Tools for increasing engagement in your virtual convening

Consider these options for making your virtual convening engaging and explore the other capabilities of your videoconferencing platform.

TOOL	WHAT IT DOES	WHY IT'S USEFUL	WHEN AND HOW TO USE IT
Polls	Collects real-time feedback from participants May be anonymized depending on software used	Requires participants to be present and engage with the prompt in real-time Gathers input that can inform the facilitation	At the beginning of the convening to get to know participants During a session to solicit input about a particular topic At the end of the convening to collect feedback about the event
Video	Enables participants to see presenters' video feeds Enables participants to see each other in a "gallery" of video feeds	Simulates face-to-face interaction in the virtual environment Allows participants and facilitators to see facial expressions and nonverbal body language Adds visual interest to the event, decreasing the chance that participants will look at something else (i.e., their phone!) May increase accessibility for participants that read lips because they are deaf or hard of hearing	During event introductions, depending on group size During informational sessions so participants can see presenters During group discussions so participants can see each other

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Virtual whiteboard or bulletin board	Enables participants to do group brainstorming by contributing their ideas on virtual "sticky notes" Enables participants to rank, vote on, and sort ideas and other information	Requires participants to be present and engage with the activity in real-time Gathers feedback from multiple people simultaneously (versus sharing verbally one at a time) Encourages peer learning and engagement Often elicits input from participants that may be less likely to contribute their ideas verbally	During collaborative sessions that seek to collect input from several participants
Breakout rooms	Sends participants into separate virtual rooms for small group discussions	Promotes in-depth conversation among participants Facilitates discussion of specialized topics that interest some, but not all, participants	During a session that requires simultaneous, hands-on problem-solving When participants have specialized interests or areas expertise When small groups could discuss specific aspects of a multifaceted issue