Tips for using Zoom for online groups

I attended a Zoom Masterclass the other night and wanted to share some additional tips I took note of while watching.

Importance of settings
Before you run a workshop it's important that you go to your settings and are aware of the permissions for functions to be made available like screen sharing by participants, white board sharing etc. There are different settings for meetings and different settings for recording as well. For example, you can record audio only, or audio and visual or audio/visual and chat box text. You can also select how you want the presenter recorded. You can have them as the main frame or you can record it with the participant gallery. It's good to know what it is you want to do before setting off.

Breakout groups: There is the function to break people out into break out rooms at the bottom of the screen and in the controls, you can select who you want to go in what groups or do a random selection which is always faster if you have less time or it doesn't matter who is grouped with who. Make sure you've explained what you want your groups to do before you release the break out group function as they'll press the function before you've finished your instructions.

Whiteboard: Some of you might already know this function which is available when you go to screenshare. You can select your desk top or there is another option of selecting white board. This function allows you to do thought storming and take people's ideas down and when the host shares their whiteboard they can also allow others to join in. It can get messy if there's lots of people so the facilitator might want to control it but with smaller groups it's nice to let people input themselves. There are shapes and icons that participants can select and put beside an item on the whiteboard e.g. you can ask everyone to put a heart or an X beside the two top issues they want to deal with next and this gives you a way of democratically selecting participant's ideas going forward.

Whiteboard for break-out groups: In the break-out room function you can instruct participants of the whiteboard function so they can write down and share their ideas. One member of the group shares their screen and selects whiteboard option out of the various squares shown, and others can also input into that person's whiteboard by going to view at the top of their screen and selecting 'annotate' in the pull-down options. When the groups return to the larger group the person whose whiteboard was used can share their screen and select 'whiteboard' in the panel to share with the wider group.

Facilitating: Have at least two people facilitate to ensure a smooth flowing workshop, and provide back-up in the event that there are technical problems at one end. Both facilitators should have the slides in case one facilitator cannot access theirs. One person can oversee technical issues and keep an eye on the chat box while the other facilitator can concentrate on the group and then swap over half way through.

Participant Names: You'll see participants' names at the bottom of each person's screen for easy reference but sometimes there won't be a name, it will be a number. This makes it difficult to address someone when you can't identify them. What you can do is ask them to hover over the top

of the right- hand side of their screen and click the three white dots they see – ask them to click the 'rename' option and put the name they'd like to be referred by.

Playing music: If for any reason you want to play music in the background and speak over the music, the ideal setting is 1/3 of the full setting. You need to go to screen share and then if you want to show your screen plus audio from your computer then you have to tick the box at the bottom left hand corner that says 'share computer sound'. If you want to solely share your audio, let's say for a tea break, without the screen, you need to go the advanced tab at the top of the window and select 'music or computer sound only'. There is a warning not to play any music we don't have an agreement to play as there are IP royalties to pay.

Presenting: One good tip was given for presenters to look at their camera rather than their screen when speaking as it's more immediate and intimate. It can be difficult for the presenter to look at an inanimate object so in that case it's best to move between the screen and the camera to avoid looking fixated on the screen.

Polling: Some of you will know about the polling function and there is two things to bear in mind about using this function. You need to set your questions before your session and then press the button at the bottom of the panel which says Poll and it will take you straight to 'launch poll' function. Zoom has a glitch in it which means sometimes it just won't work when you launch it. If your poll doesn't launch you can use alternative methods like a show of hands for ratings of 1-10 (participants vote with their fingers) or if it's a yes or no question you can get participants to vote in the chat box.

Pinning Videos: Often you can find when you're watching a presenter that the screen changes from one participant to another and can even change while someone is speaking because someone else's mic is on and the image defaults to their screen. You can avoid this by hovering your cursor on the top right- hand side, clicking on the three white buttons and selecting pin video. This will fix who you see during the webinar and won't switch backwards and forwards. This only affects your view and no one else's.

Spotlight a video: In the settings you can set the video so that participants can only see the presenter and no one else. This can be handy if you're talking to a large group of say over 50 participants.

Security settings: As I write this Zoom has just set up added security settings which mean that all meetings will now require passwords as well as meeting IDs. For internal security, you can disable private messaging between participants if there is a need, or disable file upload by participants particularly with larger groups where you might not always know who is in attendance. You can also lock a meeting once everyone has joined so that no one else can join, but now that the passwords have been introduced you might not need to that anymore.

Using 3rd party devices: To get participants to access 3rd party devices most people have the address on a slide but in doing this, it's impossible for participants to click on and go direct to the site. So it's always best to type the address into the chat box so participants can go directly to it. This could be to a decision-making tool like Loomio or Mentimeter for example.

Extra Resources
The following website: https://embodiedfacilitator.com/resources-for-embodiment/
 has many tutorials on many aspects of Zoom which have recently been made available for yoga teachers and body workers to bring their work online but they are completely relevant for

partnering work as well. If you can't find what you're looking for on this site, the Zoom website has tons of tutorials for most functionalities.

Hope some of these tips are helpful for you. Don't forget to share any tips you come across in your use of Zoom or other online hosting apps.

Happy Webinars!!

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