

Anybody Out There: What's the Deal with Webcams, Anyway?

A webcam can be a helpful tool for working and learning together in a web platform like Zoom. Below are four guidelines to help.

1. **Be intentional.** When you ask participants to have their webcam OFF or ON, ensure you have a reason why.

EXAMPLE: Turn it ON to help build a sense of team or get to know each other.

EXAMPLE: Turn it OFF to help individuals focus on a solo activity or reflection.

2. **Be transparent.** When individuals know why you are asking for webcams to be ON or OFF, they are more likely to be compliant.

EXAMPLE: "While we listen to the panel, feel free to turn your webcam ON or OFF – the choice is yours..."

EXAMPLE: "I would like to ask you to turn your webcam ON at this point. This will help us talk about this sensitive topic together."

3. **Mix it up.** Starting and ending with all webcams ON is an important way to connect. However, how you invited participants to engage with content along the way may vary.

EXAMPLE: "While we watch this following video, feel free to turn your webcam OFF.... While you take your thoughts about the video into your breakout room, I ask you to turn your webcams back ON. It will be helpful to see your group members as you enter into dialogue and work."

EXAMPLE: "As we take a few minutes to stretch and take a break from our work, I invite you to turn you webcam OFF."

EXAMPLE: "For the next 10 minutes you are invited to draw an image that communicates how you think we are doing so far with our strategic objectives. Let's turn your webcam OFF for this time, and I'll let you know when it is time to come back."

4. **Affirm people actions.** By thanking people for their compliance, they may more quickly turn it ON or OFF on your request the next time.

EXAMPLE: "It's so wonderful to see you all – thank you for turning your webcam ON. It's been far too long!"

EXAMPLE: "This is very personal sharing, so I would like to ask that you to turn your webcams ON..."

EXAMPLE: "It felt good to turn our webcams OFF for a while. I hope it helped you focus on the work – I know I found it helpful."