PFLAG Virtual Support Group Meetings:
Facilitating a Virtual Meeting

Virtual Meeting Facilitator Best Practices:

• Be patient and kind. This kind of virtual meeting space is new for everybody.

• Assign a live-chat facilitator for your meeting who can monitor and moderate the chat throughout the session. We have best practices for live-chat facilitators available at pflag.org/pflag-connects/facilitate-meeting.

• Remember the role of facilitators. They are great listeners and communicators and set the tone for the meeting. They are neither a content expert nor a lecturer.

• At the start of the meeting, the facilitator should:
  
  o Give some basic instructions including where the chat is and how participants can mute their line.
  
  o Remind the group of the purpose or agenda of the meeting.
  
  o Read ground rules and/or group agreements. Ask the live chat facilitator to share the ground rules in the chat.
  
  o Specifically request that people do not take screenshots or livestream the meeting.
  
  o Read a confidentiality statement and remind people that while the format of the meeting is different, confidentiality remains an important tenet of PFLAG gatherings.
  
  o Preemptively address concerns about trolling/doxing/Zoom Bombing and share that there’s a plan in place to remove folks if necessary.

• Prepare a short icebreaker, group activities, and discussion prompts to keep the conversation moving. This is especially important for groups that don’t already know each other.
• Check in with folks on how they’re coping but do not dwell on COVID-19 or allow it to dominate your meeting.

• Take threats of self-harm and/or violence seriously. Put a plan in place for when emergency assistance may be necessary. We have created a document that has suggestions on what to do if someone is in crisis available at pflag.org/pflag-connects/facilitate-meeting.