

TRANSITIONING IN-PERSON EVENTS TO ONLINE:

Tips for transitioning in-person campus events to online platforms.

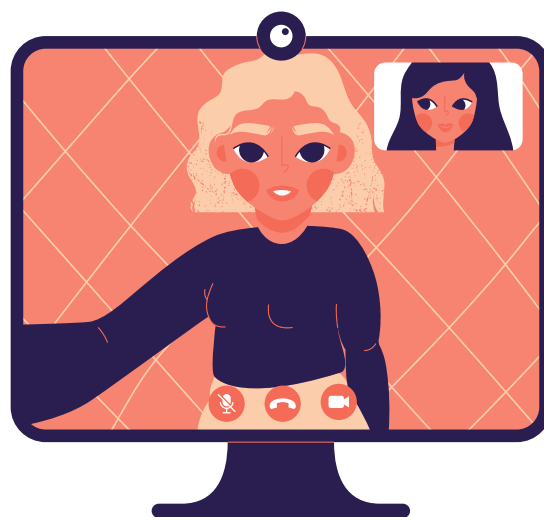
ENHANCING VICTIM
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Asynchronous vs. Synchronous Webinars

Do you want to have a pre-recorded or live webinar for your event, or perhaps both? This largely depends on the type of content you are delivering and whether live engagement with audience members is beneficial or essential to content delivery. Live sessions may be recorded and shared with a wider audience at a later time; however, keep in mind that participants should be made aware that they are being recorded for privacy reasons. Live webinars and virtual workshops typically run between 60 and 90 minutes, whereas asynchronous trainings or events are better suited for more in-depth learning and/or reaching wider audiences.



ACCESSIBILITY OF PLATFORMS

When choosing a platform for a virtual event, consider features based on the anticipated demographics of your audience. Some platforms offer automatic speech recognition (ASR) in real-time in English, Spanish, and other languages. However, communication access real-time translation or CART, in which a transcriber types spoken communication in real-time, is considered the gold standard, as ASR is not as precise, especially when technical language is being used. RespectAbility has compiled a list of available CART services [here](#).

You may wish to consider including live interpretation by sign language interpreters because events might be accessed through smart phone applications, where captions might be harder to read. For audience members who are blind or visually impaired, include image descriptions for visual components of the presentation and consider sending PowerPoints or Word documents to audience members in advance because when a document is being shared on Zoom or other platforms, screen reading is not an available option in real-time. Ensure that breaks are built-in every hour or so to allow audience members to adequately process the information that is being delivered.

Also consider the ability for audience members to connect to meetings by phone or internet, as not every potential participant has reliable internet connection. Expected audience size, ease of use by both presenters and audience members, and the potential for both public and private chat and verbal communication are also important considerations when choosing a particular platform. Some audience members may prefer to ask questions addressed only to hosts and panelists or ask questions anonymously. Consider making these options available, especially when delivering sensitive content.

PRIVACY

If a live webinar is being recorded, always make sure your audience is aware of this and what parts of the webinar will and will not be recorded. For example, questions in the chat box might only be recorded if read aloud and answered by presenters on some platforms. Ensure only event registrants obtain links to events, and events are password-protected (if platforms allow this). This can prevent “Zoom bombing,” when hackers intentionally disrupt virtual events. At the beginning of the event, be sure to inform participants about how they can attend anonymously or send direct questions to the presenters if they want to ask questions or respond anonymously.

ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE

Engaging your audience looks different in virtual event programming from in-person programming. Maki (2020) recommends asking the audience questions verbally, asking poll questions, or coming up with creative games to ensure the audience is focused on the event content. Lee et al. (2020) recommends engaging your audience every fifteen minutes to keep them interested. Get creative in engaging your audience to establish feelings of safety and connection. When discussing sensitive material, such as detailed descriptions of abuse or violence, make audience members aware of this before this information is delivered and the approximate amount of time this material will be shared, so audience members can decide whether and how they will be present when content may be uncomfortable or retraumatizing to audience members.

Conclusion

Virtual events and trainings require different types of preparation and audience engagement than in-person trainings. Keep in mind the importance of privacy, accessibility, and competence with technology when developing and running these events.



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