

BCAA Child Passenger Safety

Guide to Virtual Presentations

While many presentation skills and best practices apply to both in-person and virtual presentations, there are some key differences and adjustments to be aware of when using the virtual mode. The two main differences involve: Using the technology and engaging participants.

1.0 Use the technology

Learn the platform

One of the biggest differences between in-person presentation and virtual is learning to use a virtual platform like Teams or Zoom. You might be familiar with using these platforms as a participant, but If you have not used one as a presenter, you will need to take the time to become comfortable with it. Though the different platforms have similar functions, there are often differences in how to access and use them. In preparation for a virtual presentation make sure you become familiar with the main functions. Here are some links to the user guides and support for the most used platforms:

- Zoom: [Zoom](#)
- Teams: [Microsoft Teams](#)
- Skype: [Skype](#)
- GoToMeeting: [GoToMeeting](#)
- Google Meet: [Google Meet](#)

Note: Links to the user guides for Zoom, Teams and Skype can be found in the Educator Resources on the BCAA CPS Educator Community under CPS Virtual Sessions

Video/audio controls

Familiarize yourself with the video and audio controls for the virtual platform you will be using.

It is best to use a headset or clip on microphone for your audio. This decreases the background noise and is usually better for the participants to hear you.

Mute one or all the participants

If there are more than one or two participants in different locations, feedback can occur if all the participants have their audio turned on. This is particularly a problem if more than one device is being used in the same location. Also, if participants are in their homes, there can be distracting noises in the background.

Mute yourself when you are not talking.

Tip: Do not set up the session with all participants muted. As participants arrive to the session, welcome them, and ask them to mute their audio or let them know you will be muting them.

Some platforms have waiting rooms where participants wait until you open the meeting. If you want to use this feature, remember that you will be opening the platform to many people at one time. You might want to direct people to mute before you let them in or just be aware to direct them to mute when you open the session.

Also, you will have to watch the waiting room for late comers so they can be let in to join the session.

Turn screen sharing on and off	<p>A virtual session often has the presenter moving between showing themselves on the screen and presentation slides or videos. Find the share screen function and practice turning it off and on.</p> <p>Tip: Watch yourself on the screen as you switch between screen sharing being on and off. Try to make the transition as smooth as possible.</p> <p>When you are sharing your screen, your video will be seen by the participants as a small video in the corner of the shared screen. If you prefer not to switch the share screen on and off, you can either leave it as participants can see you or you can change the size of this video so that when you are asking questions or not referring to a slide you can increase it so participants can see you better. Practice this to see what method works best for you.</p>
Chat	<p>The chat function can be especially useful for participants to ask/answer questions or make comments. On some virtual platforms the chat function opens automatically, on others you will have to turn it on after you open the session.</p> <p>An option on most platforms is for participants to have the chat private or seen by everyone. Though there might be times you want the chat private, it would be recommended to have it set so everyone can see it. You might have to direct participants to turn their chat on so everyone can see it.</p> <p>Managing the chat can be awkward at first. Questions/comments come up as your talking and that can be distracting. You will need to determine the best way for you to handle the chat room. You can ignore chat comments as you are talking and address them periodically or read them as they come up if there aren't many or it isn't too distracting for you. You can also use the chat to ask/answer questions.</p> <p>Tip: When practicing, have someone help by entering comments in the chat so you can determine the best way for you to use chats effectively.</p>
Raising hands	<p>Another function that most platforms have is a way for the participant to 'raise their hand'. This is one way to allow participants a way to ask a question or make a comment.</p>
Practice and test	<p>Take the time to practice using the technology until you are comfortable and can transition between functions smoothly, manage the chat and control the video and audio. It takes some multitasking skills to operate the technology and present the content!</p> <p>Tip: Arrive early to the session and test using all the controls.</p>

Setting yourself up for technology	
In a virtual session, what the participants see is as important, if not more important than an in-person session. Setting yourself up in a quiet location with as few distractions as possible is especially important in a virtual session.	
Lighting	<p>Ensure that there is adequate lighting so participants can see you. Don't sit in front of a window or where a light source comes from behind you. This makes it difficult for participants to see your face.</p>

Background	Set yourself up with a background that is not distracting. Some virtual platforms have backgrounds you can choose for free, others require payment. Otherwise just make sure whatever is behind you is not distracting.
Location	Set yourself up in a room or space where you won't be interrupted and there is no background noise. If you have other people in your location, let them know you are in a virtual session and to not interrupt you.
Internet	Of course, an internet connection is needed for virtual sessions. If you can connect directly to the internet via an ethernet cable, this will decrease the connection problems that sometimes happen with Wi-Fi. If you have to use Wi-Fi, then make sure other users in your location are not using programs that stream video (e.g. watching Netflix, Disney+, playing video games).
Camera angle	<p>Where the camera lens is positioned makes a difference to what the participants see. The best position is if it is at eye level. In addition, you want to be close enough to the screen so your face takes up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the screen.</p> <p>Tip: When on screen you look at the camera, not at your screen. This makes the participant know you are talking to them.</p>

2.0 Engage participants

Introduce themselves	<p>Having participants introduce themselves is a good way for them to know who else is present and feel part of the group. However, there might be some participants or groups who want to remain anonymous or might want to keep their location private. If there is a host organization, you can ask if having participants introduce themselves is going to be a problem or the best way to manage that.</p> <p>There are a few ways you can have participants introduce themselves.</p> <p>You can welcome participants as they arrive. You will see them sign on. If appropriate, you can have participants introduce themselves with their first name and their location as they arrive.</p> <p>You can ask that they enter their first name and where they are from in the chat so others can see.</p> <p>Once everyone is signed on, you can have everyone introduce themselves one at a time. This works best in a small group - it takes too long in a larger group.</p> <p>You can let everyone know who is there or what organizations are represented.</p>
Ask questions	<p>One way to engage participants is to ask questions. However, in the virtual mode, having everyone shout out answers does not work well. There are a couple of options:</p> <p>You can ask a question and have participants respond in the chat which keeps them paying attention and allows them to be involved.</p> <p>You can ask a question and have participants 'raise their hand' and then call on them to answer (unmute them if you have them muted)</p> <p>Some virtual platforms have options for 'polling' the participants with yes/no or agree/disagree</p>

	options. You could poll the participants to see how many have other children or who has infants vs toddlers.
Manage question asking	<p>Managing participants' questions can be difficult in any presentation mode. Using the chat helps mitigate these issues in the virtual mode, but you also might have times when the participant talks. And then you could experience those who like to hijack the presentation, talk for a long time or want to oppose your opinion. As the presenter you need to take control.</p> <p>When a participant:</p> <p>Goes off topic - politely, and quickly bring them back. Use lines like 'Thank you XX or that's interesting - I'd like to get back on topic, do you have a question related to this topic?</p> <p>Talks too long - wait for them to take a breath and apologize for interrupting and let them know you need to move onto other questions - or if they haven't asked a question, ask if there is a question.</p> <p>Pushes their differing opinion - let them know that what they are saying is interesting and thank them for their opinion - or offer to discuss it at another time. Politely move on!</p>
More slides and videos	<p>You should have more slides in your presentation than you would in-person - and you should move through them quicker. Having presenters look at one slide for an extended period of time will risk losing interest.</p> <p>Also, short videos are engaging in the virtual mode - long ones risk losing the participant's attention.</p>
Short stories and examples	Real life stories and examples are great for learning - however, in the virtual mode those stories should be short. It's harder to keep participant's attention or for you to tell if you have their attention. Keep it short and simple and on topic.