

Facing Cancer Together Online Groups

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Facing Cancer Together (FCT) has transitioned all support and wellness group offerings to the online communication platform, Zoom. We recognize that online groups are different from meeting in person and these guidelines are intended to help make sure that even if it's different, our groups continue to be helpful and supportive.

Online Group Guidelines

Recognizing that online groups bring a new dimension to social interactions, we have established a set of guidelines intended to support participants' confidentiality and safety and establish norms for online group behavior.

Safety Guidelines

1. Each group facilitator will provide a Zoom link to their specific group with the understanding that only the group members will have access to the link. FCT uses a HIPPA compliant encrypted platform.
2. Each group facilitator will either use the waiting room function or password function to ensure that only members of the group can enter the Zoom meeting.
3. When possible, it is recommended that group members access Zoom via a secure, password protected WIFI network as opposed to public/free WIFI.
4. In order to maintain confidentiality, we require that members agree not to record, screenshot, or otherwise save any content from the group meetings.
5. We ask that you connect to the group from a quiet room where your privacy and the privacy of group members can be guaranteed.
6. Since we are not in a room together, we need a safety plan in the unlikely event of an emergency. Before joining the group, you will have filled out a form with an emergency contact and the address you will be using for Zoom groups. The group leader has access to that information and will use it if needed or will call 911.

Group Norms

All of the group agreements that normally exist in an in-person group also apply to an online group. The following are several specific examples and **we ask that you use as your rule of thumb the idea that if you wouldn't do it during an in-person group, you should not do it in an online group.** These guidelines are meant as a way for each of us to show respect for one another:

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- Groups will start and end on time. If you plan to be late, please let the group leader or another group member know ahead of time.
- Please sit upright in a chair (if you are able).
- The room where you are meeting should be free from distractions so that you are able to focus exclusively on the session (i.e., no cell phone use or texting; no eating or food preparation; no multi-tasking).
- No alcohol or substance use before or during the group.
- Please be fully clothed in a manner suitable for an in-person group.
- To protect everyone's relationship with their doctor, we ask you not to use your doctor's name. That said, we do encourage you to talk about issues and feelings that emerge in your medical care.

Camera Etiquette

There are several ways that we can enhance our connection and communication with one another while using an online platform. Although we lose some of our usual ways of relating in person when we move online (i.e., expressing ourselves through eye contact and through our body language), there are other meaningful ways we can connect if we pay attention to these things. For this reason, we have established some things to consider when engaging with the group:

- Please place your computer or other device on a stable surface so that the camera is not moving around as this can be distracting to others.
- Pay attention to where you sit in relation to the screen. If you are too far away from the screen it can be difficult for others to see or hear you. When we sit closer to the screen, we are more able to read facial expressions.
- Maximize your ability to be seen by having as much light in front of your computer as possible and as little light coming from behind you (such as a window or lamp) as this will darken the screen.
- Since much of our body language cannot be communicated via Zoom, pay attention to physical sensations that you are having that may be useful to put into words.