

Connecting Confidently Online



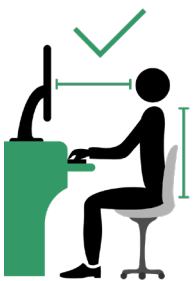
During COVID-19, we may be spending a lot more time online and it's natural to feel overwhelmed or stressed. Below are a few tips to help you manage online stress, anxiety, and feel more confident as you work, learn, and connect online.

5 Ways to Feel Confident Online and Cope with Zoom Anxiety



1. Set Yourself up for Success

Test your technology before meetings to make sure your camera, speakers, and microphone are working properly. Create a space with minimal distractions, lighting in front of you, and maintain virtual eye contact by positioning your camera at eye level.



2. Create a Confident Online Appearance

Body posture is important. Sit up straight, face the screen with your shoulders squared, your head straight, and feet flat on the ground. Before the meeting, take 5 deep breaths and start with a smile. Keeping your camera on helps to maintain human connection through body language and eye contact. If you are getting distracted by your own video, use "hide self-view" or "speaker view" rather than turning off your camera.



3. Reframe Unhelpful Thoughts

Remind yourself that it's okay to feel anxious. We can get too caught up in what we *think* others are thinking about us. It's important to remember that people are not noticing us as much as we assume. In reality, most people are thinking about themselves. One of the most important thoughts to remember is, "I'm keeping myself and others safe by maintaining distance."



4. Change Behaviors

Set goals for yourself to increase social connection—for example, when in a break-out room, challenge yourself to take a risk and ask someone a question to get to know them (e.g., find common ground—what is something you have in common or talk about a common experience you are sharing, "How are you liking this class so far?," "Would you like to study together sometime over phone or Zoom?").



5. Create Healthy Online Habits

Be mindful of "zoom fatigue" and reduce how much time you are on screens when not working. Take "screen breaks" throughout the day to stretch and move. Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look away from your screen for 20 seconds at an object that is 20 feet away.

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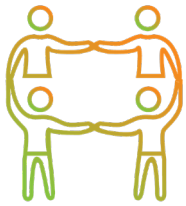


5 Ways to Socially Connect While Keeping Physical Distance



1. Be Intentional

It's easy to keep to ourselves during these times of physical distancing. It's important to be intentional about creating and maintaining relationships, as close relationships help reduce loneliness and provide support during stressful times. Prioritize weekly social connections.



2. Find Community

Attend one of our Community Forums where students can meet and build connection: caps.ucsd.edu/groups. Find groups that have similarities with your own interests and values. Try apps specifically for finding and making friends such as "Bumble BFF" and "Meetup.com." Ideas for ways to connect online while maintaining physical distance: Study groups, book club chats, distance dinner parties, group online exercise class, stream movies online together, cook together over Zoom, virtual game night.



3. Attend Virtual Social Events

Set a weekly goal to attend one of the many events going on across campus to meet and connect with others. The Center for Student Involvement facilitates opportunities for learning, community building, and engagement: getinvolved.ucsd.edu. UCSD Virtual Student Union shares online activities and events happening each week: virtualstudentunion.ucsd.edu.



4. Create Residential Units

Think of it like a circle of care and cooperation. Create residential units, which are small, self-contained networks of people in your residence who limit their non-distanced social interaction to one another.



5. Support From Loved Ones and Professionals

Reach out and connect with loved ones and share with them when you need support. If you would like professional support, please visit the CAPS website for additional information and resources: caps.ucsd.edu