

# Self-Care & Safety for Online Events



## About this Resource

We're delighted you are joining us for one of the upcoming virtual training sessions!

We want to make sure you feel as supported and safe during these online events as you would in an in-person event.

We've included suggestions for you to think about as you prepare for the day, so you can plan to be comfortable and safe as possible. Below is an overview of virtual resources that will be available to you during the session.

Take some time to read through this resource or click on a specific element below to go directly there.

### [Self-Care Online](#)

[Gather Ahead of Time](#)

[Technology](#)

[Harm Reduction](#)

[Once the Session Starts](#)

### [Safety & Supports During the Event](#)

[Safety Coordinators](#)

[Chill Out Room](#)

[Indigenous Elder Presence & Support](#)

[Peer Support Workers](#)

[Virtual Counsellor](#)

[Anonymity](#)

### [Taking Care of Yourself Afterwards](#)



## Self-Care Online

Being online for long periods of time can be draining. Here are some ideas to make yourself comfortable and ready to engage.

### Gather Ahead of Time

- **Glass of water.** You might also want a coffee, tea or another drink. These events are going to be interactive and you'll hopefully be doing some talking! Something to hold and drink can be a nice to have to keep hydrated if you're talking or feeling nervous.
- **Snacks.** Keep some on hand if you get hungry or are feeling low energy.
- **Tissues/Kleenex.** In case you need to shed some tears, have sniffles or allergies.
- **Pens/markers and paper.** You may have an idea you want to draw or write down, a question you don't want to forget to ask or a person whose name you want to remember.
- **Fidget items.** Could be a ball, spinner, cube and some people like to knit, paint or colour during online events. If you find this relaxing and that it helps you focus, bring one or more of these items to the events.
- **Pets.** Animals can be great support during an event or sometimes a distraction! Think about if you'd like your pet nearby and if they might need something too.

### Technology Considerations

- **Video camera.** Video cameras can make conversations feel more real and help us communicate by expressing more of our body language. Did you know you can add a background to your zoom video? Check out the [Zoom support center](#) for tips and instructions. Since video cameras can also feel draining when they are on for long periods of time, you can also turn it off while you are in large meetings or during presentations.
- **Choose your space.** A private or semi-private space, where you can speak freely, is ideal.
- **Headphones.** Headphones with a microphone can help to improve audio quality.
- **Mute.** This is a great feature to help reduce background noise – keep in mind you might need to mute yourself on Zoom as well as on your phone (if you are using both). In smaller groups it's really nice if you are somewhere quiet to take yourself off mute even if you're just listening. It makes conversations feel more natural – people can hear you agree and laugh.
- **Interruptions.** These happen and it's OK! Please make sure you're on mute and turn off your video while you sort out the situation. Turn on your video and unmute yourself when you're ready to go again.
- **Display name.** Everyone will be able to see the name you sign-on with. Please make sure it's your preferred name and if possible, indicate your preferred pronouns (i.e., she/her/hers).
- **Phone, charging cables & internet connections.** Ideally, you have access to a laptop with a camera and a stable internet connection to fully participate in these events. Internet connections are dropped and sometimes the power can go out. If this happens, don't worry. You can log back into the event once your connection is restored. You can also turn off your video camera to try and improve your connection to audio and see other participants. Before the meeting it's a great idea to have the battery on your phone and computer fully charged and the power cables you might need, close by. Have access to a phone if you want a counsellor or a friend to phone you during the meeting (this is optional but a nice option to have!).



## Harm Reduction

- **Harm Reduction Strategies.** What strategies work best for you when you're in a new, potentially stress-inducing environment? Attend the event with a person you trust. If you decide to use during the event, make sure you have a safety plan in place. Check out below for some supports we can provide during the event!
- **Harm Reduction Apps.** There are several great online apps that can help you stay safe. If you have one you feel comfortable with, we recommend you stick with that! A buddy is always the best system but if you don't have one, you are welcome to reach out to our virtual buddy during our event. You can also check out the following apps that were made for people using alone:
  - [Brave – Be Safe](#)
  - [Lifeguard](#)
- **Have a buddy on the ready.** Events can mean a lot of connection, ideas and stimulation! Think about how you feel after a conference or a meeting. Let a friend, partner or family member know you are going to an event and that you might want to talk to them about it later. Sometimes this can be a nice to look forward to after a lot of learning. You can always let them know you might cancel or reschedule if you are feeling tired.

## Once the Session Starts

- **How would you like to be referred to?** Zoom allows us to change the name that is visible to other attendees by hovering your mouse over your video tile, clicking the three little dots in the upper right corner and choosing "Rename." Please make sure your name is shown the way you'd like us to refer to you and consider including your preferred pronouns i.e., Name (she/her/hers)
- **Use of webcams during the session:** So much of how we interact with each other is visual. While not the same as meeting in-person, webcams can let others see and experience our interactions in more detail. The use of webcams is always optional but at minimum, if you're comfortable we do recommend using them during breakout rooms.
- **Turning on your camera & changing the view:** You can turn your camera on and off at any time during the session by clicking the video camera icon in the bottom left of your screen. You can also turn off "self view" so that you do not see your own face on the screen (right click on your video and select "hide self view").
- **Move your body.** Give yourself movement breaks – some people find sitting down for long periods of time uncomfortable. Listen to your body and if you feel the need, stand up, stretch, sit on the floor, shift positions, dance or do any other kind of movement that feels right. Whatever you need to do to keep yourself comfortable and engaged is welcome and encouraged!
- **Stay connected:** We will be doing a lot of connecting through small breakout rooms during the events. If you make a great connection in a breakout room and want to stay connected, we recommend exchanging contact information with the person. You can do this in the breakout room or through private message during the event. Ask permission first and only share what you feel comfortable with! These connections can be helpful relationships in the future. However, in order to respect confidentiality, we will NOT be formally sharing a list of contact information with all participants.



## Safety & Supports During the Event

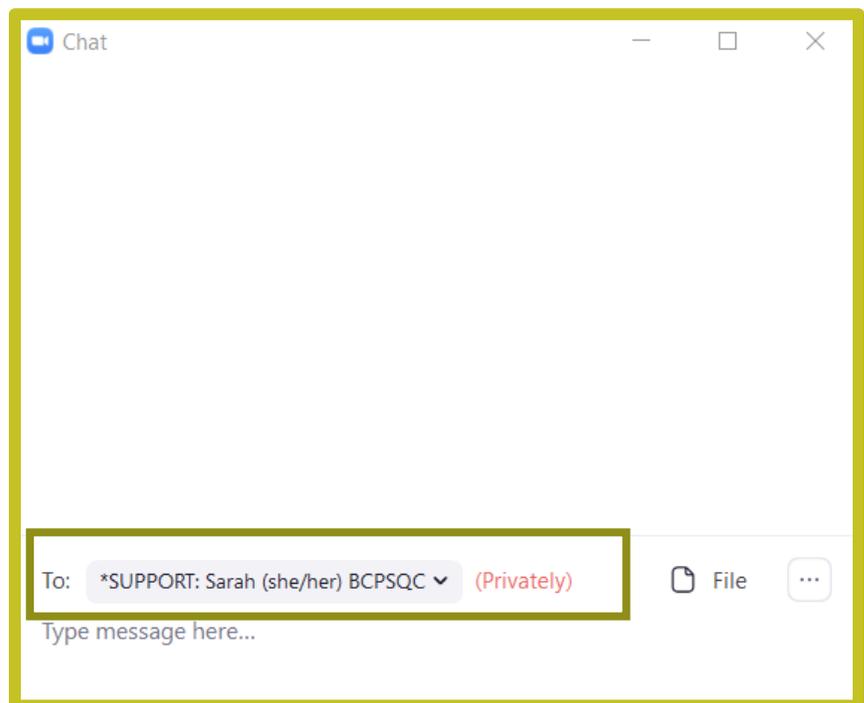
We acknowledge that learning and connecting with other people is hard work, especially in the virtual world. There are people and resources to help you if you need some extra support, take a break or have a 1:1 conversation with someone who can listen. We also want to remind you to stay safe and to use a buddy if you plan to use. The supports below have been identified and designed with our peer leaders in our advisory group and they are available to all participants.

### Safety Coordinators

To help facilitate and coordinate accessing support services, **you can reach out to anyone who has \*Support beside their name** – they're a team member who's there to help you access the support(s) you need.

To send a private message to a safety coordinator:

1. Go to the chat box in the bottom right corner of your screen (or open the chat window by clicking the icon in the upper toolbar if someone is sharing their screen).
2. Click the drop-down menu where it says "To" and select the person named SUPPORT.
3. Type your message and hit enter to send.



\*\*If you do not select a specific person to send your message to it will go to the entire group by default. If this happens the \*Support person will privately message you to see what they can do to make you more safe and comfortable.

### Indigenous Elder Presence & Support

We are honoured to have two Elders joining us for our events. They are from the Squamish nation and are here to be Knowledge Keepers and supporters. During the event, if you feel like you would like to connect with them 1:1. **Message \*Support in the chat box to help get connected to an Elder.**



## Peer Support

We have recruited a peer who is able to support you during these events. She can chat with you, listen to you, and can also offer you support during the session. **Message \*Support in the chat box to help get connected to peer support.**

## Virtual Counsellor

We also have counselling services on call during this event. Our register clinical counsellor has formal training in substance use support and is happy to meet with you 1:1 during these events. Our counsellor is happy to support you via direct message in the chat, by phone or through a private Zoom meeting. **Message \*Support in the chat box to help get connected to a counsellor.**

## Anonymity

We respect your wish to remain anonymous when accessing any of the resources. You can change your display name or turn your camera off to make yourself more comfortable.

If you are using, let someone know where you are and that you are safe. **Message \*Support in the chat box to help get connected with someone.**

## Take care of yourself and your space

At an in-person event you're able to get up, move around and grab a snack with other participants. We want to feel supported to the same kind of flexibility to that rhythm as you would in person! If you need to get up, stretch – go for it! You are welcome to turn off your camera, or mute yourself if you want to stay connected. If you need to log out – to speak with a counsellor, or a friend, don't worry. You can reconnect to the Zoom meeting using the same link you used to sign in. You can always get back to the main Zoom event and we'll work to get you back up to speed.

## Taking Care of Yourself Afterwards

Events can be both exciting and draining, especially in the virtual world. As much as possible, give yourself some time to relax following the event. Unexpected feelings may arise – this is okay. Journaling, talking to someone or accessing additional supports such as the following resources can help you to process and wind down.

[24 Hour Crisis Phone Service](#) 1.800.784.2433

[Indigenous Support Line](#) 1.800.588.8717

[Métis Support Line](#) 1.833.638.4722

[Here to Help - Trans Support Line](#) 1-866-999-1514

Take care of yourself and tap into your support system when you need to.