

## ...SHIFT ONLINE

### F2F GOES VIRTUAL

With the past COVID-19 shutdown and future expected pandemic closures, EE has had to shift online. Staff have had considerable difficulties making a move from face-to-face/F2F to virtual delivery and debriefing of activities. The loss of body language cues and vocal intonations have made facilitating EE somewhat difficult. Here are some helpful techniques to ease transition.

### DIFFERENT DESIGN

Instead of meeting indoors or out in the woods, clients are engaging through **online meetings** using **web conferencing apps** (Zoom, WebEx, Meet, Connect, GoToMeeting, or LiveMeeting).

These **synchronous** applications communicate via a **variety of channels**: video, audio, chat, screen sharing, interactive whiteboard, web co-browsing, breakouts, polls, or feedback buttons. Get very familiar with and practice often using each different channel to your advantage.

Take time to maximize your **visual appearance** and **verbal projection** with level hi-def cameras, quality microphones/speakers, suitable lighting, and high-speed (fiber or cable) connectivity.

Physical activities no longer engage clients, so substitute **digital activities** (see the resource list for where to find some of these virtual events).

### DIFFERENT DELIVERY

**Psychological safety**: clients, especially those new to virtual tech, are unlikely to feel safe in this new setting. You will need to log in early, greet each client by name, discuss ground rules or mechanical operations, and engage them in conversation before the meeting begins. Give them lots of choices and make participation fun.

**Facilitation**: as in most programs, introduce the digital activities, observe clients participating in teams, and ask debriefing questions afterward. Make **observations** of body language and vocal intonation via **audio** and **video**. Ask **questions** via **chat** or **screen sharing** of prepared slides. In addition, be prepared to explain that this will be a very active engagement session and not a pre-recorded passive lecture (as they might expect).

**Never facilitate alone**: much like working with a belayer in the outdoors, work with a **technical producer** who can attend to problems arising, mechanical needs, and client help requests. This allows you to completely center on client facilitation and meeting their change objectives.

### DIFFERENT DEBRIEFING

While the same questions will likely be asked, these will need to come in a different manner.

For example, **chat** allows everyone to respond at the same time, permits them to contribute over one another, and records what was said for all to read and comment on. If properly used, it causes discussions to become **inclusive**.

**Interactive whiteboard** sanctions simultaneous editing and co-creation of shared learning or commitments to change. It can be especially useful when **clients are not strong in language**.

When **shy clients** may be hesitant about sharing answers to questions, **breakout rooms** can be employed to create partners or triads to agree and present the group's collective response.

**End on a high note**: finish the meeting with an affirming event like a **poll** of the lessons learned or **feedback** about summary pledges to change.

With 60 years of combined experience working virtually, we are confident that the time tested, tried and true, techniques described here and in the readings will make a big practical difference.

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# FURTHER RESOURCES

## READING

Chen, J. (2012). *50 Digital Team-building Games*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Chen, J. (2021). *Engaging Virtual Meetings*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Priest, S. (2000). *virtualteamworks.com's 100 of the best Virtual Team-building Events*. Seattle WA: Tarrak Technologies.

Priest, S. (2005). *virtualteamworks.com's Guide to Electronic Facilitation*. Seattle WA: Tarrak Technologies.

## VIEWING

Virtual Team Initiative – A to Z - [How to Build Virtual Team Rhythm – A to Z – Engaging Virtual Meetings](#)

Google Aristotle: Psychological Safety - [re:Work](#)

Engaging Virtual Speaker Checklist - <https://engagingvirtualmeetings.com/?p=5791>

Get Productive with Virtual Tools - <https://engagingvirtualmeetings.com/?p=5723>

Never Zoom Alone - <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/361656>

Prevent attendees from talking over each other - [Air Traffic Control – Engaging Virtual Meetings](#)

Simultaneous Document Editing - <https://engagingvirtualmeetings.com/?p=5759>

End on a high note - [End on a high note – Get your attendees to return – Engaging Virtual Meetings](#)