

Tools to increase participant engagement in virtual settings

Following physical distancing measures and health guidelines, you may be providing programs like financial literacy workshops and client financial support services virtually. If you and your participants have access to internet and a computer or mobile device, there are many tools available to encourage participant engagement in an online setting.

The applications mentioned below are free for use but may also have paid versions that include additional features. Prosper Canada does not endorse any specific application. Use at your own discretion.

Video conferencing

Meeting face-to-face allows us to read body language and facial expressions. This is helpful for communication, and in turn, for building relationships and rapport with participants. When in-person interactions are not possible, the next best alternative may be to use a video conferencing program so that you and participants will still be able to see each other. Some examples of video conferencing programs include:

- [Google Meet](#) (include the [Google Meet Grid View](#) Google Chrome browser extension to see multiple participants on your screen)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [WebEx](#)

Collaborative brainstorming

Whether you are discussing a concept with learners during a facilitated workshop or action planning with a client, it is useful to have a tool that allows you to organize ideas visually. Some applications allow you to type ideas and colour-code and move the typed text into a concept map, and others mimic a board posted with sticky notes. Some examples of collaborative brainstorming and mindmapping tools include:

- [Coggle](#)
- [Lucidchat](#)
- [IdeaBoardz](#)
- [Google Jamboard](#) sticky note feature (requires Google account)

(View a [sample concept map created using Coggle](#). Participants can add new branches and items onto the map collaboratively in real time.)

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Interactive whiteboard

Sketching ideas and thoughts together can be a great way break the ice or further the conversation on a topic. Many ideas in our [Top icebreaker activities](#) and [Quick warm up activities](#) resources can be adapted onto a virtual drawing canvas. Some video conferencing programs may already have a whiteboard feature built-in, but if not, the examples below are easy to use:

- [AWW - A Web Whiteboard](#)
- [Whiteboard Fox](#)
- [Google Jamboard](#) (requires Google account)

Interactive games, quizzes, polls

Games, quizzes, and polls can be very engaging for groups, especially if responses can be seen in real time by the facilitator and fellow participants. Below are some tools that you can use to create interactive activities for your group sessions:

- [Kahoot!](#) for creating interactive games and quizzes
- [Mentimeter](#) for creating interactive presentations that include polls and quizzes
- [Swift](#) for real time polling

Additional considerations

Consider the ease of use and accessibility features of any applications you decide to use. Test any tools, perhaps with a group of colleagues, before sharing with participants. Also be sure to follow the recommendations and privacy and security guidelines set by your organization or governing body.

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