

# Managing Breaks in a Virtual Meeting

1. Adhere to the promised break times and lengths as much as possible. Consider strategic breaks:
  - a. A break could come slightly early or at an unplanned time to transition from a heated debate or interrupt a participant who is unfairly or inappropriately using meeting time.
  - b. A break could come slightly late to allow participants to finish a productive discussion and arrive at consensus or a conclusion that will create shared success.
2. Make attendees aware that there are planned breaks but encourage them to take breaks as needed to care for themselves during the meeting.

## Before the Break

- Announce the break is starting and when it will end. Use a visual timer on your shared screen and signify the start and end with a bell or other cue.
- Encourage attendees to stand, stretch, and relax during the session time. Avoid assigning tasks or allowing discussion to continue without everyone in attendance.

## After the Break

- Welcome participants back after the break. Offer a summary of what has been accomplished already and what is next on the agenda.
- Reiterate the meeting objectives and group norms.
- Address any questions or concerns raised during the break or that were unresolved during the previous agenda topic.
- Consider a short and relevant warm-up or icebreaker activity to introduce the next topic.