



How To Set Up a Hybrid A.A. Meeting

What is a Hybrid A.A. Meeting?

A hybrid A.A. meeting is one that has both live (in-person) and web conferencing (virtual) elements concurrently. People can join the meeting either in person or “virtually” and interact with each other in the same room at the same time.

This pamphlet will cover three main areas for groups considering setting up a hybrid A.A. meeting:

- 1: The A.A. Traditions and Hybrid Meetings
- 2: COVID-19 Safety
- 3: The Technical Elements of a Hybrid Meeting

The A.A. Traditions and Hybrid Meetings

The following table outlines hybrid meeting considerations as they relate to each Tradition (12 Traditions reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.)

A.A. Tradition	Things to Consider
1. Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An informed group conscience will guide us. People are allowed different opinions, that is how a group conscience is formed. - Are you considering only your needs or considering what may be best for the group?
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No member holding a position in the group has an opinion that is more important or valued than any other member.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The voices of all members count. - By staying only online will this restrict members with no computer/phone access to attend meetings?
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our group is able to run on its own group conscience, but how are we affecting other groups or members when we make our decisions?

<p>5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are we reaching the newcomer? - Are we considering members with hearing/visual disabilities? - Are only members with access to phones/Internet able to attend our meeting? - Are members able to still make connections?
<p>6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Things to keep in mind when/if using or borrowing equipment to run a hybrid meeting.
<p>7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is our group able to support itself with a web conferencing account as well as rent for our facility? - Are we still keeping all levels of service in mind with our 7th tradition?
<p>8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group members should be able to perform the needs of the group in order to operate.
<p>9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we organize the cleaning, set-up, contact tracing, tech team/support?
<p>10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We should be following <u>all</u> provincial guidelines and mandates
<p>11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure to follow all A.A. protocols when announcing meetings.
<p>12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep in mind that we are practicing the principles (Unity, Trust, Identity, Autonomy, Purpose, Solidarity, Responsibility, Fellowship, Structure, Neutrality, Anonymity, Spirituality) and putting the group's needs/conscience before our own.

Hybrid Meetings and the 7th Tradition

Your group may want to consider the following questions related to the 7th Tradition as it relates to hybrid A.A. meetings:

- Does our group still pass a physical basket in the room?
- Will our 7th Tradition cover both rent and web conferencing expenses?
- Does the group still continue to send contributions to A.A. organizations according to the percentages it is currently using?
- Are we able to take credit/debit card contributions at our meeting?
- Can we receive online contributions?
- Should we set up auto deposit through our financial institution?

Below is a link to more Frequently Asked Questions related to the 7th Tradition provided by A.A.'s General Service Office in New York:

https://aa.org/assets/en_US/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf

COVID-19 Safety

Hybrid A.A. meetings need to be organized in such a way that A.A. members and the community at large remain safe from the spread of the COVID 19 virus.

Local Health Orders for Gatherings

All A.A. meetings must abide by their health region's public health authorities regarding COVID-19. Failure to do so could result in a fine for your group, and/or worse — a COVID-19 outbreak. Please check your local government's website(s) for all pertinent information related to COVID-19 health orders to ensure your group is in compliance.

Venue Requirements

As well, A.A. groups need to adhere to the rules as set out by their host venue regarding COVID-19 protocols. These rules may be different (i.e. more strict) than your local government's health authority.

Permitted Number of People: All venues obviously vary in size so there will be specific restrictions in place as to how many people will be allowed in the space. As per A.A. Tradition 4, each group is autonomous. Follow your group's conscience as it relates to your local health authority's legal requirements and your meeting facility's crowd size limitations and how to deal with overflow seating, etc.

Ventilation: Airflow is an important consideration, opening as many open windows and doors as possible can assist in stopping the spread of COVID-19. It can also make people feel safer attending in-person meetings.

Entrances and Exits: It is good practice to have separate entrances and exits to avoid people clustering too closely together.

Contact Tracing

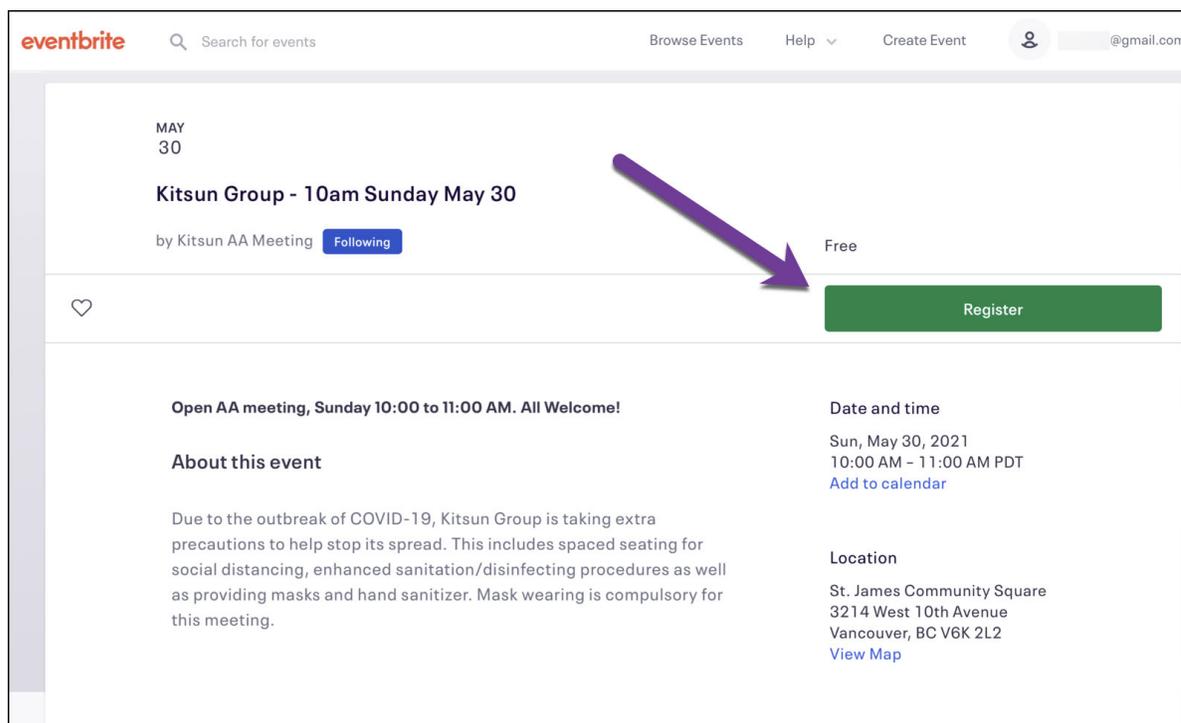
Health authorities often require our meetings to record the *name and phone number* of every person in attendance at the meeting, including all service personnel. This way, in the case of a COVID-19 outbreak, health authorities can contain the spread by notifying everyone who may have come in contact with the virus. In keeping with our traditions, a first name and last initial are sufficient. Authorities often require that the information be kept for one month. It is only to be used for the purposes of contact tracing and only shared with the appropriate authorities if they ask for it. It is your group's responsibility to ensure that all contact tracing information gathered remains private and is destroyed after one month in order to protect the anonymity of our members.

This information can be collected by having attendees fill out a form on site, or by having members register online using a free ticketing service website (such as *eventbrite*). Consult your group's conscience regarding advance registration and contact tracing requirements. A standard COVID-19 questionnaire must be filled out if someone wants to gain admission to the meeting. Ask attendees to confirm the following:

1. You do not have any of the symptoms related to COVID 19: fever, fatigue, dry cough, difficulty breathing;
2. You have not been diagnosed with COVID 19 within the last 14 days;
3. You have not knowingly been exposed to anyone with COVID 19 within the last 30 days;
4. You have not travelled out of the country within the last 30 days;
5. You agree to wear a mask over your nose and mouth, and to adhere to social distancing protocols; and
6. You agree that [Meeting Name] is not liable for any exposure you may have to COVID 19

A link to your registration/ticketing website can be added to your group, or your intergroup's website to make it easy to find.

Here is an example of what an online ticketing site could look like:



Sanitization

It is suggested to have hand sanitizer at the door. A set-up crew sanitizes everything the group will be using before for the meeting: chairs, tables, podium, audio visual equipment, etc. Sanitize everything again when putting everything away after the meeting.

Physical Distancing

Set up your chairs so that each one has a six-foot radius of clear and free space around it. Some meetings have seating set up for couples that reside in the same household so that they may sit together.

Mask Use

A mask that covers both your mouth and nose is required to remain on at all times during the meeting according to most health authorities. The only exception to this is when a speaker is at the podium sharing. Your group may want to consider purchasing disposable masks and having them available at the door.

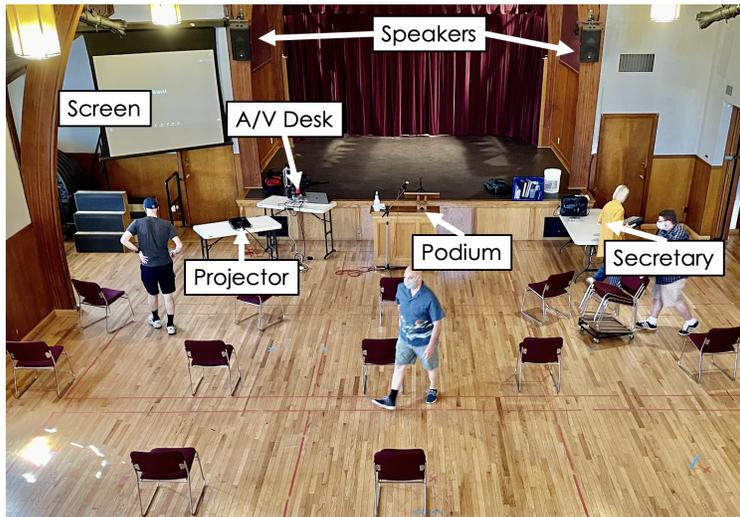
Announcements

It is good practice to have your group's COVID-19 protocols stated in your announcements.

Service Positions

It is important you have a person at the door checking to ensure attendees have registered online, or to collect any required information from them on site. It is also advisable to have members such as 'greeters' to help ensure compliance to your group's COVID-19 safety protocols, i.e., mask wearing and social distancing.

Technical Elements of a Hybrid A.A. Meeting



People

A hybrid A.A. meeting should have at least one person in charge of the technical elements during the meeting. Additional “co-hosts” can be added for management purposes.

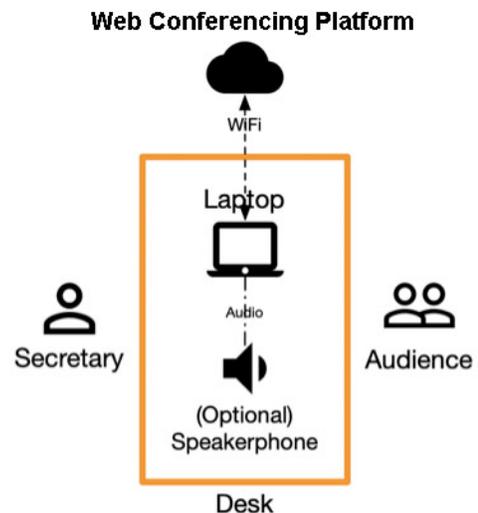
Basic Technical Elements

A small, typical hybrid A.A. meeting requires the following basic technical elements:

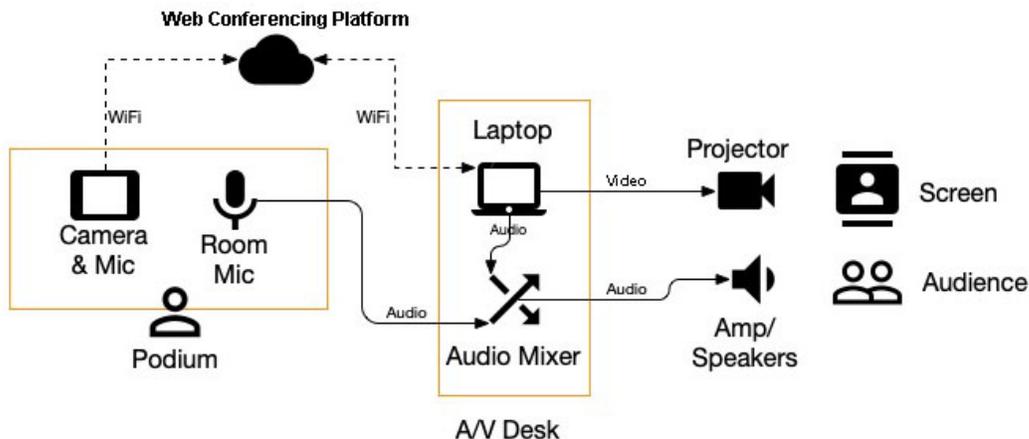
- Hardware* a computer such as a laptop, smartphone, or tablet
- Software* a free web conferencing platform account* (such as *Zoom*)
*Note: There may be limitations to free accounts.
- Internet* a strong and stable wifi connection (router or cell phone “tethering”)

Small Hybrid A.A. Meetings: A Single Connected Device

For a very small meeting, all of the above hardware elements are contained in a basic laptop. To scale things up slightly from this setup, you can add elements such as a speakerphone (for audio only), a webcam, etc.



Larger Hybrid A.A. Meetings: Multiple Connected Devices



The above schematic is one example of how to set up a larger A.A. hybrid meeting. You may want to consider the following technical gear for such a set up:

<i>Laptop</i>	to connect to a web conferencing platform
<i>Cabling</i>	to send video from the laptop to a projector (i.e. HDMI or VGA)
<i>Projector</i>	receives video from laptop and projects video to the live room
<i>Screen</i>	a projection screen (or blank wall) to allow live attendees to see virtual attendees
<i>iPad</i>	an iPad, iPhone, or other portable wireless device pointed at the speaker
<i>Mic</i>	to send audio from the live speaker to the computer (benefits virtual attendees)
<i>Mic Cable</i>	connect from mic to laptop
<i>Mic Stand</i>	assists in securing mic for live speaker (tabletop or floor model)
<i>Audio Mixer</i>	to mix the live and virtual speakers' audio in the live room
<i>Audio Cable</i>	from the laptop "out" to the audio mixer "in"
<i>AC Power</i>	power and power bars as required
<i>Extra Feeds</i>	additional cameras/devices (i.e. phones, laptops, or iPads) signed into same web conferencing account to provide the virtual attendees perspectives of the live room (i.e. view of the group from the podium, view from the rear of the room to the front, etc.)
<i>Mounts</i>	for your additional devices, to allow you to point a mounted iPad or cell phone in a certain direction or angle of the room

In this option, an Internet-enabled wireless device such as an iPhone or tablet is providing the video feed (only) of the live podium.

Additional Internet-enabled wireless devices can be added to provide views of the live room (i.e. a view from the podium toward the audience, and/or a view from the back of the room pointing to the front) for the benefit of the virtual audience.

Web Conferencing Platform Management

Consider the following when managing a web conferencing platform account for a hybrid A.A. meeting:

Account Administration

- Payment, subscription level
- Host accounts, permissions & updates
- Default meeting settings (eg: disable recording, mute upon entry)

Hosts

- in-meeting settings
- assign co-hosts
- “end meeting for all”

Co-Hosts

- Attendee management, muting, enforce rules
- Security settings (restrict share screen, renaming, unmuting, etc)
- Entry controls (password, waiting room)
- Chat (any to all, limited to hosts, or none. allow files)

How To Manage Disruptions

- Keep an eye on inappropriate behaviour
- Remove disruptive attendees to the waiting room
- Mute people as required

Links

Alcoholics Anonymous Links

[The A.A. Group... Where It All Begins, P-16, pamphlet](#)
[Safety and A.A.](#)
[Safety Card](#)

Province of British Columbia Links

[Order of the Provincial Health Officer: Food Service Establishments and Liquor Services](#)
[Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's Office: Guidance on Contact Tracing](#)
[BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) / COVID-19 / Event Planning Information](#)
[BCCDC Hand Washing Signage](#)
[BCCDC Physical Distancing Signage](#)
[WorkSafeBC's COVID-19 Safety Plan Template](#)

Other

[Suggested Group Reconvening Considerations](#)
[Technology in A.A. Online Community](#)

In Conclusion

We hope that you have found this information useful. Setting up a hybrid A.A. meeting can be a significant and worthy task. Aside from the obvious benefit of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, it has the added benefit of creating more service positions and giving members more opportunity to practice step 12. You will likely find that your members have all kinds of hidden talents and skills that will make your hybrid meeting a success, so don't be afraid to ask for help. Good luck!

*Prepared by the Hybrid A.A. Meeting Workshop Subcommittee
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