

COLLABORATIVE Practice Tips

August 2020

A monthly bulletin from the CP Cal Practice Excellence Committee

The Practice Excellence Committee is pleased to offer tips to help you increase your Collaborative cases and achieve *practice excellence*.

Please send us your comments and questions! Email us at info@cpcal.com

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Zoom Fatigue: Zoom fatigue is a “thing”. Research shows we concentrate more on distractions during a video conference. We look at ourselves; we look at others; we check out backgrounds; we filter distracting noises; we are distracted by cell phones; we struggle with overtalking each other and following the conversation; we are distracted by emails and fight the temptation to multi-task. Our eyes get tired from staring at the screen and from the lighting used to make us look better.

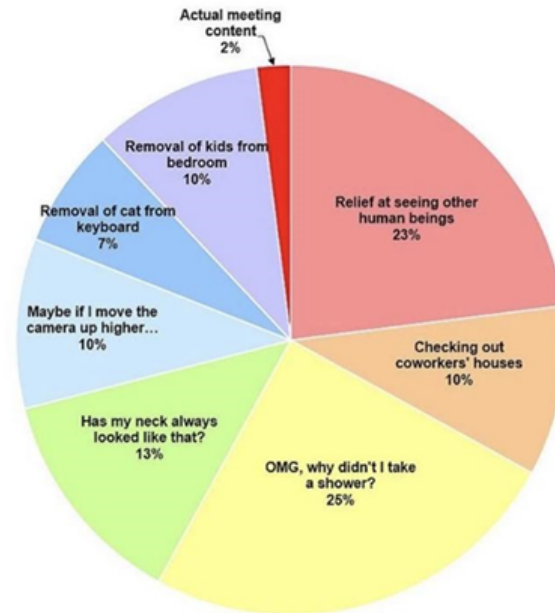
1. **Don't multi-task.** You lose focus and unlike in an in-person meeting, you cannot ask the person next to you what you missed. In addition, others may notice that you are distracted.
2. **Consider turning off self-view.** Research shows we tend to look at ourselves more than others, like there is a mirror right there. Turning off self-view will help you stay focused on the topic and the others on the call. In the screen with your video, click on the 3 dots (...) in the upper right corner, you will see the option “Hide Self-View”.
3. **Quiet your cell phone and your background:** Before every zoom meeting, remember to put your cell phone on silent and turn the volume to low, so that any alarm is quiet during the call. Advise the rest of your household for approximate length of the call and your need for quiet. Close the door to the room in which you will be attending the Zoom call.
4. **Have clients use Speaker View:** Suggest the client's use “Speaker View” while the Team uses gallery view. The team can watch facial expressions and body language, clients can focus on who is speaking and what is being said. This reduces the distractions of multiple people and backgrounds. An added benefit is that spouses don't have to see each other all the time. FYI, the Host can enforce Speaker View; but when doing so, it will apply to everyone on the call.
5. **Give your eyes a break.** Look away from the screen for 15 seconds or so every so often. (Consider setting “Timer” on your phone with low key

ring tone (i.e. chimes) for every 10-15 minutes; look away when it goes off; hit “reset”; continue your call).

6. **Practice ahead of time.** Practice a Zoom meeting with your client before a Full Team meeting to work out the kinks and give her/him confidence. If you plan to have a client or another person in the same room/office, be sure to check in advance that the two computers being used don't create feedback or pick up distracting background noise. You may have to separate into different rooms. Pre-plan whether or not to use text messaging for any feedback either of you might want to provide during the meeting.
7. **Schedule breaks DURING Zoom meetings:** Consider scheduling breaks if you are meeting for an hour or more. Even if it is just 5 minutes to stretch, get a drink or use the restroom. Be sure you let clients know they can ask for a break at any time. Some older clients may need to break more frequently. Consider turning off video and muting yourself on breaks (what you say or do while on break could be embarrassing or possibly breach confidentiality).
8. **Schedule breaks BETWEEN Zoom meetings:** If you have more than one Zoom meeting in a day, schedule a break for yourself and your team with at least 30 minutes in between; 60 minutes is better. Use this time to rest your eyes and your brain. Have a snack, meditate or take a walk.
9. **Pre- and Post-Team Meetings.** Try to schedule the Pre-Team meeting (professionals) the day before the Full Team meeting (clients and professionals). Consider scheduling a 5-15 minute break between the end of the full Team Meeting and the post-meeting debrief for the Professionals. Check in with clients the next day about how they felt about the Zoom meeting process.
10. **Camera Positioning and Eye Contact:** It can be challenging to make eye contact during meetings. You need to look at the camera so others receive your eye contact. You need to look at the screen to see the eye contact from others. You cannot do both at the same time. When teaching a class or giving important information, look at the camera. If you need to gauge reactions from others you need to look at the screen. Try to position your camera in front of the screen you will be looking at most of the time. It will appear like you are giving better eye contact. If you need to look at another screen or look down to take notes, let others know what you are doing.
11. **Documents:** For documents that need to be signed during a meeting, have them prepared on DocuSign, or a similar program, so that you can share these on screen, fill in the blanks, answer questions and send for signatures during the meeting. For DocuSign: have the packet ready, set the signing order for you first, i.e. have all text boxes assigned to you. Then you can share them on screen, fill in the blanks and email the final drafts for signature by your clients.
 - If drafting documents, you can share as you type on “Screen Share”. This allows for real-time feedback and is interactive while on the Zoom call. The interaction keeps everyone engaged and fights Zoom fatigue.
 - Include in your Fee Agreement or other retention document an agreement to use electronic signatures. Cite CCP Sections 1633.1-1633.17 which pertain to electronic signatures.
 - Send documents in advance by email. Have them numbered in the order you want to review them to make it easier for clients to follow.
12. **Screen Share:** Be sure to turn “Screen Share” off when you are not actively using it so that all can go back to seeing each other. Everyone will lose focus if you leave a document on the screen that you are not actively working with.

13. **Have a sense of humor:** Clearly Zoom meetings are here to stay and issues will arise. A sense of humor can ease a lack of confidence and/or discomfort with the process.

Diagram of Zoom Meeting Attention Span



Update Your Website!

Many businesses are going out of business right now. Make sure that everyone who searches for and finds your website knows that you are alive and working. The very first message that people should see on your front page is something about COVID, what you are doing differently, and how you can still be helpful now. Don't stop at the front page, though! Mention your online work several times on several pages throughout your site. Our most important message: yes, you can get divorced right now, effectively and efficiently online using a collaborative team.



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