Getting the most from online mediation

Start Mediation were pioneers in online mediation, having first started offering it in 2012. Stephen Anderson has taught many other mediators in the UK and around Europe how to mediate online. Since the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, mediating online has become a normal part of mediation.

We've drawn on that experience to put together this short guide, to help you get the best results possible from your own online meeting.



1. Your mediator

Choose a mediator who is accredited and who has experience of mediating online. They will be able to prepare you for what to expect, so you'll have some idea of what the experience might be like for you. They'll also have the particular skills needed to make working online a positive experience for everyone taking part.

Start Mediation's mediators are accredited and bring experience and sensitivity to all our online mediations. We make sure that everyone has a chance to say their piece and feel listened to.

2. Privacy

Mediation is a confidential process. Choose somewhere to take part where you won't be overheard or interrupted. You may feel tense enough without worrying about someone walking in. We do not record our meetings, and we ask everyone taking part not to record them either. Our

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Privacy Policy explains how we look after your information.

Please make arrangements for any children in your care, as they can't be present during the meetings. You might also want to keep pets out of the room to avoid distractions, although some people find a pet nearby helps them relax.

3. Your space

Ideally, have your camera at around eye level. It's important that you don't hold your device in your hand, so that it isn't shaking or moving during your meeting. Being physically comfortable matters, and you'll want your hands free to make notes, so sit at a table with a notepad and pen.

Make sure your room is well lit, without a bright window behind you, so that everyone can see your face clearly. Your expressions help them understand what you're saying and how you're feeling.

4. Zoom

We hold all our online meetings on Zoom. You don't need a Zoom account. We will email you a link, and you click it to join the meeting. On a computer, Zoom can run in your internet browser, or you can install the free Zoom app. On a tablet, you'll need to install the free Zoom app first.

We suggest you open the link a few minutes before the meeting starts, to check your camera and microphone are working.

5. Internet connection

It's important to test your internet connection and speed before you agree to meet online. A reliable broadband connection will give you the best experience. Video calls use a lot of data, so if you're using mobile data, check your allowance first.

If there are problems with sound or video during a meeting, we will do our best to sort them out.

6. Equipment

For mediation, you'll need a laptop, desktop computer or tablet with a camera and microphone. A tablet needs a screen big enough for Zoom to

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show everyone taking part, so a small tablet, such as an iPad mini, is unlikely to be big enough. Whatever you use, it must be propped up on something, not handheld.

We don't mediate with anyone using a mobile phone, because its screen is too small for all the participants to be on screen at the same time, and in mediation everyone needs to be able to see each other. A phone is fine for your MIAM though, when it's just you and the mediator.

Generally, the bigger the screen, the better, as it also makes it easier to read any documents we share.

7. Before your meeting

- Be on your own, indoors, in a private room where you can speak freely. If that isn't possible, please let us know and we will rearrange the meeting.
- Use headphones or earphones if you have them, so that no one nearby can hear the other people taking part.
- Have any documents you may need to hand, with a notepad and pen, and a glass of water or a cup of tea or coffee.
- Turn off notifications on the device you're using for the meeting.
- Keep your mobile phone with you, switched to silent, so that we can call you if there's a significant problem with sound or video.
- If you're cut off, rejoin using the same link. We'll wait for you.
- If you need any adjustments, such as captions, more breaks or a longer meeting, please let us know in advance.

To start your mediation

Call +44 1473 487427 or fill in our online MIAM form

startmediation.co.uk
The Hub, 2 Civic Drive, Ipswich IP1 2QA

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