

APC examples from practice: Welcoming, opening and closing

Welcome your participants: Share the tips for attending the session

- Ask your participants to write their names/alias and pronouns on the platform used. Remind them that this is optional for those who do not feel comfortable disclosing their pronouns.
- Video is optional at any point of the event. If used, remind your participants to turn off their cameras during breaks.
- Remind your participants to mute when they are not talking. Remind them to cancel the background noise when talking.
- Suggest to sit comfortably and have a glass of water, coffee or tea next to them.
- Explain that if they want to talk, to type HAND in chat, or raise HAND emoji if the option is available. Sometimes when there are many participants, the option to raise their hand on video is not the best option.
- Encourage the use of chat with symbols for C-comment, Q-question, HAND-talking, “+” for agree, “-” disagree, CL-clarification. Come up with your own symbols, but keep it simple. Encourage the use of sharing drawings or any other form your participants feel comfortable using.
- Invite people to focused presence as best to their situational capacities. Minimize multitasking. Remind to close other applications or tabs in the browser.
- Offer a shared document for questions, comments and reflections.

Opening. Set the framework of your session: guidelines, narrative, tone and grounding

- Introduce yourself and all of the teams present. Introduce your participants to the space, technology, communication channels used and offer accessibility and tech support.
- Share the agenda with your participants. Make sure to set the tone, narrative and inform participants of what will happen, breaks to rest, activities and your objectives.
- Share the principles of participation and make sure the group has access to them and agrees on them. Ask people how they connect to lived realities and welcome adding points they find meaningful.
- Share consent, privacy and confidentiality protocols and agreements.
- Suggestion: Grounding activity. Have an activity that will help participants settle into the space and be open for connection. You can invite your participants to bring their favorite object and share the story behind it. Or you might want to do a breathing exercise to settle into the space.

Closing and celebration

Invite your participants to share impressions and what they are leaving with. This can be useful for your reflection and evaluation process. Closing is also important and remind what are the main agreements or follow up steps if any. Dedicate some time to play music, sing, read poetry and celebrate the collective energy that was shared. There was a lot of hard work done, a lot of time and dedication invested for knowledge and insights exchange. Make sure you celebrate the powerful connection that was established - and these are just some of the reasons for joy!

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