

Here are some considerations as we consider opening live meetings again and creating hybrid meetings. The notes below are slightly edited from a non-12-step California organization. Perhaps we want to further adapt and share them within OAOCI.

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Protect your people. While some folks who are vaccinated are perhaps especially eager to meet in-person, please keep the health of the most vulnerable in mind.

It won't be like it was. Some of the things that we love best about our meetings are off the table for the foreseeable future: hugs and handholding. Experiment with other ways of warmly greeting and showing care for one another. There will continue to be limits on capacity, facial coverings, physical distancing, sanitizing... Managing expectations and excellent communication for the next many months in our meetings will help things go more smoothly. Be familiar with and follow public health guidelines, which may change frequently.

Virtual? Face? Hybrid! We've learned over the last year that "virtual" has real value, and many of us are determined to continue to "do OA" online even when we're back in the rooms. Accessibility, schedules, and geography are just some of the variables that have driven an increase in participation in some of our meetings while we've been online. We've realized that we have a broader reach when we're virtual. That realization is making us rethink what "local" means and how that impacts our meetings.

Hybrid meetings are a great goal. They may also pose technical challenge such as audio and video quality, perceived safety and anonymity, and internet access or bandwidth. We suggest that OA members (presumably vaccinated) who feel safe together in small groups experiment with joining an online meeting as a small group and experiment with that setup as a step towards hybrid meetings. Let your e-media manager know what you learn!

We'll have failures. This is new territory and there are a lot of opportunities for tech failures, miscues, and frustration. It won't be perfect and that's okay. Be patient with yourselves and others. Keep your sense of humor. It'll get better.