NEW ENGLAND ATTC VIRTUAL BEST PRACTICES TIP SHEET

For Trainer/Facilitator Use

The following information provided are general tools, tips, and best practices to help guide you (or your organization) in transitioning to and delivering online training. Most of the information included in this document comes from anecdotal experiences from the New England ATTC staff and trainers that have successfully transitioned their in-person training(s), national and regional conferences, webinars, and programs to a virtual format.

Technology

- Update Zoom App, browsers (e.g., Google Chrome, Firefox), any additional applications, and perform any system updates at least a day before your training.
    - *Reasoning*: System updates help make sure your computer will run smoothly and can also introduce new features and bug fixes! Zoom especially has frequent updates that introduces new features (e.g., blur background) and fixes bugs with existing features.
- If you have an external tool you plan to use, test it prior to your training and check for any limitations for free accounts vs. paid accounts.
    - *Reasoning*: Some free accounts limit the amount of responses or features available to you.

Training Duration

- Your **audience** will play a large role in how long your training takes
    - *Reasoning*: The more your participants interact, engage, and ask questions, the more time it takes to get through the content.
- Participants start to fatigue/burnout from staring at a screen after three hours. If your training is more than two hours we recommend scheduling breaks
    - *Reasoning*: Providing scheduled breaks allows participants to take a break from looking at their screen and can help minimize disruptions. View this article from Stanford on '[How to Combat Zoom Fatigue]'.
- If you don't want to cut on content, try making it a multi-day training or assign pre-work.
    - *Reasoning*: Having full-day training sessions online are draining and it's difficult for people to sit for such a long time.

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Pre-Training

- Log in 30 min prior to your event/training to check your connectivity, audio/visual, and screen share.
    - *Reasoning*: Connectivity/computer problems can arise between previous practice runs and the day of your training. Logging in early affords you the opportunity to realize and address any issues. This also provides you some time to run through any last minute changes, things to remember, etc.
- Dry runs to practice your presentation (with co-facilitators/tech support if applicable) in the exact environment you plan to deliver the event/training in (e.g., time of day, room), helps you be well prepared for the day of your training
    - *Reasoning*: Not only does it check connectivity, lighting, etc., it also gives you an opportunity to check flow, coordinate your plans, and resolve any minor details (e.g., switching presentation slides).

Presentation

- Try to avoid having content in the top right corner of your presentation slides.
    - *Reasoning*: Participant settings (e.g., side-by-side view) and your own settings (e.g., record active speaker with shared screen) play a role in the layout/view of your presentation during the training and in the recording. Some content might be covered by the speaker's image on participants' screens or in the recording.
- Share your slides ahead of time (if possible)
    - *Reasoning*: Content heavy presentation slides can be hard to read on some people's screens if it is too small.
- Include the instructions for any breakout room sessions in either in a separate document or in your slides (if you are sharing ahead of time).
    - *Reasoning*: When participants are sent to breakout rooms, they no longer see the instructions you have in the main session. If they have access to the instructions in a separate document you share via chat, they won't forget the instructions.

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General Tips

- Manageable class sizes for solo trainers - Less than 20 participants is manageable for a solo trainer, but more than 20 participants we recommend at least having additional technical support or another trainer
  - *Reasoning*: As a trainer, you want to be able to focus on delivering the content and monitoring your audience. Additional technical support or a trainer can help with the additional requirements of online training (e.g., managing the chat, setting up breakout rooms, launching poll questions)
- Share your wealth of knowledge and preparedness with colleagues/co-presenters
  - *Reasoning*: Your colleagues/co-presenters might need some guidance on how to create digestible and visually appealing slides, training on how to use certain zoom functions, or aren't aware of engagement techniques/tools available
- Think of your audience when choosing training dates and times
  - *Reasoning*: Different demographics of participants have different responsibilities, therefore their availability might differ (e.g., parents who have to take and pick up kids from school). Time of year can play a role in workload for organizations as well.
- Utilize feedback mechanisms
  - *Reasoning*: Feedback during a training session can help you adjust your presentation strategies (e.g., going in greater detail because your audience identifies as 'beginners''). Post-event evaluation forms can help give you feedback to adjust future training sessions (e.g., participants request a longer training for more Q&A time).

General Steps to Transition In-Person to Online Training

1. Create a detailed, daily agenda of your in-person curriculum
2. If you have a full-day (6+ hrs) or multi-day training, see how you can spread this out to avoid Zoom fatigue/burnout
3. Identify readings, tasks, general work that can be assigned as pre-work to adjust your total time
4. Identify areas that are intended for group/partner/interactive work
   a. Try to find the best engagement tool that can mimic the in-person activity