

Virtual Groups

BEREAVEMENT GROUP NORMS

Group Cohesiveness

- Recommend that everyone be on camera if at all possible.
- Have each person on the call identify themselves by going around for introductions (the most efficient way to do this is to have the facilitator call the names of participants asking them to do an introduction. This way no one is missed).
- Use each other's names when speaking (Facilitators and Participants).
- Encourage group members to say their name when they speak (especially if they are on the phone).
- Acknowledge to participants that this is new to everyone and that we are all learning together.
- Virtual groups have the added challenge of demonstrating that you are actively listening to what participants are saying. Stay present, actively listen, and verbally acknowledge what individuals are saying and contributing to the conversation.
- Although on video, try to maintain eye contact with others. Be aware of where your camera is located so that you can look into it.
- Avoid interrupting others and do not allow others to interrupt you.
- Pay attention to the non-verbal reactions of participants while others are sharing. It can be helpful to say, "I noticed when John was sharing that many of you were nodding your heads," or statements like that to confirm you are present.
- Acknowledge how everyone's grief has been impacted by what is going on in the world with the pandemic.
- Make connections and summarize just as you would in an in-person group.
- Engage everyone on the call – invite each person to share. Joining the conversation can be even more challenging on a video call than in person.

Camera / Video Etiquette

- Test how your sound is being heard by others. Make sure you have a clear connection.
- Find a comfortable position and stay there. Sudden movements like rocking or swiveling in your chair are distracting.
- Pay attention to your camera position, don't be too close to the camera, and adjust your lighting so that you can be seen clearly.
- Eating, chewing gum, and snacking are also a distraction. These activities also impact your ability to be present and can impact group cohesiveness.
- Silence all devices. These include your cell phone, computer notifications, email sounds, and alarms.
- Turn off your camera if you need to relocate yourself. Walking around while on video can distract others.
- Be aware of surroundings that show up on the video screen.

- Dress appropriately.
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- Ensure that cell phones and tablets are held steady.

Conversation Guidelines / Ground Rules

- Timeliness. Begin and end the meeting on time.
- Confidentiality. Stress the importance of confidentiality and privacy. Encourage participants to use earphones and turn their screens away from others who might be in the room if they cannot find a private place. Family members who are not a part of the Zoom meeting should not be allowed on screen or to participate in the group.
- Share Airtime. Make sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance to speak.
- Respect and Courtesy. Encourage group members to be respectful and courteous to others by 1) not interrupting; 2) being present and paying attention; 3) being tolerant of differences.
- “I Pass” Rule. Participants should be able to NOT speak if they do not want to.