

Virtual Engagement Guide

Engage your club virtually

Each year, Our Minds Matter impacts thousands of students by holding club meetings and school-wide campaigns in effort to improve school culture around mental health.

Due to the COVID-19, we know that you can no longer hold your traditional meetings and campaigns. Thus, we wanted to put together some ideas and templates for you to use so our mental health advocacy efforts do not have to stop!

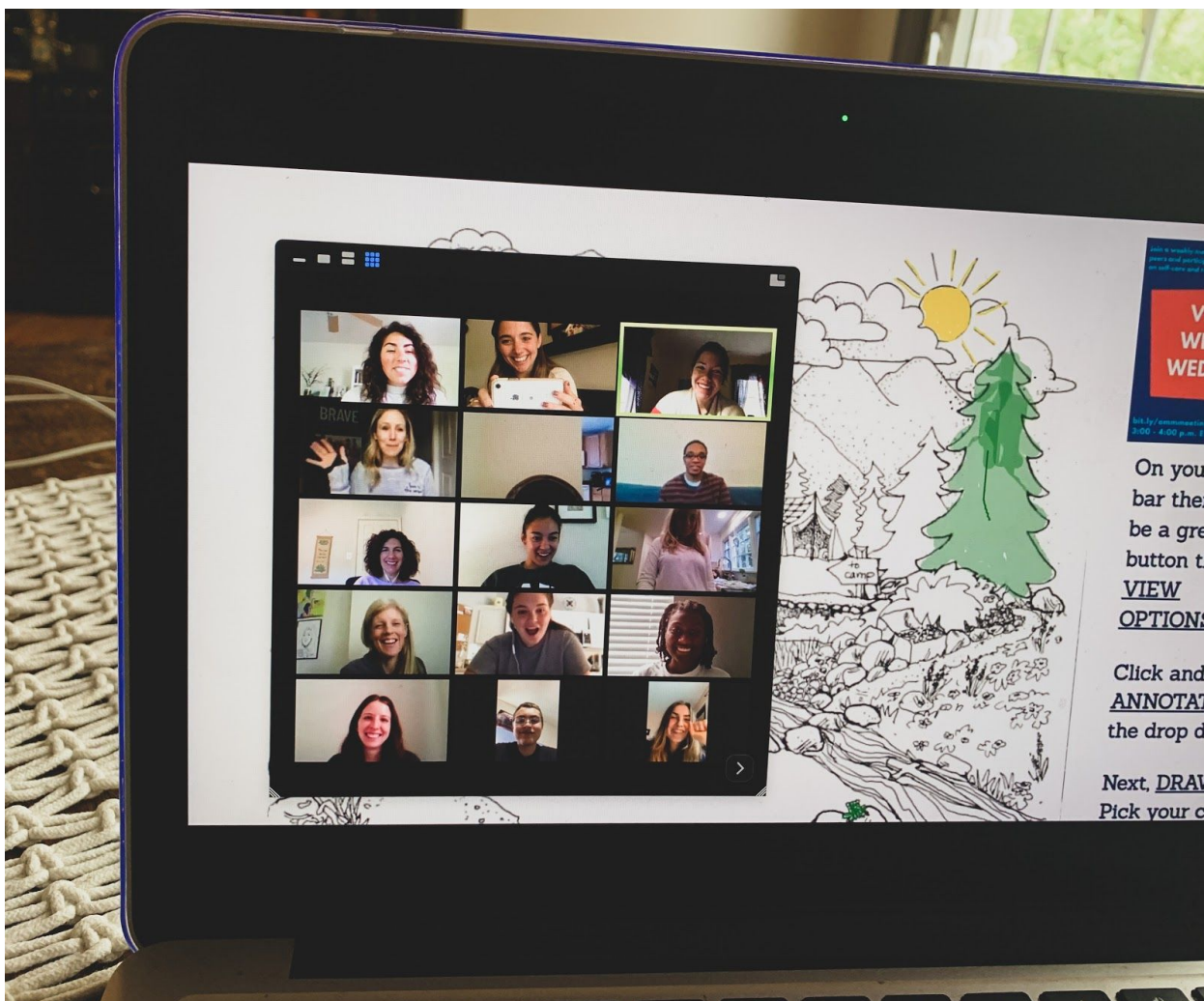


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Hosting Virtual Meetings

Use a free video conferencing platform (e.g. Zoom, Google Hangouts, Blackboard Collaborate) to hold your club meetings. Follow the steps below:

1. hold a planning meeting with your club leaders and sponsor to determine the meeting time and frequency.

- a. Consider sending out a poll to get a sense what the best time would be best for all your members.
 - i. Make sure the day/time that is picked works for your sponsor.
- b. Brainstorm meeting topics
 - i. What do you think your club needs? For example, if you think a lot of people are struggling with feeling connected during this time you may want to focus on activities that promote connection.
- c. Create marketing materials to promote your meetings
 - i. Consider using [Canva](#), a free design platform.
 - ii. Be sure to include date, time, and link to join meeting

2. prepare for your meeting

- a. Use this [PowerPoint template](#) to create visuals for your virtual club meeting
 - i. Determine meeting agenda
 - ii. Organize activity materials as needed
 - iii. Advertise and invite your peers to attend your meeting
 1. Use your club roster to send invitations - if you have been using the [OMM sign in portal](#) you have a roster of everyone that's ever signed into previous club meetings
 - a. IF, you don't have a club roster on hand reach out to your club sponsor to help you
 2. Leverage social media platforms
 - a. [See example](#)
 3. Reach out to peers that have never attended a meeting before and invite them to learn more

3. deliver the meeting

- a. Use the template of provided Google Docs. Have other students follow along by directing them to the activity on the OMM website and remind them to check out the right hand column with supplies and resources.

Making Virtual Spaces More Personal

In a podcast with Ted Interview titled [“How to create meaningful connection while apart”](#), Priya Parker provides insight into how virtual spaces can be modified to foster genuine human interaction. Parker asserts that **what constitutes meaning is specificity and structure**. Our virtual meetings in recent times have become “vague and diluted”. To render our connection with loved ones more authentic, we must do more than just “staying in touch”.

First of all, we tend to assume that **the purpose of a virtual meeting** is obvious. However, this is not always the case. The best way to establish meaning in a gathering is to ask ourselves simple questions. What is the need of this gathering? How can we cater to that? What is the larger purpose than simply gathering for the sake of gathering?

Suggestions Parker offers are to **center meetings around specific ritualistic practices**. Typically, rituals are established within groups that share common beliefs. Although, rituals can also be developed within a diverse setting with enough intentionality. Developing a common understanding of the symbol acts of gatherings is crucial for meaning within a group. For example, family members or friends could set specific evenings of the week as planned time to do defined activities together such as a game night or a storytelling night. This serves to mark the days so that the week does not blur all together. **Establishing ground rules** such as topics of discussion (and those that should not be discussed), duration of gatherings and virtual etiquette enable a more harmonious virtual experience. **Giving the gathering a name** offers authenticity and a shared identity of members. Furthermore, objects can be shown on screens and participants can move about in the comfort of their own space in interaction with others through a screen (get up and move) just as they would if they were meeting in person.

The bottom line is to find meaningful interruptions in our days for genuine human interaction despite physical distance. Parker shares that **“the way we gather is contagious, we decide what we gather around”**. So find creative ways to interact virtually with people who are close to you and share these ideas with others! Check out the NEW virtual activity named “Fun Virtual Activities” that you can do with your friends or family remotely. Feel free to share with us what kinds of activities you are doing virtually.

Template for a Virtual Meeting

prior to start of meeting:

1. Advertise club meetings using social media, club roster, google classroom, or other platforms your club may have in place.
2. Post or send any materials needed for the activity (if applicable)
 - a. *Tip: try to conduct activities where most people would have those supplies (e.g., pen & paper)*

during meeting:

1. Review the virtual meeting etiquette for any new participants and have them sign-in (bit.ly/ommsignin) so you know who is attending meetings and can send a recap email out afterwards with any important information or links.
2. Review the meeting purpose so participants know what to expect
3. Conduct an opening ritual to promote connection
 - a. For example: Rose, Thorn, Bud or Statement of Gratitude
4. Conduct selected activity
5. Conduct closing ritual
 - a. For example: mindfulness or virtual challenges
6. Review any club business or announcements

after meeting:

1. Send a recap email to all club participants with the meeting recording
 - a. See recap email template below

Recap Email Template

Thank you for attending our meeting today! =) We hope you all will join us again [Insert date and time of next meeting] and invite others to attend.

4.1 Meeting Overview/Resources

- [Insert Meeting Video]
- [Insert Meeting Slides]
- [Insert any announcements]
- [Insert Virtual Challenge]
 - Example: Create an OMM Covid-19 Playlist with us! We will ask you to submit your songs on Instagram so make sure you're following us. If you don't have social media or doing a social media detox, email me your song choice and I can email the playlist to you.

Mental Health Support

Contact our club sponsor, [insert name and contact information] OR text CONNECT to 741741 or call 1-800-273-8255

As always, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Stay well,
[Insert club name]

Virtual Activities

See our [Youtube](#) page to see OMM student leaders running an online meeting. Use this [meeting powerpoint template](#) to run your meetings.

Name	Theme	Activity Description	Virtual Modification
Identifying and Utilizing Resources	Resource Awareness	Brainstorm different mental health resources and the pros and cons associated with each one	Use a Google Doc (HERE is an example)
Mood Libs	Resource Awareness	Read about different situations and share their perspectives on which resources would be the most beneficial for them	Use a Google Doc (HERE is an example)
Word Cloud	Stigma Reduction	Students come up with positive words to describe their group members and create a wordle together	Use a Google Doc (HERE is an example)
Tweets	Social Systems of Support	Create tweets to describe what a healthy social relationship means	Write tweets in a Google Doc (HERE is an example) which students can edit
Walk in Our Shoes	Respect	Students are put into groups which are given a video about a "character's" story struggling with different disorders	Use a Google Doc (HERE is an example)

<u>Eating to Manage Mood</u>	Healthy Habits	Listen to a passage about the benefits of eating healthy food and watch a short video on tips to manage mood with food	Discussion based. Post discussion questions in a Google Doc (<u>HERE</u> is an example)
<u>Perspective via Instagram</u>	Healthy Mindset	Students look through different pictures on Instagram and reflect on their own posts and talk about the context of their pictures	Use a Google Doc (<u>HERE</u> is an example)
<u>TedTalk</u>	Mindfulness	Watch a TedTalk on the importance of active listening	Provide view-only Google Doc (<u>HERE</u> is an example)
<u>Kid President</u>	Choose Kindness	Students watch a video of Kid President explaining how to do good in the world	Provide view-only Google Doc with discussion questions (<u>HERE</u> is an example)

NEW Virtual Activities

activity name:

connection through COVID

[30 min]

There are plenty of ways to stay connected virtually, all you need is a little creativity!

supplies:

- [Sample Powerpoint](#)
- Blank scene or landscape to color in

goals:

- Students will learn the outline for virtual meeting
- Students will understand the importance of explicitly stating the meeting objective
- Students will discover new ways to interact virtually with others

instructions:

Use these ideas to build an activity to connect with your club members.

Ideas for virtual social gatherings to keep it interesting through a shared activity are endless. A general template to follow in the resource section is outlined below. Use the Sample Powerpoint under supplies to follow this template sequence.

It is important to state the meeting purpose to ensure that all participants understand the meaning of the gathering. Before starting the meeting, ask yourself and participants what everyone needs most in that moment? Do they need comfort or solace? Do they need entertainment? Do they need to retreat into a safe, open space? Think about it! Ask participants and be intentional in your virtual gatherings.

Below is a list of different activities that can be done virtually.

1. Birthday parties can be thrown over video chat with every invitee bringing a sweet treat, a drink, a funky hat and a story, value or quality embodied by the birthday person to share.

2. Share a weekly meal and discuss 7 songs. Groups could define weekly meetings to share a meal and to alternate speakers. The speaker chooses

7 songs (or books, poems, movies) etc that are significant at different times in their life. Alternate to a new person each week.

3. Read a book together. Pick a good book, read a chapter and “pass along” to be read by all members until finished or read a set number of chapters at a time.
4. Watch Netflix simultaneously with your friends with [Scener](#). This free Google Chrome extension allows you to sync a movie or tv show on Netflix to view with a friend. Have a viewing party!
5. Online gaming. These include some classics and some new games that might interest you: [Charades](#), [Psych!](#), [Heads Up!](#), [Pictionary](#), [Trivia](#), [Jackbox](#), [Categories](#), and [Bingo](#).
6. Yoga. There are TONS of free yoga videos on Youtube and beyond. Connect on a video conferencing platform, have one person share their screen, start the video and practice some yoga with your friend!
7. Recipe exchange. Create a google doc or an email chain to share your favorite recipes with your friends and family and vice versa. If you're not into cooking, maybe check out some cooking shows on Scener with your friends.

discussion:

- What activities are your favorites?
- Which ones do you not like?

other tips/resources (e.g., picture as an example):

- Virtual meeting template
 - Slide 1: Club name with the date, link to meeting. Option to include a school logo.
 - Slide 2: Virtual meeting etiquette.
 - Slide 3: Opening ritual. Important to have consistency with virtual routine meetings. Decide on an opening activity as an ice breaker. Ex. rose, thorn, bud; highlight, lowlight of the week; gratitude; coloring landscape, bingo -- get creative!
 - Slide 4: state purpose of the meeting and its goals.
 - Slide 5 - 9: bulk of the meeting's content. It can be discussion based. You can use interactive components like videos or word clouds.
 - Slide 10: announcements.
 - Slide 11: stay connected: plug for OMM instagram and club social media or club leader's contact information.
 - Slide 12: Resource with
 - 1-800-273-8255

- Text CONNECT to 741741
- Text START to 678678
- Ourmindsmatter.org
- Include club sponsor's email

activity name:

gratitude through covid

[40 min]

Write letters or emails to frontline workers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Option to also write to friends, family, teachers, or coaches to express gratitude). Expressing gratitude on a regular basis enhances overall wellbeing and sets one in a positive mindset.

supplies:

- Computer or device with email
- Pen, paper, stamps
- Attitude of gratitude

goals:

- Students will discuss why gratitude is important to wellbeing
- Students will practice and express gratitude through letter or email writing to someone impactful in their life

instructions:

Facilitator: Today we have gathered to talk about gratitude. Often we think of expressing gratitude as showing appreciation for others. But it is more than that. Gratitude can bring things to our life that enhance our well being and satisfaction with life.

Read this article From [Harvard Health](#).

Question to group: How do you express gratitude? What does it do for you? What does it do for those you express gratitude to?

Encourage participants to independently draft handwritten letters or emails to essential workers. These can be nurses, doctors, grocery store workers, delivery people. This could also be written to a friend, a parent, a sibling, a mentor, a teacher, a coach or even to oneself. Self appreciation is just as important as showing appreciation for others! These letters can even be written to doctors, nurses, and essential workers who you may not know but are working to keep our communities safe during this pandemic.

After about 15-20 minutes, ask if anyone would like to share their letter. Talk with the groups about the elements of these letters and what they have in common.

These letters or emails can be sent to their recipients but it is not required. Verbal appreciation works just as well. Even writing and keeping for oneself, can remind one of the positive things and people in one's life.

discussion:

- How do you express your gratitude?
- What kind of a difference are you making when you write letters to a person who means a lot to you?
- Does something as small as a letter make a difference?

other tips/resources (e.g., picture as an example):

- If you would like to write letters to veterans or essential workers or healthcare workers
 - Write something like “Dear Veteran” or “Dear Hero” because you don't know the name of the person who receives it
 - Operation Gratitude has samples of letters

activity name:

instructions for a bad day

[25 min]

This activity will help students understand that everyone has bad days and that recovery and progress is not a linear process. Having a bad day does not mean that one did anything inherently wrong or that tomorrow things will be the same.

supplies:

- [Video link](#)
- Google doc

goals:

- Students will talk about what it is like to have a bad day
- Students will share what they do when they have a bad day
- Students will watch a video titled “Instructions for a Bad Day”
- Students will begin to understand that having bad days and setbacks is a part of life and that there will always be better days

instructions:

Facilitator: With mental health, progress and recovery is not a linear progress. Just because we make small improvements over time does not mean that every day will be a little better than the last. Everyone has setback and everyone has bad days every once in a while

What does a bad day look like to you? What happens on a bad day? (group discussion)

Facilitator: There could be no rhyme or reason as to why one is having a bad day. Maybe they just feel off. Physiological processes could be going on inside of us that make us feel physically or mentally vulnerable. Or an event could have set us off that hits a soft spot within us that makes us feel emotionally vulnerable.

What do you do on a bad day? (group discussion)

Watch video: [Instructions for a Bad Day](#)

Facilitator: Initial reactions? What did you notice in the video? How was the video intended to make you feel? (option to discuss verbally or write out on a google doc)

discussion:

- What are your go to self-care or coping mechanisms when you have a bad day?
- Is there someone you talk to?
- What are things you remind yourself of on a bad day to remind yourself that feelings are temporary?

other tips/resources (e.g., picture as an example):

- Talk about bad days in general terms, unless someone would like to share a more personal story.

Club Office Hours

In order to provide extra support to clubs we will hold office hours to discuss planning for the following topics: leadership planning, virtual engagement with your club during COVID-19, and the Pride Campaign.

If a club needs one on one support. They can set up private office hours at calendly.com/lblevitt OR email laurabeth@ourmindsmatter.org

Wellness Wednesdays

Every Wednesday from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. EST from March through August 2020 club members, leaders, and teens nationwide joined virtual meetings on Zoom. These virtual meetings focused on being a place to connect, learned about different coping mechanisms, practiced mindfulness, and created a safe space to talk about mental health.

We encourage everyone to follow [@our.minds.matter](https://www.instagram.com/our.minds.matter) on Instagram to stay up to date on the topics and guest speakers for these weekly meetings. You can [access previous meeting recordings here](#).

Join a weekly meeting to connect with peers and participate in activities focused on self-care and resources.



**VIRTUAL
WELLNESS
WEDNESDAY**

bit.ly/ommconnect
3:00 - 4:00 p.m. EST