



PFLAG Virtual Support Group Meetings: Zoom Security and Online Safety Recommendations

As your chapter launches virtual support group meetings and events, you must be focused on establishing online safety and meeting security. This is a rapidly evolving conversation and we strongly recommend that all chapters who are using PFLAG Connects regularly check pflag.org/pflag-connects/educational-materials for updates and breaking news.

PFLAG National also urges all chapters who are using PFLAG Connects to take the following steps to set up more secure systems from the start:

1. Use a sign-up form or other vetting process

Publicize your virtual meetings but do it in a smart way. Get started by using the tools available in the [PFLAG Connects Promotional Toolkit](https://pflag.org/pflag-connects/promotional-toolkit), beginning with using a sign-up form or other vetting process for participants. A sample is available at pflag.org/pflag-connects/educational-materials).

PFLAG Chapters should not post log-in details for virtual support group meetings and events publicly. This includes posting the log-in details for your Zoom meetings on your chapter website, social media including Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, or in emails that are sent to your entire membership or mailing list.

2. Take precautions when scheduling your meeting

There are a few more simple steps you can take during the meeting scheduling process that will help ensure a safer online experience, including:

- Use an auto-generated meeting ID (not your personal meeting ID)
- Select “mute participants upon entry”
- Set a meeting password and share the meeting password only with participants who have signed-up
- Enable the waiting room feature to let participants in one-by-one based on sign-ups

4. **Take precautions during the meeting**

All chapters who are hosting virtual meetings online should use the following steps when you're hosting meetings, too:

- Log in 5-10 minutes before your scheduled start time so that you can turn off the screen-sharing option for participants. The easiest way to do this is to select the security icon at the bottom of the screen and uncheck "Share Screen"
- Begin your meeting by reading a confidentiality statement that specifically mentions recording/screenshotting/sharing on social media. A sample is available at pflag.org/pflag-connects/educational-materials.
- Have ground rules/group agreements, that participants must agree to, that specifically mention recording/screenshotting/sharing on social media. We offer a sample ground rules statement at pflag.org/pflag-connects/educational-materials.

5. **Expect the best, prepare for the worst**

It is possible that even if your chapter takes all of the necessary precautions, that your support group meeting will be accessed by hackers, trolls, or doxxers. In those cases, chapters should develop (in advance!) a plan so the facilitator and live-chat facilitator know what to do in a worst-case scenario.

The facilitator and live-chat facilitator should do their best to remain calm and address the issue without bringing attention to the disruption. This may include muting, removing, and/or blocking the individual(s). There is more information on how to do this in the Zoom tutorial available here: [Host and co-host controls in a meeting](#).

If absolutely necessary they should also be prepared and empowered to end your meeting early.

At the conclusion of the meeting, be sure to return to your attendee registration list and mark any participants whose behavior violated your group agreements. Be sure to share this information with other meeting facilitators so they can be aware of potentially problematic/disruptive individuals.