

How to run an online activity group

1. Why run an online activity group?



- To alleviate social isolation if meeting in person is difficult or members live far apart.
- To bring members together who have the same interests.
- Online activity groups are easy to access using different types of technology, eg smartphone, tablet or laptop.
- Various online platforms are available to use, eg Zoom or Teams.

2. Preparing for an online group



Here are some factors to consider before the first online meeting takes place.

- Does everyone know how to access the meeting?
- Send out a 'How to ...' guide which explains how to download apps onto different technological devices.
- Check in with each member before the meeting to see if anyone requires help, eg with joining the meeting.

3. Choosing a theme for the online group



The process for choosing a theme is the same for in-person meetings.

- What are the group's likes and dislikes?
- Was everyone involved in choosing the theme?
- Is everyone happy, and does everyone feel listened to?
- Do all members share a special interest or identity?
- Has a compromise been considered?

4. Tell the group members when the online event is



Let the members know the following information by text, email or on social media:

- the **date** of the event
- the **time** of the event
- the **login details** or **password**, if required.

5. At the beginning of your online group

RULES



First introduce yourself as the group facilitator, and then go over the:

- housekeeping rules, eg keep your microphone on mute when someone else is talking, use the chat box function to comment, use the raised hand icon to speak
- the group rules, eg no hate speech, be respectful of each other.

Make sure everyone knows that they have the option to turn their camera off or contribute non-verbally using the chat function.

6. During the online session



The group facilitator will ask if the members feel comfortable introducing themselves. Then:

- introduce the group theme or begin the activity
- give a 15 minute time check before the end of the session
- arrange the **date** and **time** of the next meeting.