



**GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, INDIA.**

Regd. No. F-13438 (Mumbai)

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April 01, 2020

Greetings from AA GSO India..!

Sub: Impact of Corona on AA Meetings (March 2020) and how our fellowship in India, managed to emerge with guidelines (examples from across the country) is now common knowledge. On line meetings have come in as a blessing, be in Phone-in or Conference Call in or Zoom meetings or Cloud Meetings, using Mobile Phones / PCs / Lap tops to call direct or through an App.

Whatever the mode or channel, there is an overwhelming proliferation of on line meetings. For example, in one of the 18 Regions in India along, there are 17 phone-in meetings on a Sunday from 6 AM to 8:30 PM IST.

The following suggestions were circulated in Regional Whatsapp Groups for phone-in meetings:

In phone in (Call in) or joining a phone meeting (including use of any app on phone or through laptop), AA members are requested to:

- 1) Sit alone at home in a secluded area or in a car***
- 2) Use headphone to avoid external noises and to avoid others nearby hearing the sharings.***
- 3) Use mute function, when not sharing and while listening to others.***
- 4) Avoid use of recording option.***

In addition, the available guidelines / suggestions from US fellowship, a mature AA Fellowship, which has learnt by practice, the nuances of Online meetings, are given below.

FROM AA NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL OFFICE:

ZOOM MEETINGS PROTECTING ANONYMITY & DEFAULT SETTINGS

For Zoom users: With the rush to shift to online meetings, many of us did not take time to investigate what this meant to the spiritual foundation of our recovery – namely, anonymity. Now that online meetings are accessible, we want to pass on best practices for protecting anonymity.

These have been curated from the membership and online resources.

The default Zoom settings run counter to AA's spiritual foundation of anonymity. The meetings are publicly accessible and full names and faces are often displayed. Additionally, by default all Zoom meetings are recorded to the cloud. Turning that feature off is simple, fortunately.

There are other settings in the Meeting sub-tab that can also be adjusted, such as disallowing remote control of devices, file transfer, data sharing with Zoom, and screen sharing.

Here are some suggested settings for your meeting to use. Please note that most, if not all, of the settings below are not the Zoom default:

Go to: Settings > Recording and click off the Local and Cloud recording features.

In the Zoom Settings section, under the Meeting sub-tab:

- *Require Encryption for Third Party Endpoints*
- *Disable Auto saving chats*

- *Disable File transfer*

- *Disable Feedback to Zoom*

- *Disable Screen sharing*

- *Disable desktop/screen share for users*

- *Disable Remote control*

- *Allow Virtual background (this is the Zoom default and allows the user to use a virtual background instead of the inside of their apartment, for example)*

In the Zoom Settings section, under the Recording sub-tab:

- *Disable Local recording*

- *Disable Cloud recording*

- *Disable Automatic recording*

That is not all. A separate .pdf file with **detailed guidelines for Zoom meetings** and **how to follow 7th Tradition** (Kitty, as called otherwise at group levels) in online meetings is also attached herewith.

Phone Meetings are a gift at the presentation. Let us use it with caution (specific reference to the basic AA Principle of “Anonymity”) and let us not over do it, which is a character defect by itself for Alcoholics in general. Let us use the tool wisely, stay together in AA online meetings, stay away to practice the social-distancing and stay well, under these excruciating circumstances.

Sincerely yours in Service of AA India,

Valley. K

General Secretary – AA GSB India

Attached files:

- Detailed guidelines for Zoom meetings
- How to follow 7th Tradition in Online Meetings.

NYIG Toolkit for Handling Unwanted Meeting Disruptions

Pro-Tip: All groups are encouraged to have both a Zoom “Host” and “Co-Host” in every meeting as service positions. One host acts as the traditional chair while the other manages muting & hand raising, and can be free to handle meeting intrusions. [Click here for details on assigning a Co-Host when your meeting has begun](#) (No special setup needed, NYIG accounts already allow for Co-Hosting!) [Additional Chairing tips available here](#)

What should you do if your meeting is disrupted?

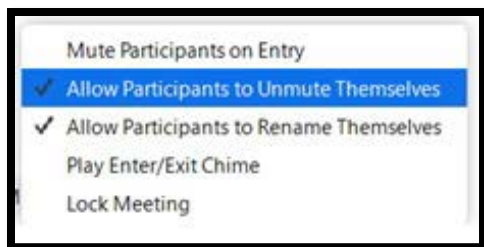
- [Mute All Participants and Disable Self-Unmuting](#)
- [Turn off a Participant’s Video and Remove Participant](#)
- [Locking a Meeting](#)
- [Preventing “Zoom Group Chat” Abuse](#)
- [Preventing “Share Screen” Abuse](#)

1. Mute All Participants and Disable Self-Unmuting (Stop The Noise!)

- a. Click the “Manage Participants” icon (Yellow arrow below)
- b. Click “Mute All” (Red arrow)



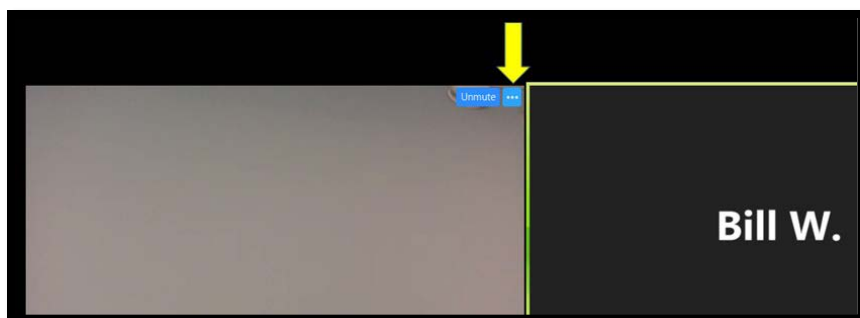
- c. Click “More” (Blue arrow)
- d. **Uncheck** “Allow Participants to Unmute Themselves”



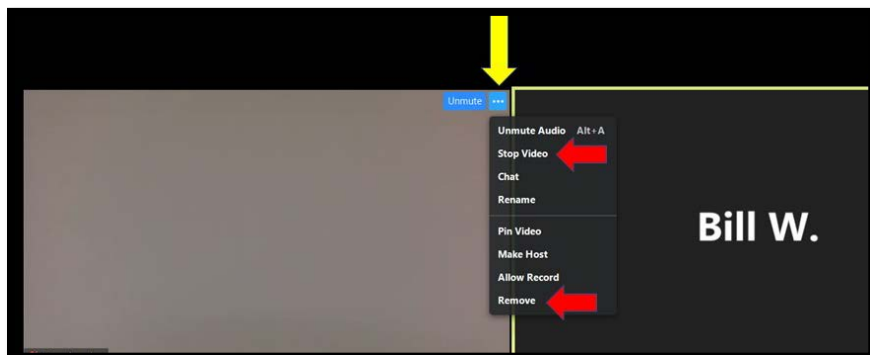
Note: Hosts will then have to unmute Participants anytime that they wish to speak when the meeting resumes.

2. Turn Off a Participant's Video and Remove Participant

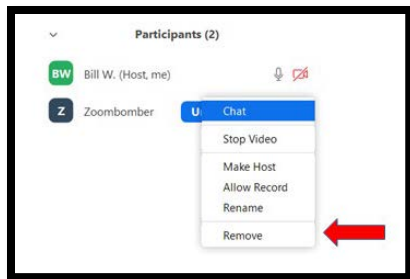
- a. Identify the disruptive participant(s) and hover your mouse over the right corner of that person's video
- b. Click the blue square with three white dots (Yellow arrow below):



- c. A list of options appears (Yellow arrow below)
- d. You may stop the video of the participant and/or remove the person from the meeting (Red arrows)
- e. After removing, proceed to step 3 as disruptors may simply rejoin the meeting if you don't continue to secure the session in progress

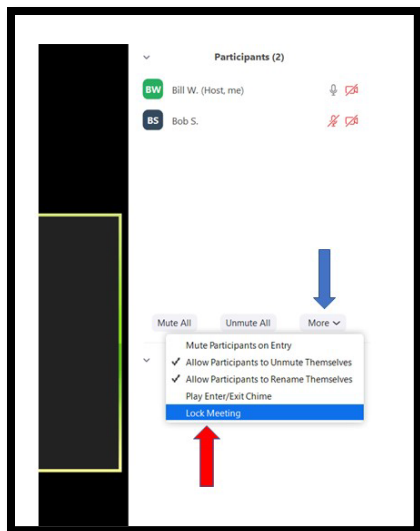


- f. You will also find the "Stop Video" option and "Remove" option (Red arrow below) by hovering your mouse over the names in the Participants list on the right side of your screen and clicking "More"



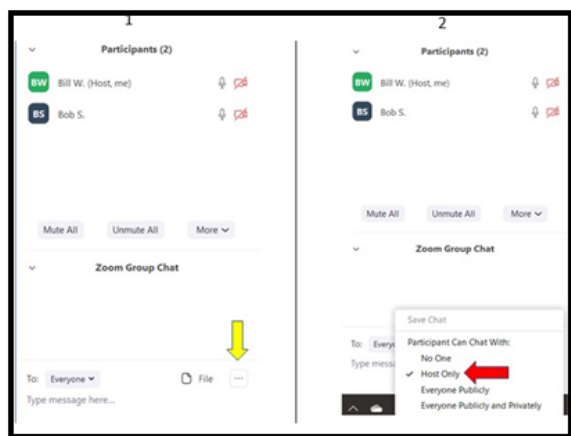
3. Locking the Meeting

- To lock a meeting and prevent anyone from joining the meeting for that session, click “More” under the Participants list (Blue arrow below), which will bring up the option “Lock Meeting” (Red arrow)
- Please note after the meeting is locked, **no one will be able to join the meeting**. The policy of locking a meeting may be a matter to be taken up in a Group Conscience



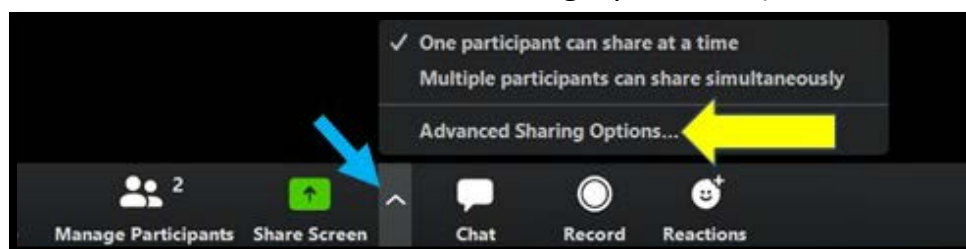
4. Preventing “Zoom Group Chat” Abuse

- Many groups have elected to change the settings on the chat box to enable Participants to send messages only to the Host
- To restrict chat, click the three dots at the bottom of the chat box (Column 1 below, yellow arrow) and select “Host Only” (Column 2, Red arrow):

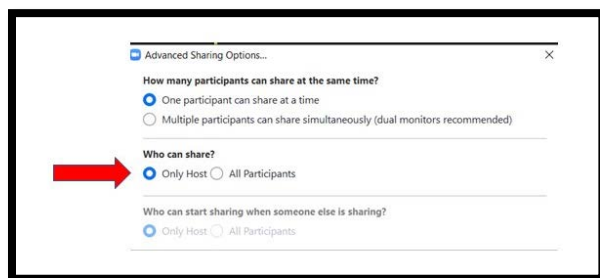


5. Preventing “Share Screen” Abuse

- To prevent “Share Screen” abuse, many groups allow only the hosts to share their screens. To limit the ability to share screen...
- Click the arrow next to “Share Screen” (Blue arrow below)
- Select “Advanced Sharing Options...” (Yellow arrow).



- Selecting “Advanced Sharing Options...” brings up the dialog box below. Select “Host Only” (Red arrow)



Remember: These tools are all designed to help your group protect yourselves from intrusions, but there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Please arm your Chairs and Hosts with this information, and discuss in your groups what will work best for your needs. We will continue to evolve guidance for the community as new information becomes available.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

Remote A.A. Meetings

7th Tradition Best Practices

Online meeting spaces make it difficult to “pass the basket.” Some groups have set up digital contribution accounts with services like Venmo, PayPal, Google Pay, etc. to deal with this problem. Now might be a good time to review an essential piece of AA literature, “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix.” Each group is autonomous and might consider taking a group conscience on whether digital contributions are an option, and which platform (or mix of platforms) best suits their groups’ needs.

But first, why collect 7th Tradition for an online meeting?

- **Our regular meeting locations still have operating expenses...**
 - Our meetings facilities may rely on our regular rent to help pay their rent, utilities, and employees
 - Meeting supplies will still be needed when our meetings reopen – coffee, paper products, literature, refreshments. And after an extended closure, we may experience a large influx of people who are motivated to re-join the fellowship in person.
- **Intergroup and the General Service Office still have operating expenses such as...**
 - Websites – which we may now rely on more than ever!
 - Phone lines, rent and insurance on office space
 - Utility and other ongoing expenses
 - Paid Special Workers who deserve our continued support. Their compensation is crucial to their ability to serve us.
- **Our Districts and Areas and CTFC still have expenses...**
 - Regular expenses to support the work of committees and events that will take place when the crisis has passed are still there.
 - Web services support for groups
 - Expenses for venues for events that have been cancelled may still need to be met, since any income from the event won't be there to support the pre-payment of reservations, cancellation fees, etc. The expense of re-arranging for venues to reschedule events is very real.

Let's continue to support these folks during the crisis.

- We realize that even though the immediate need for virtual connections is relatively inexpensive, the real expenses of our fellowship continues. Please consider continuing to practice our 7th Tradition and make contributions to the service entities that support your group – your Intergroup or Central Office, your District, Area and the General Services Office. Individual members may choose to contribute directly to service entities—consider becoming a [Faithful Fiver](#) or make a [one-time contribution](#) to Intergroup. Contributions to GSO can be made [here](#).

Now, how does our Group go about collecting digital contributions?

- **Understand the role of treasurer** – read [The A.A. Group Treasurer](#) to learn about the role of treasurer within the group. Here you will learn the importance of selecting a treasurer, how to safeguard and distribute group funds, what a “prudent reserve” is, and more!
- **Group bank account vs Treasurer’s personal account** – Your group likely has this sorted out already. For smaller groups, treasurers tend to use their personal bank account and account for group funds using a spreadsheet. A larger group might have a bank account established in the name of the group. *For more information on how to set up a group bank account, see this [Guide to Obtaining a Tax ID Number](#).*
- **Digital payment options** – [Venmo](#), [PayPal](#), [Zelle](#), [Cash App](#), [Google Pay](#), [Stripe](#), and [Apple Pay](#) are all viable options.
- **Take a group conscience** – A group conscience is recommended as each member who wishes to contribute will need to open an account with the chosen service. Many members may already have a service they use and prefer.
- **You can select one or multiple** – A group can agree to use just one service, but larger groups may even want to consider multiple options for their members.
- **Consider the costs and benefits of each platform** – each service has varying fees for money transfers depending on the users’ chosen method of payment (debit, credit, checking account, etc.). Some may have a more user-friendly interface than others.

Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix

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