

## Online Meetings

### Part One: Preparation & Closing

As community leaders, juggling many commitments, online meetings can be easier to arrange & sometimes even increase participation. While it can't replace the depth of connectivity built by in-person meetings, online meetings are sometimes the only way we can connect with others.

Here are some tips & good practices to help you host, prepare, & close online meetings.

#### 1 Before The Meeting: Facilitator's Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan your meeting & select what tools you are going to use in advance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Double-check your timing & agenda
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prepare a well-thought-out Land Acknowledgement (see <a href="http://www.GrassrootsDigitalHub.ca">www.GrassrootsDigitalHub.ca</a> )
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create visuals (pictures, slides, charts, etc.) to help participants understand information easily
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meet & assign roles (with possible co-facilitators)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Send meeting reminders

#### Visuals



- Avoid presenting text & reading only directly from the screen
- Use visuals to support understanding, but don't overuse them
- Allow space for everyone to be on camera & see one another

#### Co-Facilitators



- It's always helpful to have a support Facilitator (co-host(s)) to help you. They can:
- Monitor the chat & waiting room
  - Share their screen to present materials for the presenter
  - Take attendance & minutes & turn on recording
  - Set up tools & activities (e.g., polls, breakout rooms)
  - Assist participants with technical difficulties

#### Meeting Reminders



- Include meeting links in reminders sent one week, one day, and the morning before the meeting so participants can join easily
- Post the link & a reminder in a group chat, like WhatsApp, an hour before the meeting to help participants join from their phones

## 2 Before The Meeting: Test Your Tech & Tools

<input type="checkbox"/>	Review your <b>settings</b> (screen share, waiting room)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test your technology & equipment in advance: Is the internet stable? Is the microphone working? Is that camera working?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Know & test how to use your meeting <b>tools</b> (polls, breakout rooms, etc.) beforehand

### Settings



The type of meeting you plan (webinar presentation, interactive meeting, consultation, etc.) & the number of participants will help you choose whether to restrict or open permissions like these:

- Allow Share Screen? – It allows all participants the ability to share screens & saves time during the actual meeting.
- Enable Waiting Room? – It allows time for hosts/co-hosts to prepare prior to a meeting. But it also:
  - Provides a measure of safety from Zoom bombings
  - Provides a place to move someone to have a private conversation

### Tools



The Online Tools section of [grassrootsdigitalhub.ca](https://grassrootsdigitalhub.ca) offers instructions and suggestions on using online tools in five languages.

## 3 Preparing Your Participants Checklist

As an online facilitator, make sure your participants are prepared. Before the meeting and as the meeting starts, do what you can to support members' transition into the meeting.

<input type="checkbox"/>	In the meeting invite, suggest that participants <b>test their equipment &amp; ability to connect</b> before the meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider starting your meeting with a tool/tech check-in to make sure everyone is well-connected & ready to work
<input type="checkbox"/>	Suggest that your participants use headphones, sit in a quiet place with no distractions, & sit with their back against a wall or a blurry background to protect privacy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask your participants to use a screen name to identify who they are or identify themselves via chat as they enter a room, if they cannot rename themselves

## Test Equipment & Connection



If participants are stressed out about getting online, their bad connection, or not knowing how to do something on Zoom, etc., they will not be fully present at the meeting. You can help members by sharing the “how-to” tips in the Online Tools section of [www.grassrootsdigitalhub.ca](http://www.grassrootsdigitalhub.ca)

## 4 After the Meeting: Closing & Check-In Checklist

If there is time, it is always a good idea to do a check-in at the end of the meeting to see how people are doing and how the meeting went.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Try the <b>STOP, START, CONTINUE</b> activity that can be presented in many different formats                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Send a follow-up email thanking participants & reminding them when your next meeting is                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Offer to create a WhatsApp Group or ask a participant to volunteer. Make sure everyone agrees to provide their numbers. |

## STOP, START, CONTINUE Activity



The activity asks participants what you, as the facilitator, should stop, start, or continue during meetings. Use a PDF document (whiteboard) for people to write on, a Mentimeter poll or Padlet for them to offer their opinions.

## 5 Remember



- Building trust and community remains central. It's vital to ensure everyone is welcome, they have a seat at the table, and their ideas count.
- Think creatively, be supportive, and make sure to have fun!

## 6 Sources

Rewa, J. & Hunter, D. (2-24) Leading groups online: Your essential guide to leading online courses, meetings, trainings and events. Daniel Hunter Pub

Various (2026). [www.grassrootsdigitalhub.ca](http://www.grassrootsdigitalhub.ca)

Sunnybrook Hospital. Box breathing relaxation technique: How to calm feelings of stress or anxiety.

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