celebration of the group.

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**DIGITAL TOOLS**

* [Trainings for Change interactive slide templates](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1KkXdhExHl9mURn_-nA6LI784DOqDAixD83Dlpl8uy8c/edit?pli=1#slide=id.ga4450cced7_0_1063)
* [Mentimeter live interactive questions tool](https://www.mentimeter.com/)
* [Free closed captioning tool Ava](https://www.ava.me/)
* [PSN Resource Bank](https://www.powershift.org/resources)