Tips for Successful Online Meetings

Be on Time: It's always a good idea to call/sign onto the meeting 5–10 minutes early. That gives you time to make sure you have the correct meeting link and your audio and video are working well.

Join from a Quiet Place: If you have background noise around you, like children talking or dogs barking, that can make it hard for other people in the meeting to hear you clearly. Try to join from a quiet location. Use headphones whenever possible to ensure the best sound quality.

Present Your Best Self on Camera: Join the meeting from somewhere with good lighting. Make sure there isn't a window behind you since that can make your face disappear on the video. Check that what is in the room behind you isn't too distracting. For example, if there is a TV on behind you, turn it off. Wear clothes that are right for the meeting. If it is a meeting for work, wear clothes you might wear to the workplace.

Stay Focused: Avoid reading emails, eating, scrolling through news articles, etc. while in a virtual meeting.

Some people have found taking notes during meetings helps them stay focused. You can type notes on your computer. Just make sure you are "muted" so other people won't hear you typing!

Other people have found playing with a Fidget Spinner or squeezing a stress ball also helps them stay focused on the meeting.

Some platforms like Zoom offer "Gallery View." This is a way to see everyone on the screen at once so the camera is not always shifting from one speaker to another. This may make it easier for you to concentrate and feel relaxed in the meeting. Try it and see if it helps!

Allow Extra Time for Responses: When you ask a question or request information, give people a few extra seconds to answer you. Sometimes people's internet connection is unstable or there's another issue that makes it hard for them to respond fast.

Allow Others to Participate: Be mindful of those who have not had a chance to speak. Allow time for everyone to have a turn.

Be Polite: Avoid side conversations and avoid interrupting the person speaking. Mute yourself when you are not speaking.

Let Others Know if You Need to Leave Early: Tell people about this at the start of the meeting. That way, when you leave, they'll know you didn't lose your connection to the meeting. If you aren't able to tell people at the start, use the chat feature right before you go to send a message to everyone (or just the host). You can type something like, "I have another appointment, so I'm heading off now. Talk to you all soon!"

Take a Break Afterwards: This allows you to rest your eyes, reflect on what you heard, and get into a good headspace for your next activity.

This document was created by the Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination Work Group of the Massachusetts Partnership for Transition to Employment Project (MPTE).

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