

# Guidelines for Participants

## Before the session starts

- Clear your schedule for the entire webinar time frame.
- Let your coworkers know you are not to be disturbed. If possible, close your door and/or let your co-workers/family know that you will be unavailable.
- Turn off your cell phone. and remove any other potential distractions.
- Come prepared. Read any related material before the session starts.
- If calling into the session via phone, do not put your phone on hold if doing so plays music or a message.
- In most cases, headsets are best. If you are using your laptop's built-in microphone, realize that any typing you do will be heard by everyone. It will also pick up your speakers and everyone but you will hear an echo of everything coming from your speakers. Some software does a much better job of noise cancellation than others.
- If you will have the opportunity to interact, a microphone is much better than typing in the chat window. If you don't have a microphone, everyone has to wait for you to type.
- If it is a video conference, have a camera. If you are the only one without a camera, your input will have less impact and influence. It's much easier to talk to a face than a blank screen.
- Connect early enough to configure your microphone and speakers. If this is the first time using the software, connect at least 20 minutes before the start of the conference. There may be software required for you to install. If it only takes you a few minutes to connect and get setup, feel free to do something else until the meeting starts. Just leave the conference window open.
- If someone else is in the conference early – ask them if your sound level is okay and to say something so you can verify your speaker's volume level.

## During the session

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking so your breath, background noise, etc. is not being picked up.
- Use the chat feature to ask questions or make comments without interrupting the speaker.
- Keep chats on topic. Remember that everyone can see the public chats.
- Give feedback. If you don't have a camera on you, all the speaker knows is that you are signed in. They are assuming you are keeping up with them and understanding everything that is said. They can't see you yawning, falling asleep or walking away from your computer or your body language. You have to let them know if they are going too fast or have lost you.
- If you have to leave early, type something in the chat window (private chat if possible) to let the speaker know why you left. Otherwise, they won't know if you were mad, disinterested, confused or had an emergency.
- Stay engaged! Resist the temptation to check your email, surf the net, balance your checkbook, etc.

# Guidelines for Moderators, Presenters, and Discussion Leaders

## Before the session starts

- Know how to use the web conferencing software you will be using and how to configure your microphone, speakers, and how to use any features you will be using.
- Practice using the features of the software.
- Connect early to configure your mic and speakers and make sure everything is loaded properly.
- Connect early to help others with technical difficulties. If you don't feel confident enough to answer basic technology questions invite someone to help you.
- Change your screen resolution if you will be sharing your whole screen or resize the window to the smallest size that will show what you want to show if sharing just a window.
- Have the windows you will be sharing open and sized correctly.
- Turn off IM, auto email notifications, and any other possible interruptions – especially if you will be sharing your screen
- Have a helper who can alert you to problems such as audio or desktop resolution issues or chat questions/comments you may have missed.
- Welcome people as they join the session.

## At the start of the session

- Start and end on time (people usually don't mind if you end early).
- Make sure the attendees can see your screen or slide before you start.
- Let everyone know if you are recording the session.
- Set the ground rules for the session. Explain how you want the participants to participate. Will you be taking questions via chat as they come in or at the end?
- Be aware that the participants may not have a screen with the same resolution as yours and they probably have only one monitor.

## During the session

- Go slow. Slower than normal, especially when showing content on your screen. Often there are latency issues that cause your audience to be a few seconds behind you.
- Keep an eye on the chat discussion.

## At the end of the session

- **Thank the participants for coming.**
- Tell where the recording will be found if there is one.

RESOURCE: This [post](#) was published on the [Military Families Learning Network blog](#) on March 7, 2013.