



Online Mediation “Best Practices”

You may connect directly with your web browser without signing up for Zoom. We have found that parties have a better experience when they utilize the downloadable Zoom application, but it is not necessary. Joining the video conference call, without the Zoom application, is as easy as clicking the link my support team sends you with your mediation details.

The Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

I use the Zoom platform which is simple and easy to use. It provides adequate security levels and confidential breakout rooms.

How It Works

I want all parties to be comfortable with how to use Zoom. If you want my support team to walk you through the basics before the mediation, let us know. I also have a private tech support person available if needed, who can assist at no expense to you. If you are really industrious, and want to learn more, there are short video tutorials available under the resources and support tabs at www.zoom.us.

I manage all aspects of the video mediation on my end. As a participant, just click the link sent to you, which has a meeting ID and password. If you are new to Zoom, follow the prompts, clicking "download and run Zoom," add your name, and choose "join with video."

Once you sign in, you will be in a **Waiting Room**. Think of it as the lobby. You will not be able to see anyone else, but I am notified that you have arrived. Once we are ready, I will move each participant directly into a breakout room for the appropriate party. We will decide together whether to move into a “common room” for a “meet and greet.” I create the secure breakout rooms, go in and out of them, move people from one room to another, and generally run the mediation as I would if we were in person. When you are in a breakout room, no one else can see or hear you other than those you see on your screen. I can also create more breakout rooms as may be needed for private conversations you may wish to have. Just about anything we do in an in-person mediation can be done virtually.

Throughout the mediation, you can ***mute*** your microphone, turn off your ***video***, share any document on your computer onto the screens of others in your room or choose to share with the other side. You will always know who is in your room by either seeing their video feed or clicking on the list of participants.

Security and Confidentiality

Zoom is an encrypted platform and its security and privacy settings are on its website. We have disabled the “record” feature and do not utilize the “chat” feature.

What You Will Need

All you need is a secure Wi-Fi or ethernet (hard-wired) internet connection.

Technology Issues and How To Reach Me

As with all technology, sometimes there are glitches or inadvertent keystrokes that cause disruption. Do not panic. It rarely happens, but if that were to occur, please call or text me and I will get you back into the session and/or the correct room. My **cell number** is 818-402-4320. You may also use it for private communications with me during our mediation if needed.

Best Practices and Tips for Effectively Mediating Online

Here are a few tips you might find useful:

- 1. *Early Login.*** Login to the meeting a few minutes early to make sure your connection works (you will see my logo and welcome note in the waiting room). Test the operation of your video and microphone.
- 2. *Reliable Connection.*** Make sure you have a reliable and fast internet connection--not just a secure one. Reportedly, most problems arise from heavy simultaneous use or bandwidth to your office or home.
- 3. *Do Not “Leave Meeting.”*** You will see a “Leave Meeting” button on your screen. Do not push it when all you want is a break. It will cause you to disconnect and require you to be readmitted and reassigned to your breakout room. Instead, you may Silence (“Mute”) your microphone and turn off your video. Those buttons are on the lower left.

4. **Eye Contact.** Try to look at the camera when talking--not the video. Similarly, when listening, remember that the speaker likely wants to see you looking at them.
5. **Camera Placement.** For the best results, your camera should be at eye level. You should also face any light or have it directed from the side. Sitting in front of a window darkens your face.
6. **Background.** Consider the background people will see and whether it conveys what you want.
7. **Camera, Microphone and Speakers.** Almost all built-in cameras, microphones, and speakers work just fine. If you are going to be doing a lot of online cases, you might consider an inexpensive plug and play webcam that sits on your monitor. Bluetooth earbuds you use for your mobile phone also work fine, but you will have to click the audio link in the lower left corner to connect them.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office anytime.