

Best Practices When Participating in Virtual Groups

We are so glad you are participating in one of our virtual groups!
Here are some best practices to help you make the most of your group experience:

- **Arrive 5-10 minutes early.** An early arrival time ensures that the group is able to start on time, and gives you time to trouble shoot if technical issues arise.
- **Be stationary and do not drive during the group therapy meeting.** If you will be joining the meeting from your car, you will need to pull off the road and park to participate, or re-join when you are in a stationary position.
- **Ensure that you have access to Wi-Fi with a good bandwidth.** Videoconferencing can take up a lot bandwidth. Poor bandwidth could impact the connection, and subsequently impact the group process.
- **Select a place where you will have privacy** from other people who may be in the environment. This upholds the commitments of confidentiality to your group members. This is especially important for those who connect to the group without video. *Please ensure that no one else is in the room while the group is meeting.*
- **Choose a place where you will be safe.** Your disclosures can be overheard if someone else is in an adjacent room or nearby. Thus, it is important that you are in a space where you will be safe if your disclosures are overheard. Sitting in a car may be a good option.
- **Use (preferably noise-cancelling) headphones.** Not only does this reduce distracting noises from your immediate environment but it also protects the confidentiality of the other group members.
- **Use a device with large screen, if possible.** This will allow you to use Gallery view and see all group members at once.
- **Place phones on silent and put them away** if participating via another device.
- **Deactivate sound notifications** if participating via smart phone.
- **Give verbal and nonverbal commitments to confidentiality.** Group members will be asked to actively work towards maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of others.
- **Provide your current location at the start of the meeting.** If you are disconnected for any reason and there are any safety concerns, the facilitators will be able to send help to your location.
- **Active microphone and camera, if possible.** You can participate more fully in group if other members can see and hear you.
- **First Name Only.** For your confidentiality, please change your Zoom name to include only your first name. You can also include pronouns.
- **Use Gallery View** when in zoom so that you can see the face of all of the participants (i.e. your group facilitators and group members).
- **Utilize Mute Etiquette.** If there are distracting background noises, please mute your microphone until you are ready to speak.