Which face best represents your experience of virtual meetings....
.....be honest?
Attending prolonged virtual meetings CAN sometimes be a draining experience and this guide provides a few simple tips to improve the experience from this...

\[ \text{to...} \]
Running a virtual meeting in the same way as a face to face session will mean you’re very unlikely to gain the best engagement from your attendees and ultimately risk not getting your desired outcome!

No1 PREPARE for your Virtual meeting

- The science tells us that session should last 90mins max
- Include plenty of breaks ideally every 45mins
- When dealing with big topics slice into smaller chunks of time
- The pace of session needs faster than face to face
- Condense content / subject matter to the key messages
- Issue advance reading when detailed understanding is required
- After just 4mins we are prone to disengage and seek distractions
- Use software interactive tools and open questions every 5-6mins to simulate attendee engagement
Your preparation should include providing your attendees details of how you would like them to engage in the session and a reminder of how to maximise their WIFI bandwidth.

**PREPARE your Attendee’s**

- Make it clear if you want attendees to enter the meeting on mute.
- You may be able to mute all attendees have the options within the meeting controls.
- If your attendees are on mute, make it clear how they can connect with you if needed.
- Consider using the Chat Box to allow your attendees to provide thoughts or ask questions if they’re on mute.
- Make sure you reference (call out) any comments posted.
- To maximise your WIFI bandwidth connection, switch off any connected items (e.g. emails, TV, mobile phone, game devices) that don’t need to be used for the duration of your meeting.
During a face to face meeting you can SEE the level of engagement of your attendees and adjust your approach when needed. In a virtual meeting you will need to work smarter using the numerous interactive tools at your disposal to maintain engagement for ALL attendees.
Slides with large amounts of text content can/will lead your attendees to engage with any level of distractions in their surrounding environment and not your topic!

**No 4 CREATE visually stimulating content**

- If you actually want people to listen to you while you talk, limit the amount of text you put in your bullet points. People are already going to try and attempt to read what you show them. You may be doing so while you’re talking, which means they probably won’t process what they’re reading, and certainly not what they’re hearing.
- Red text on a blue background or vice versa may sound visually striking, but what’s more striking is how commonly used this color scheme is. It literally makes the presentation look like it’s vibrating. Other mistakes include text and backgrounds too similar in contrast, like green and white, or black and grey. There’s also a poorly executed trend of using black backgrounds with white text. While contrasts is normally good, in a darkened room, or when with poor vision (like me) the white text will often look blue and back. Black text on a white background, or something with similar contrast will usually work the best most of the time.
- Each of your slides should supplement and emphasize what you’re saying, not house your entire script. Way too often, people fill their slides with information that they then just read from and read. Firstly, if you’re reading the entire presentation you’ll bore your listener. It’s much easier for them to engage if learning one fact at a time. Look at the screen and then at the slides, which in itself should be a distraction. Don’t use your slides as a crutch. Figure out what you’re trying to say and simplify. Put an image on your slide, put a note function of PowerPoint over your screen which you can use for notes. The audience can’t type. PowerPoint can do that. Use your notes and presentation as a trigger rather than showing everything you’re trying to tell into your slides. It’s visually unappealing in every way.
- Speaking of visually unappealing, you might want to pull back on the use of effects. It’s not the 90s anymore - I’d say there are pretty few people left in this world whose minds would be significantly better served seeing text slide across the screen, based on an immersion feast to our senses professionalism these days. Use to your point, if you have too many effects, if your bullet points clutter, or do not have a single point separated by a line or bold or underlining, perhaps do not. But do not break it up by bullet points either; just do not have a “winner” inside separate to each information that way. We’ve seen it done before and it isn’t pretty.
Using your Webcam can add or distract from your meeting.

- Adjust your webcam / laptop to gain a ‘just right’ view
- If possible use a plain background avoiding windows and mirrors
- Make sure the room has good lighting

- Be aware that using a webcam will drain your WIFI bandwidth
- Try not to shout and move around too much
- Look at the camera and not the screen
- Standing when presenting will make a big difference to your energy levels
We know that virtual connections and systems can be a challenge to master. Understanding your technology controls, options and things you can influence will help.

No 6  CONTROL your tech

- TEST your WIFI bandwidth at [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net)
- TEST the controls and interactive tools you wish to use
- Test your webcam view
- Test and practice run your session with a colleague
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www.dmhassociates.org