Hosting a Virtual Meeting Using Trauma Informed Principles©

Trauma informed oregon
Promoting Prevention.
Committed to Wellness.

Purpose. By using SAMHSA's 6 principles of trauma informed care (TIC), we offer strategies for hosting virtual meetings that promote safety, power, and value. Hosting virtual meetings and trainings with these principles in mind can foster a space where participants are present & accessible, and their exposure to activation and re-traumatization is mitigated.

Examples of activation points during virtual meetings		
Compromised **SAFETY**	Lack of **POWER**	No sense of **VALUE**
• Staring at an image of oneself • Blurred boundaries between home & office • Unclear social cues and social norms • Screen fatigue • Perceived or actual lack of confidentiality	• Limited opportunity to share one's voice, given the one-dimensional platform • Lack of clarity around what choice is available in relation to ways of participating • Consent is often overlooked	• Accessibility considerations are often missing • Lack of shared presence or emotional attunement, thus limited co-regulation opportunity • Often transactional, thus missing the whole person • Silence is misinterpreted as lack of participation

1) Emotional & Physical Safety.
- Set up security measures, such as a secure link, password, and/or wait room, in order to ensure that only those invited to the meeting are in attendance.
- If the meeting will be recorded, allow for advanced notice and consent.
- If you set (developmentally appropriate) expectations and norms, explain why (e.g., "I need you to have your eyes on the screen and not be dancing so you do not distract the presenter.").
- Remind people that the meeting may not be entirely confidential, especially if there are others in the home who are able to listen in on the meeting (requesting that people use headphones may somewhat mitigate this issue).
- Invite participants to setup their work area in a way that supports their full participation and emotional regulation, including having a fidget toy, water, and limited distraction.

2) Cultural, historical, and gender consideration.
- Invite (don't require) people to customize their profile name and add pronouns.
- Offer breakout rooms or additional time for peer to peer/affinity group connection, including small group connection based on certain identities.
- Provide captioning or a transcript of the meeting for accessibility.

3) Trustworthiness and transparency.

- Normalize the nuances of virtual learning/gathering, including screen fatigue.
- Inform participants of the meeting agenda prior to the start time, and stick to the agenda (including timeframes).
- Identify roles and their functions (e.g., will the facilitator mute/unmute? Will the facilitator call on participants?).
- If you encourage private chats between people, note if they are truly private or visible to the host of the meeting.

4) Peer support and mutual self-help.

- Use breakout rooms to encourage connection and shared power.
- As the host, log in a few minutes early to assist with technical issues.
- Use a brief check in activity to inquire about well-being or any needs during the meeting.
- When you offer breaks (ideally every 60 minutes), offer suggestions of ways for people to use the break (e.g., move your body, hydrate, draw), reminding them about the goal of restoration rather than multitasking.
- As the host, limit distractions, including turning off the bell when individuals join the call.

5) Collaboration and mutuality.

- Use the chat function to enhance connections but have someone manage this in sync with the facilitator.
- Identify group norms around silence (e.g., silence is OK, and as the facilitator you may call individuals into the conversation).
- Allow a place for feedback about the meeting (e.g., poll, emails, etc.).
- Use a Google Doc or other shared document platform to cocreate and share power.

6) Empowerment, voice and choice.

- Constantly assess whether the online format is best/necessary—many things could be achieved via a phone call or a shared Google Doc.
- Utilize polling, chat boxes, or breakout rooms in order to encourage voice.
- Establish meeting norms around how other voices are heard (e.g., raised hand, mute when not speaking, popcorn style, "I will count to 10 and then move on," etc.).
- Allow for choice regarding camera being on or off.