



## TOP TIPS FOR VIRTUAL TEACHING

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## INTRODUCTION

The Cardiff University MSc for Health Care professionals' team transitioned 11 days of face to face teaching to on line for 2020 as a result of the covid-19 pandemic making face to face delivery impossible for this international course. These notes are our collective experience and will develop with increasing use of the technology and discussion.

As Zoom is being used more widely, we are starting to understand there are some regions internationally where Zoom is less easy and reliable. In the UK, a number of NHS regions are not supporting its use, preferring an application such as 'Microsoft teams'.

There might be slightly different processes if you use 'Teams' or 'Zoom' or another 'virtual platform' – although the educational principles will be the same in the following notes.

## GENERAL issues

### Preparation

Session planning is as important as ever. Concentration time for continuing to look at a screen is short ( both for facilitators and for participants) – as well as available time to attend. Interaction with participants is possible – either in person on the screen via microphone OR via the 'chat ' function – and don't forget to allow time in the lesson plan for this as you would do in a face to face lesson plan.

It's better to aim for a number of shorter sessions rather than one long session and if running a half day study day – aim for 3 or 4 x 45 minute sessions with 10-15 minutes break in between. Be very clear over starting times for the next session.

Sending information to participants ahead of the session , including what to expect from the session and any pre session reading is useful. Giving information about the platform being used – eg Zoom is useful and encourage people new to the technology to establish a connection prior to the session.

Have a think about what it is you want to teach on line and if it would be more impactful if 'pre-reading' is distributed before hand – this goes back to lesson planning and understanding what the aims and intended outcomes of the session will be. The role of the webinar or meeting is that it is a synchronous 'in the moment' opportunity for learners to connect with you as a facilitator and colleagues.

If you are organizing a session with new participants or co-hosts – the use of a practice 10 minutes is invaluable ahead of the event to ensure co-hosts familiarize themselves with the technology and have a separate email/ mobile number on the day so that people can alert you if there are problems.

CHECK TIME ZONES when setting the meeting up

## The session itself

Check you are not 'back lit' – participants need to be able to see your face.

Check where the camera is on your technology so that, where possible you talk 'to' the camera

Check your power supply – do you have a back up facility ready if necessary?

It is really useful to have a 'co-facilitator' whose role it is to monitor the 'chat' function and questions and ask them on everyone's behalf. If they think someone may have connection issues, they can send a private message to that participant. This also gives scope for peer feedback and reflection on the session. As a facilitator, don't forget to build in time for these questions and reflections from any discussions which have happened on the 'chat'.

Allow a couple of minutes at the start for people to join – you can have a welcome slide showing using 'screen share' while people are joining which can be useful to confirm they are in the right meeting(!)

The waiting room function is useful it gives you more control over people attending and avoids unwelcome or unexpected participants, although it does potentially delay the start of a session – if you assign a co-host, they can admit people from the waiting room on your behalf.

Don't forget to press 'record' if the session is going to be recorded.

The list of participants can be a register of attendees if a co-host can take note

If possible avoid a monologue lecture ( participants could listen to that as a podcast in asynchronous learning ) – build in gaps and use interaction if you can

If participants use headphones, they can cut out extraneous noise and make it easier to concentrate.

If wifi bandwidth is unstable, using microphone alone without video can help – although in a small group, the lack of face on video can lessen the small group dynamic. Consider asking people to mute microphones when they join but if they are happy to do so leave their camera on. This helps:

- to spot if people have been cut off (because their picture will freeze)
- the facilitator to gauge (from people's facial expression and other non-verbal feedback ) whether you still appear to have a captive audience (or not);
- everyone in the group to attach a face to a name; and, otherwise as a facilitator it can feel that you are just talking to a black void

If you are not able to have someone co-facilitating with you, it is useful to have two devices logged in (e.g. an ipad and laptop) one logged in as the facilitator, one as a participant: so you can then see what everyone else is seeing, and also easier to spot 'hands up' etc. across two screens.

Check what's visually behind you before you join e.g. if joining from your work office and there's a ward list of patient names etc behind you need to ensure the background is changed or blurred. Try to avoid too distracting a background – either in real life , or in your choice of computer generated background. If working with an international audience in particular, ensure that your background is culturally appropriate.

When joining, double check what name will appear related to your device (which may default to whoever used that computer last) e.g. if your children last used the laptop to speak to grandma you may inadvertently appear labelled as 'Peppa Pig'. It may also be useful to put in brackets after your name that you are the session facilitator as it may

not otherwise be that obvious to the participants when they first join, particularly if its a large group e.g. rather than 'Jo Bloggs', 'Jo Bloggs (session facilitator)

Depending on the session and desired outcome, holding an informal catch up at the end of the session or day can be useful. This captures questions that might have been hindered by the virtual classroom set up and can quickly clarify uncertainty while there is a direct contact with the facilitator.

If you are the organizer, make sure you have a way that cohosts or co-facilitators can make contact with you – this could be by mobile or tablet/ipad in addition to the laptop or screen on which the virtual meeting is taking place. However, it's best to avoid the temptation, if you are running the session, to do anything else at the same time! Your participants will quickly know if you are not focusing on the session by your body language and expression.



Second lap top showing emails

LAPTOP hosting ZOOM meeting session

Mobile phone in case of SOS ( on silent but text enabled)

## After the event

- Seek feedback on content and delivery style and impact on clinical practice
- If anyone has had connection issues or unexpectedly dropped out, especially if during a sensitive discussion or communication skills session, make contact with them by email or phone to check all is well.
- Follow up any other housekeeping issues

## Using the Waiting Room facility on Zoom and creating a register of attendees

It's generally more secure to use a waiting room on zoom as you can hopefully avoid unwelcome or unexpected attendees, however you need to ensure that the host/co-hosts admit people in a timely way and don't keep people waiting too long , you can have an introductory slide showing as a screen share. Taking screenshots of the 'participants' list will create a register of attendees.

## **GIVING A LECTURE**

Use the same principles as if teaching face to face although there is a need for more interaction to break up the 'screen' time – without interaction you are just giving facts – and have no idea how much of the information may be used or make an impact.

Ideally build in gaps, use the 'chat' function, polls or 'breakout rooms' (see later section) and you can build in use of other media – providing they all 'add value' to the session.

Time keeping is important – in essence, 'less is more' and it may be better to do a couple of shorter sessions rather than one long session – optimal time is 30-40 minutes with 10-15 minutes of question time

## **Meeting or Webinar on Zoom ?**

Whether your session is designated a 'meeting' on Zoom or a 'webinar' depends on the type of account you are using

On Zoom, 'webinars' are set up so that the organizer (host) and designated panelists can share screens, audio and video. People to attend the session but are unable to speak (their microphones remain muted, although they can interact via a question and answer facility, the 'chat', and respond to 'polls'.

A 'meeting' on Zoom is a more collaborative event where all attendees can screen share, use video and audio to participate if the organizer 'host' enables this during the session. To screen share, participants need to be made a 'co-host' on Zoom by the host, participants can control their audio and video participation themselves, or this can be done by the host.

## **USING SHARE SCREEN**

Test the function first – there is sometimes a slight delay as you first start sharing your screen.

You can share your screen – make sure you have minimized potentially sensitive information in other applications or documents that may be open

If you want to ask a question or use the chat function for interaction, it may be more effective to stop sharing your screen at that point to give the group a sense of community.

While sharing your screen, you won't be able to see many of the group – you can choose how many participants you see – it is useful to ask someone that you can see if the screen sharing is working before you make reference to the content

## **SHARE COMPUTER SOUND**

Some applications – eg ZOOM might need you to specifically activate 'share computer sound' if you want to show a video clip. Useful to practice this first

## **HAVING A CO-HOST**

Using a 'Co-Host' when using sharing screens or using additional technology in a session is especially useful.

## USING BREAK OUT ROOMS on ZOOM

This is a really useful application and can reproduce small group working. Automatic assigning is quick and easy and assigns people randomly – see appendix 1 for screenshots. Participants have to ‘agree’ they are going to join a break out room and when they do , their icon will disappear from the main screen.

It is important to leave someone with ‘host’ functions in the main room for trouble shooting or to reassign participants who may have lost internet connection and have to rejoin.

DO NOT ‘REMOVE’ people from the meeting - they will not be able to be admitted to that room until it is reopened with a different meeting !

You can broadcast a message to all rooms and when you close the rooms there is a 60 second warning before participants are automatically reassigned to the main meeting. You need to warn your groups and facilitators about this to avoid sudden interruptions in someone speaking or major discussion happening at the point the rooms close. Ideally warn people about the process and broadcast to all rooms the fact that the rooms will close 5 minutes before as well as 2 minutes before actual closing.

Sometimes in small numbers in the break out rooms , it is ok for people to leave their microphones on without interference – this can make a more spontaneous conversation.

Appointing a timekeeper and a spokesperson is always useful to remind each group to do before they break out = and have clear instructions for what needs to be achieved in the breakout session.

The ‘chat ‘ function for the larger group will not be visible for the breakout rooms and the recording facility will not work unless specifically activated in that room

When using breakout rooms and the chat function, the chat from the main room remains on peoples screens when they go to their breakout rooms (although they can’t add to it)- and so it’s useful to type the questions they are to discuss. Alternative option for this, is to ask participants to screen shot/ photograph the discussion tasks before they go to a breakout room.

Using breakout rooms can be very creative and can facilitate team working – for example asking people to create a ‘shape’ on screen and send a screen shot



Eliciting feedback following breakout rooms – you can ask for a spokesperson from each room for feedback on the task and then ask for anything additional to be written on the ‘chat’ . If you were the ‘host’ of the

zoom meeting, you will also still be able to see who was in each room for the rest of that meeting ID, so you can ask named individuals if necessary.

Don't forget to build in time in the session to elicit feedback.

## USING POLLS on ZOOM

This can be a neat way for interaction to happen – and results can be shared . There is a very simple polling set up on zoom with questions with 2 answers which could be single or multiple choice – you can then copy the question and then change it to give more questions....

There is no 'multiple word ' function though – the 'chat' is better for that – or use a different application and share you screen – though that can sometimes 'crash' the system

## USING THE CHAT FUNCTION

You can ask people for opinions, feedback, questions...using the 'chat' function or put in links to mentioned articles and resources. You can share this information afterwards with participants. CAUTION though –if you are the host and recording the session everything written on your chat is recorded and can be copied into a word document – you might want to check that there is no 'private' chat and delete any if so (!)

Useful for the co-host to write the question in the chat before people start answering- OR remember it and add it to the word document before circulating so the themes of the conversations are clear.

## HOW TO MANAGE THE RECORDINGS on ZOOM

The sessions can be recorded – and can be saved as an audio file only which takes up much less room on people's systems and is essentially a podcast.

The 'chat' is saved as a 'note' and can be copied into a word document – this is useful , particularly if there has been a lot of interaction – but CAUTION ! - remove any 'private' chat before circulating!

The actual session recording shows the mainscreen and is a really effective record of the session – slides, chat, interaction etc. it does take up space though. You can upload into any video editing software to take out the start and end or do other edits if preferred

SECOND CAUTION ! If you have used the breakout room facility during the session – the MAIN ROOM will still be being recorded, so you might want to edit out that part as well – especially if you have used that time to have private conversations !

## HOW TO CONDUCT AND PARTICIPATE IN SMALL GROUP SESSIONS USING ZOOM

If the session is standalone, suggest the processes outlined above to practice joining the session.

If using videos in the group , it may be easiest to download them onto the desk top or computer and don't forget to find the 'share computer sound' button and check that they play in advance of the session



The preparation and introductions/ icebreaking parts at the start are really important to help create a positive learning environment. It can be useful to specifically ask participants to:

- mute microphones on arrival
  - open up the 'chat' function
  - find the 'hands up' function – if unable to find that, agree a signal such as a hand wave to attract the attention for when a person might want to speak
- 
- Assign someone as a timekeeper
  - Assign someone to be prepared to feedback to a larger group
  - When all joined each group member asked to unmute mic and introduce themselves in turn, then mute again
  - Depending on time, an additional icebreaker may be used
  - LOOK OUT for those who are unable to use video and make sure they can use the 'chat' to have a voice. It might be worth practicing that before the session proper gets underway.

In the session itself , it is useful to:

- Outline the aims of the session ( keeping people focused in an online environment is key)
- Use the 'chat' to explore if there are other issues that participants were expecting or want to cover
- If a DISCUSSION session, the facilitator could ask each person in turn, or ask for people to signal when they are ready to contribute but make sure as above that for those who are not using video, they are included.
- Summarise at the end, house keep outstanding issues , establish follow up points

Note that in small groups, it can sometimes be possible for people to keep their microphones turned ON without sound interference which makes the conversation more fluent and informal. The suggested etiquette is to use a clear hand signal to indicate that a participant wants to speak , with 3 or 4 people in a group, even this might not be needed. BUT be aware that there may be slight time lapses between participants so try to avoid 2 people speaking at the same time.

## **USING SMALL GROUPS FOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS – ROLE PLAY**

It is possible to hold 'role play' sessions on Zoom, especially if you are considering virtual or telephone consultation skills. The usual small group facilitation skills already outlined underpin the session , but there are additional areas to pay attention to.

Outlining 'rules of role play' and a defined structure of the session at the start, including the 'time out' signal that will be used by role players or the facilitator. The 'safety' of the group including some icebreaker activities is really important to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the session.

If role playing a video consultation, it may feel more realistic if those not involved in the scenario turn their videos off, so the only video pictures on the screen are those of the health care professional and 'patient' or other 'actor'. When the role play comes to an end, or at a time out signal, turning videos back on.

If role playing a phone consultation, those role playing might choose to turn their videos off, so that the situation is more realistic, turning them on again when the role play comes to an end – as group discussion is more effective and participatory if all involved can see each other.

For role play, it is really important to have a back up plan for a participant with whom you lose contact – check there is an email address and send or ask a course coordinator to check in with the participant



## IF THINGS GO WRONG

- If you play a video and there is no sound, check you have enabled the 'share computer sound' function
- Using break out rooms, always have someone in the main zoom room – so if participants lose connection, they will rejoin the 'main room' and be directed back into the break out room
- If you lose a student who starts the group but then drops out and does not rejoin the group - let the organiser know – who can email them to check that all is well . This is especially important in role play or issues in which sensitive or challenging issues are discussed
- If you sense you are 'losing ' the group or there is a lack of responsiveness, ask a question or ask people to 'do' something – either in a breakout room or on the chat function. It can sometimes be helpful to have a 'poll' ready as a back up . The 'hidden curriculum' is definitely in evidence in the virtual learning environment – you can never be sure exactly what the participants will take away as learning points.
- Be kind to yourself ! Everyone is learning and in covid 19 times, using technology is the better option than not sharing education/professional development !!

## APPENDIX

### ATTENDING WEBINARS AND SEMINARS ON ZOOM

#### Etiquette for Virtual Meetings

- If you can, please sign into the meeting a little earlier than the scheduled start time to try out the technology.
- Keep the meeting details in an accessible space – if there is a problem with wifi ( sometimes beyond your control), you may lose connection and have to rejoin
- check that the name showing on the account is the name by which you would prefer to be called
- On joining, you may be placed in a ‘waiting room’ – so there will be a delay before you are admitted to the main meeting virtual space
- When you are admitted to meeting, please mute your microphone.
- If possible, use a headset or headphones with a built-in microphone to limit background noise.
- If you find your internet connection is struggling, try switching off the video function.
- If you have a question, please use the chat function.
  - This function can also be used to share extra information. You can choose who to share this information with, whether it’s all participating in the meeting or a specific person. Be aware that messages that are sent in the chat will be saved and at the end of the meeting will be sent to ‘hos’t of the meeting.
- For members to participate in the meeting, use the ‘hand up’ reaction or agree a hand signal. If you are joining without video, you need to use the CHAT function in order to ask your question
  - The Chair will invite you to share your thoughts on the discussion being had. At this point, promptly unmute your mic and once you have finished mute your mic again.

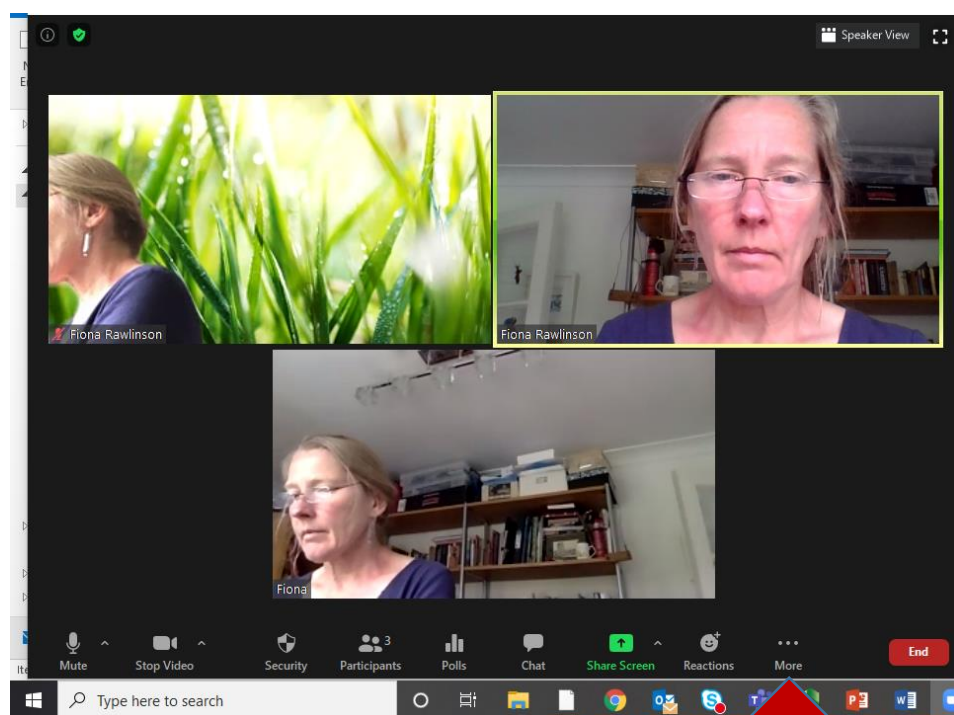
## USING BREAKOUT ROOMS ON ZOOM – SEPTEMBER 2020

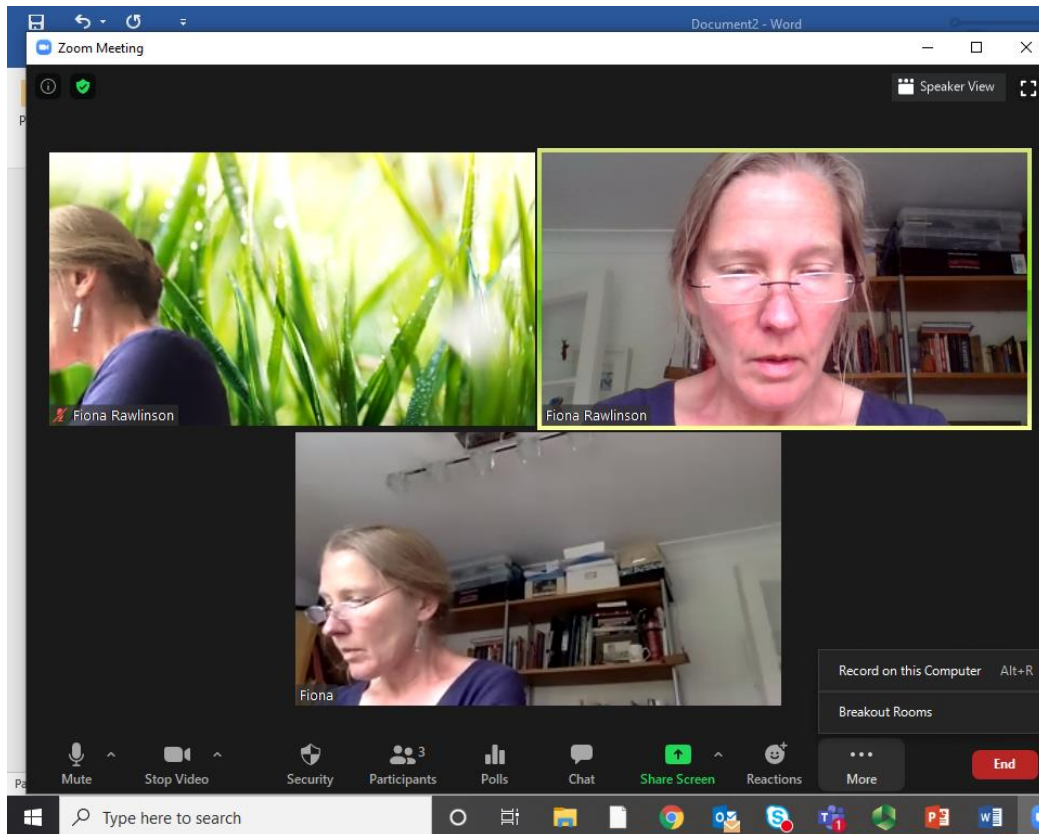
### NOTES FOR HOST WITH STUDENT VIEWS

#### HOST

You can only assign into breakout rooms if you are designated a 'host' of the meeting – otherwise the function is not available to you

At the bottom of the screen is your functions tab – these notes cover using breakout rooms





Break out rooms can be assigned either AUTOMATICALLY – useful if the groups are to be mixed but not useful if you want a designated person as facilitator in each group , or if you want eg the paediatric students to be in a specific group – in these last 2 cases, better to assign manually – BUT THIS WILL TAKE TIME , so you need to possibly have a front slide playing as you assign people, possibly with a learning suggestion or information that will be useful for the session.

So get the slide ready , make sure you haven't got any sensitive information open about to be displayed and share your screen ,

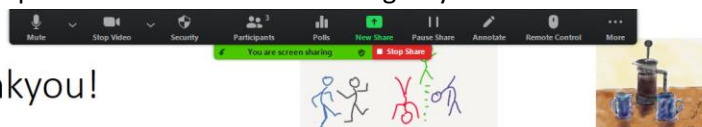
Eg

When I share my screen, my functions tab moves to the top of the screen



Look for the option 'More' – click and it will give you the breakout room option

Thankyou!



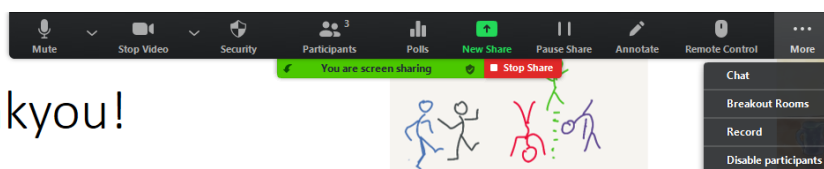
- You can leave the break out room and rejoin the large group
- Take a comfort break
- Please rejoin the LARGE GROUP Zoom session at 12 noon
- If you get lost , the Zoom link is in the module



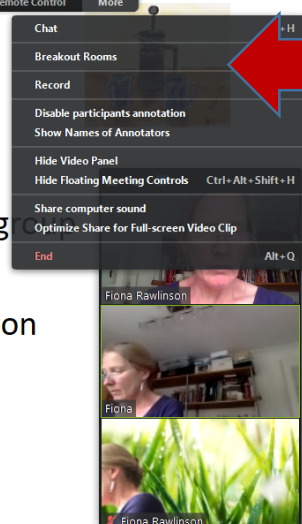
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Thankyou!

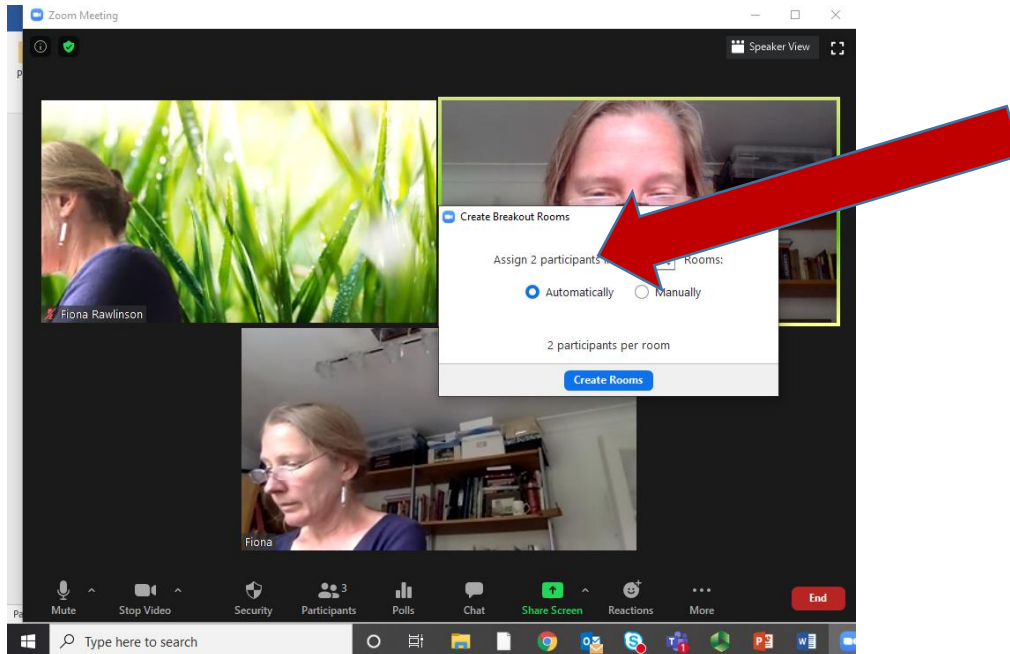


- You can leave the break out room and rejoin the large group
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- If you get lost , the Zoom link is in the module

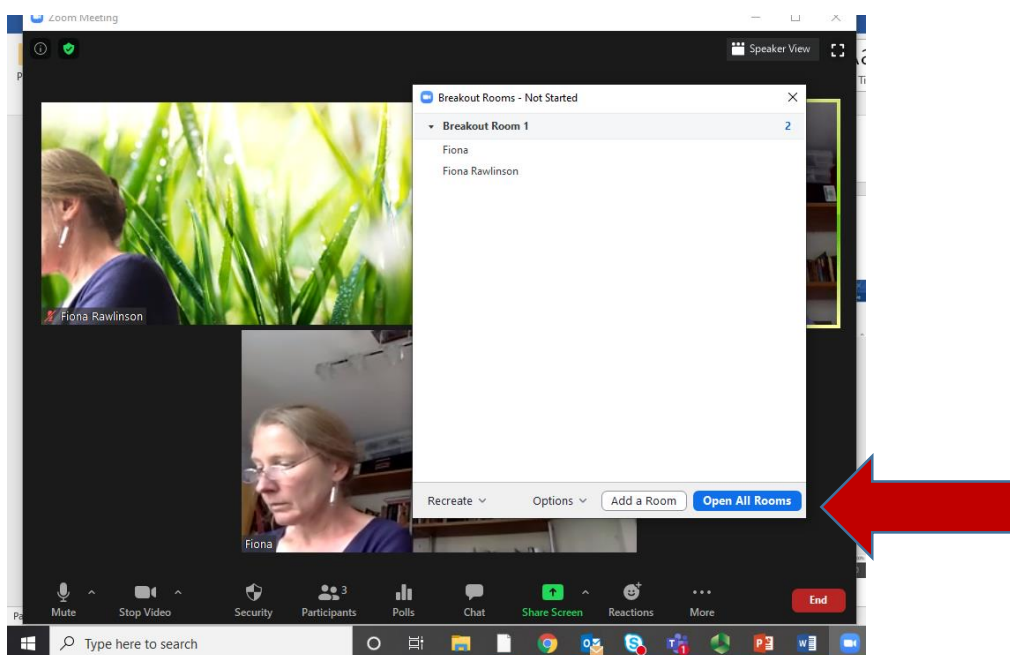


## TO ASSIGN students into rooms...

If you press 'Automatic', Zoom will assign people

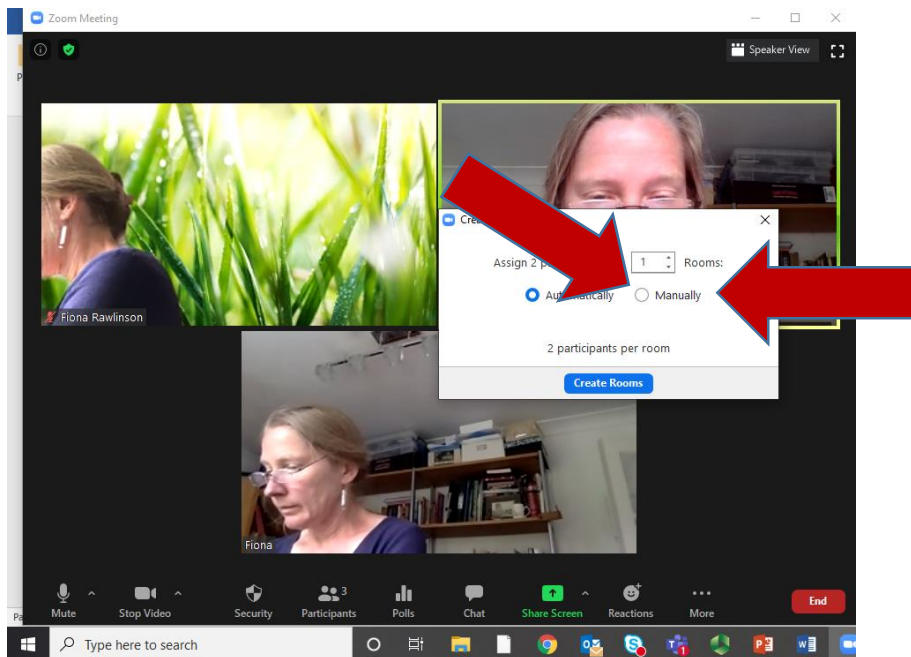


And once you press **OPEN ALL ROOMS**, participants will be invited on their screens to join

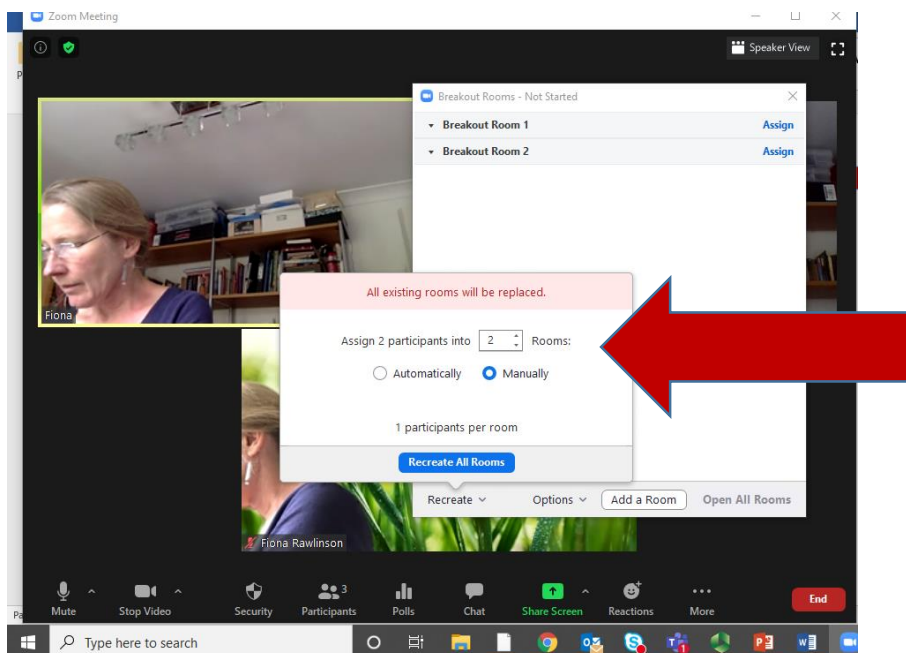


And the session has started

**FOR MANUAL assigning ... CLICK MANUAL INSTEAD OF AUTOMATIC**



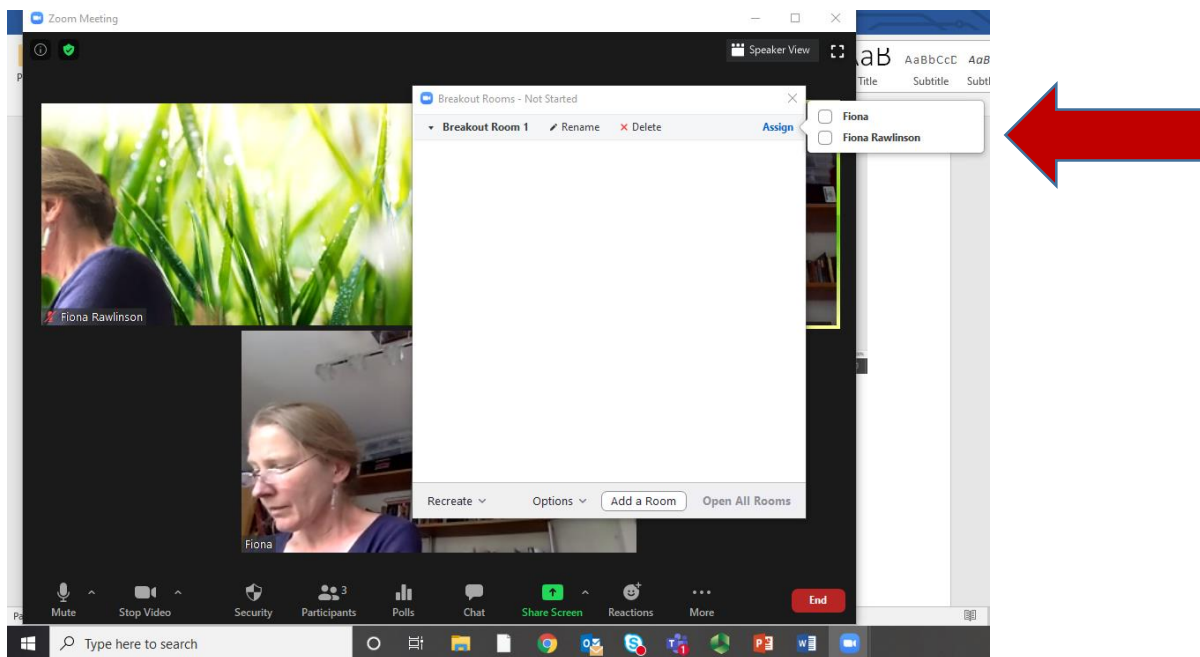
Work out how many participants you want in each room :



Click on the names in the boxes on the RHS of the screen to assign people....



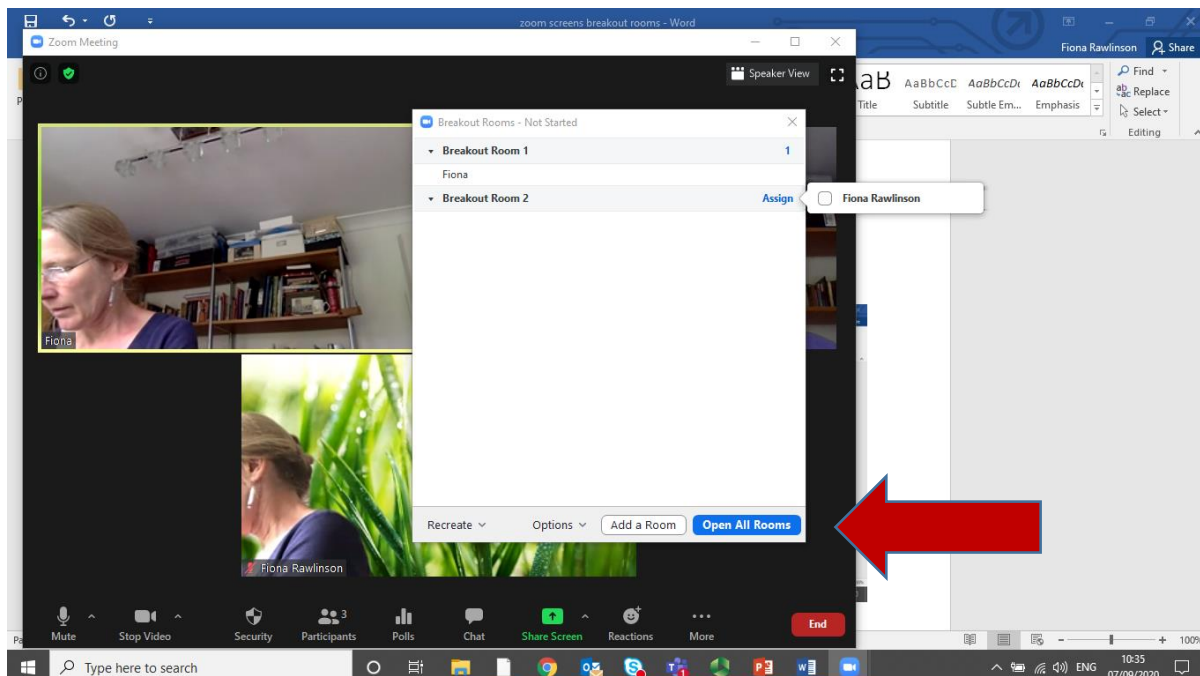
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CLICK on the names you want to go where ...

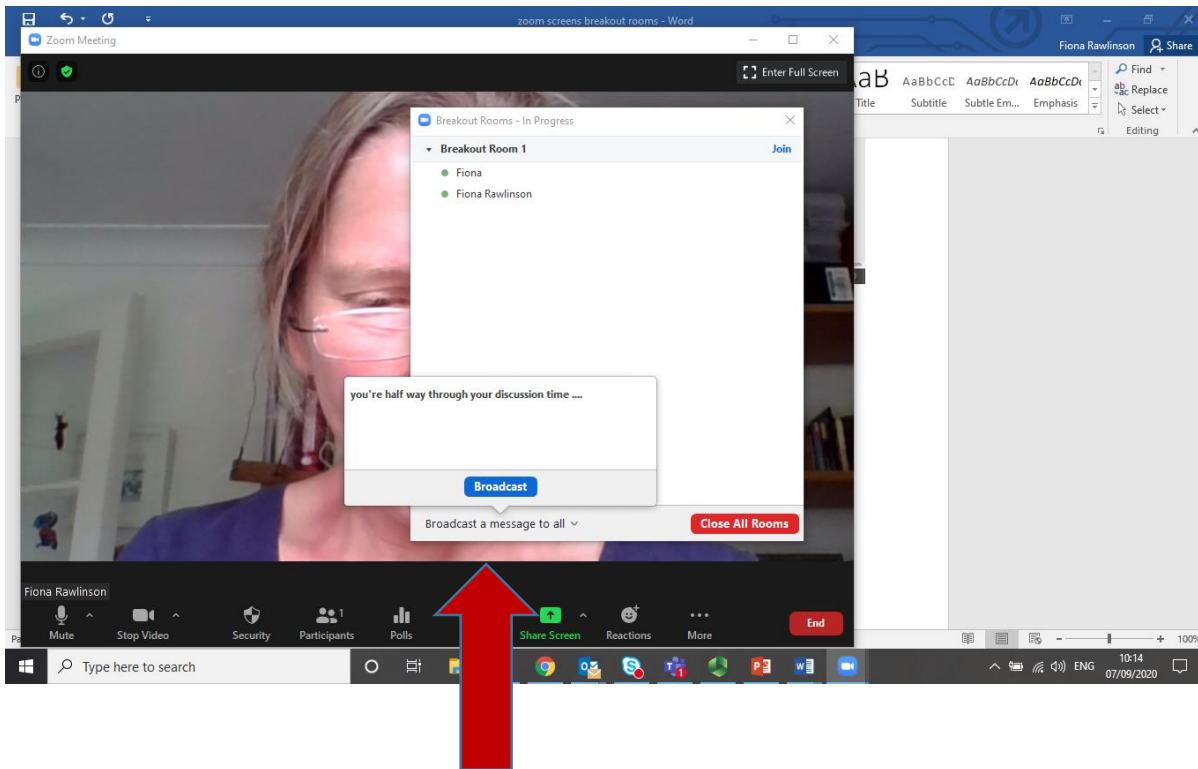
And **OPEN ALL ROOMS** to start the session

PLEASE NOTE that participants need to physically click on the tab to agree to move to the breakout room



## BROADCAST

If you want to send a message to each group , use the **BROADCAST** button

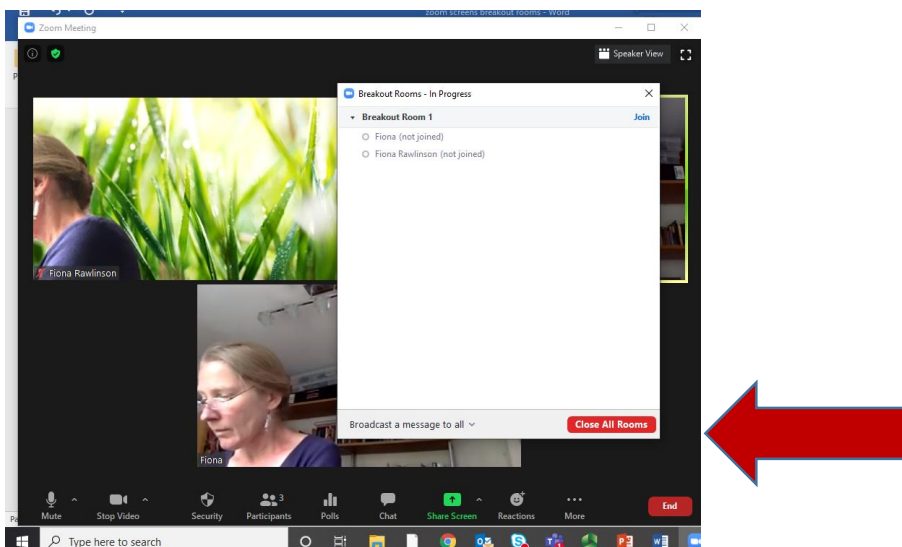


## ENDING THE BREAKOUT SESSION

And when you want to END the BREAKOUT ROOM function

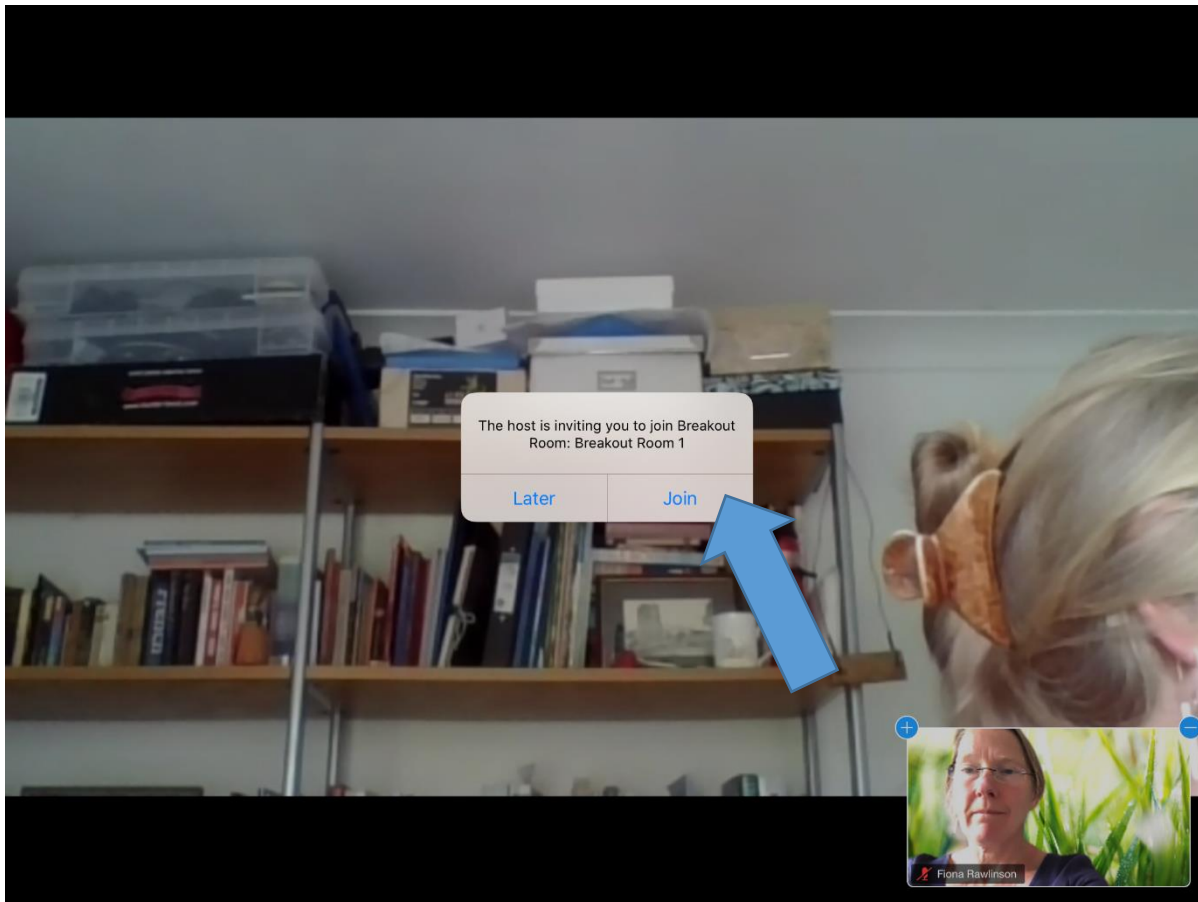
Press 'CLOSE ALL ROOMS' - this will close the room in 60 seconds – so it might be preferable to give people a 5 minute and 2 minutes warning using the Broadcast function

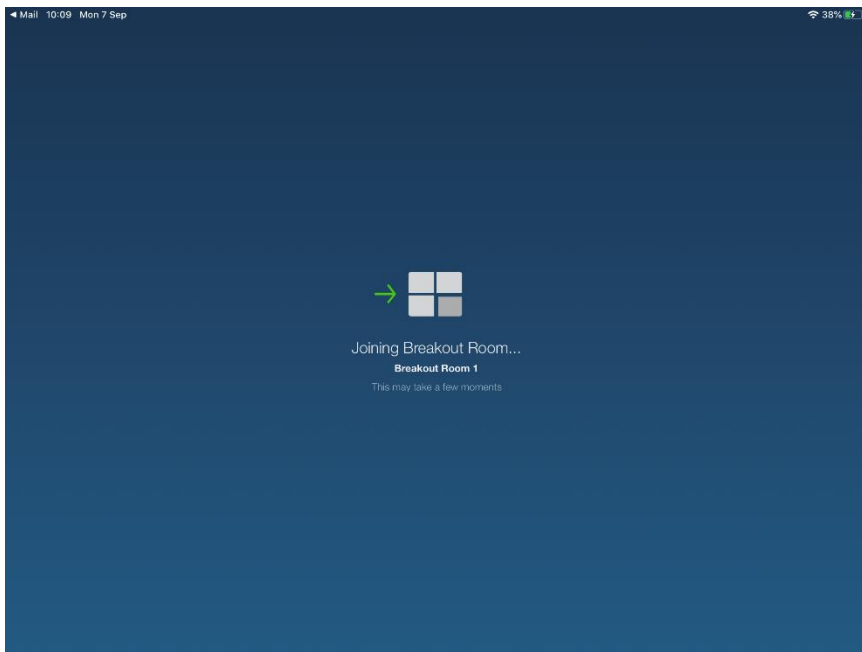
But allow time for connection glitches as people rejoin – you might need to remember to ask people to mute their microphones



## WHAT THE PARTICIPANTS SEE

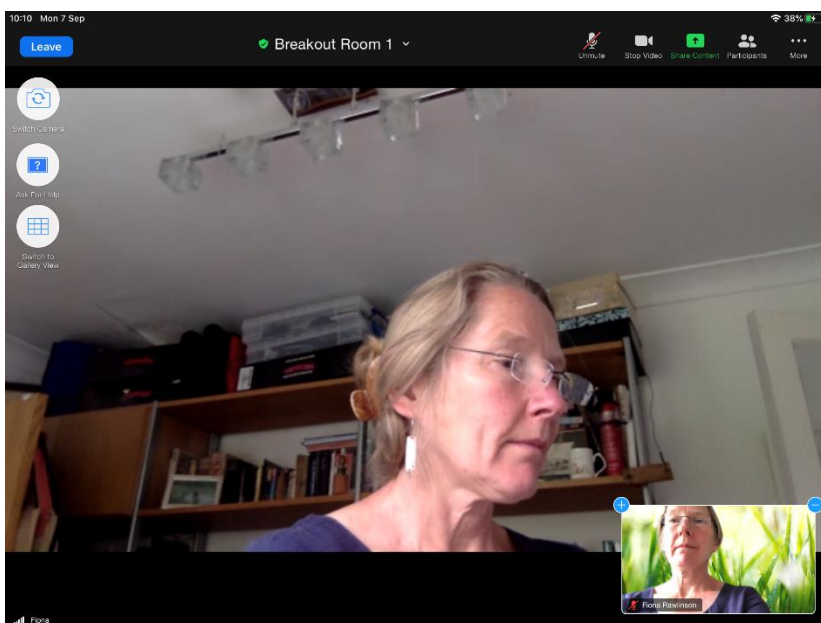
### TO JOIN A BREAKOUT ROOM



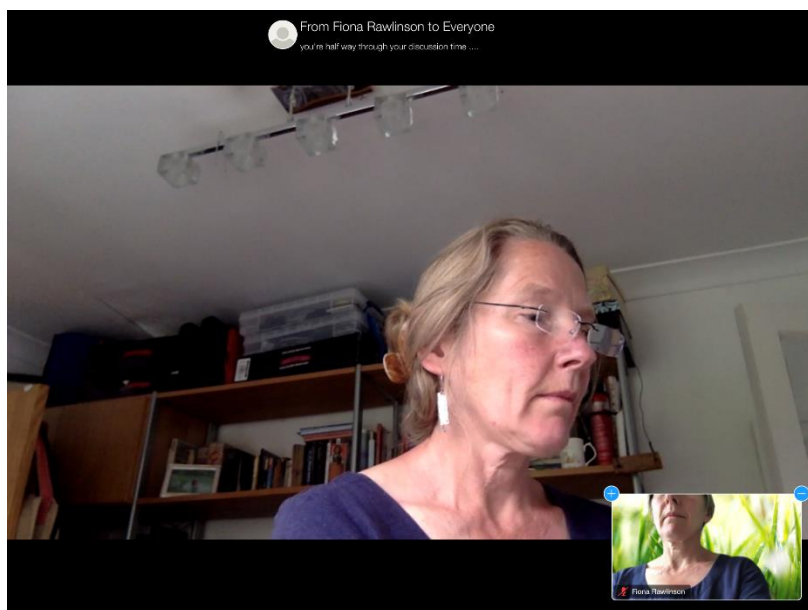


The screen will remind students which room they are in(!) , there is also a function to 'LEAVE' – which if pressed offers the option to leave the break out room and join the main room, OR to leave the meeting all together.

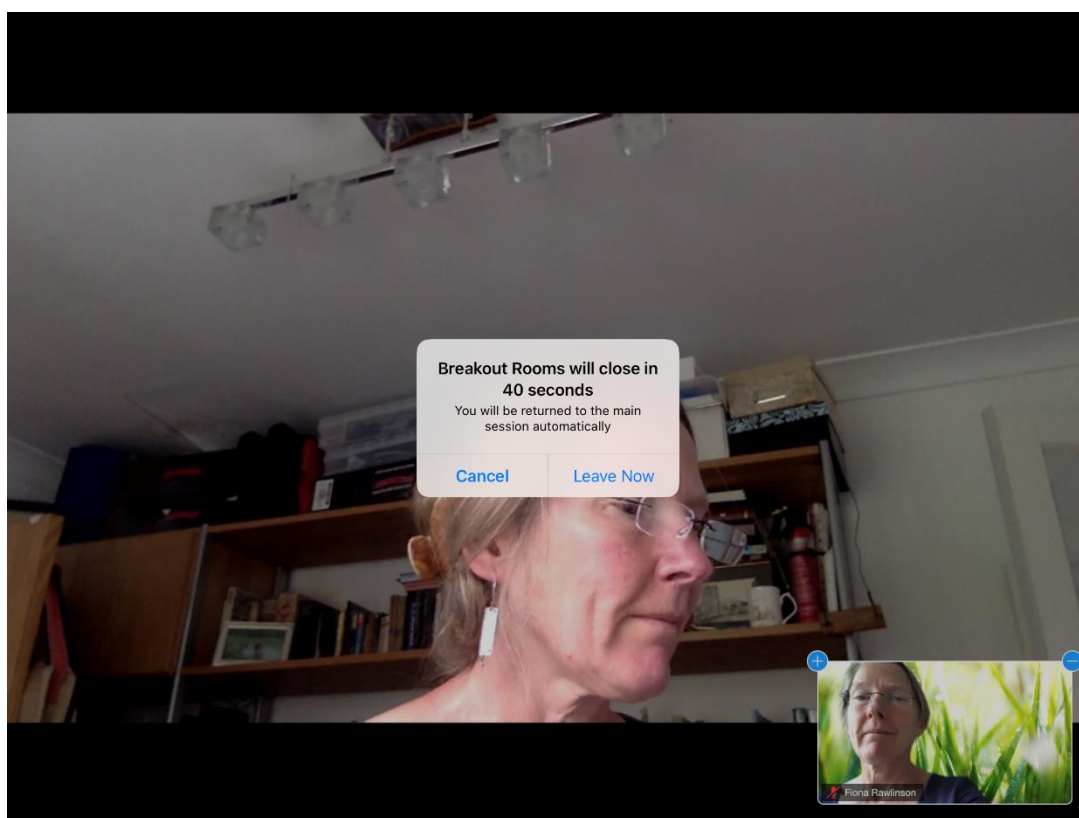
We have discovered that if the wifi bandwidth is poor, sometimes the 'ask for help' button crashes the system, so our suggestion would be to suggest someone leaves their breakout room and comes into the main room if help is needed ....unless you are confident that your system will cope!

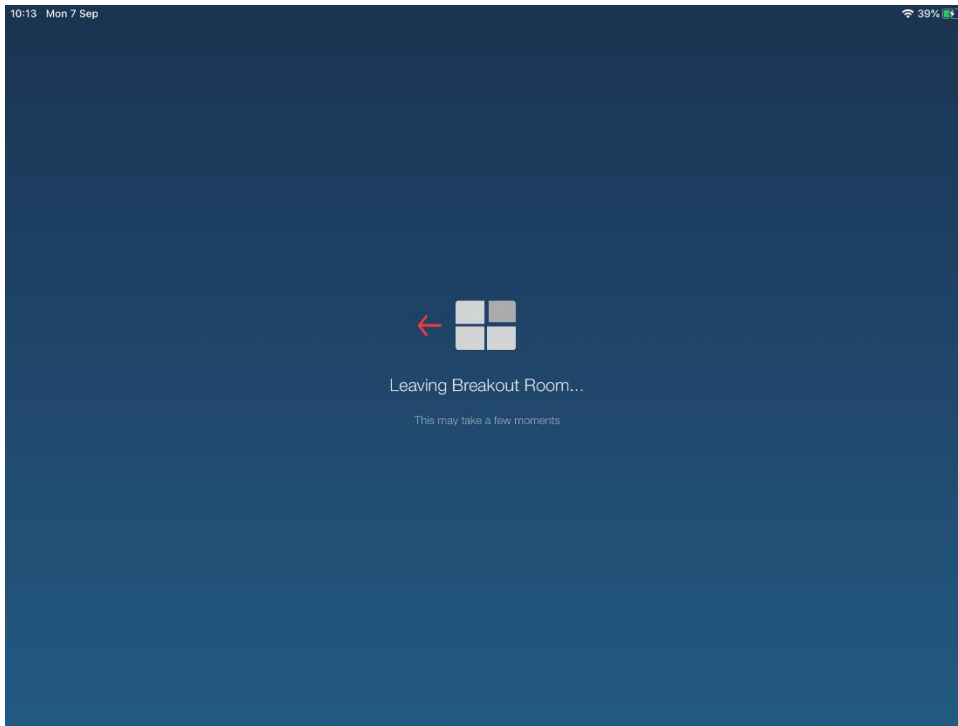


A BROADCAST message looks like this:



And ENDING the session looks like this :







## Teaching plan

<b>TITLE OF SESSION</b>					
<b>Who are the learners?</b>					
<b>How many expected?</b>					
<b>When is it?</b>					
<b>Venue ( or platform) ?</b>					
<b>HOW LONG?</b>					
<b>What are my key points for this topic?</b>					
<b>What are my aims and learning outcomes?</b>					
<b>TIME</b>	<b>Amount of minutes in session <i>[don't forget to add time if seeking feedback]</i></b>	<b>What</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Who ( if co-presenting)</b>	<b>Resources ( slides/ props etc. )</b>



<b>Any other notes</b>					

**EVALUATION – (for when you undertake the session )**

**What worked?**

**What didn't?**

**What to change for next time?**

**ANY OTHER HOUSEKEEPING ISSUES**



# Palliative Medicine for Health Care Professionals

## Communication skills – rules of role play

### Group loyalty and dynamics

- Everyone needs to be willing to participate
- The session is subject to the rule of confidentiality just as a routine consultation
- Scenarios are best played by people who have not been involved in the particular scenario in clinical work – i.e. if you present it, others play it

### Respect for colleagues

- Do not make it unduly difficult, remember this is a learning opportunity, not a judgement exercise
- Give the person tackling the problem, a simple realistic brief, they may use some discretion, but avoid the temptation to make it more difficult
- Remember culture and society differs across the world, so for example in India, it may be usual for the patient to come with a number of relatives, or for collusion to be more prevalent. Reflect and discuss the issues that arise from this in the group

### Respect for yourself

- If you have recently had a bereavement or difficult life issue that may impact on your ability to role play or form part of the group please speak privately to the tutor before the session starts
- Do not play a role if it involves issues for which you may be too close to personal experience
- In general choose a different name to yours and role play a person who is younger than you (ie an age that you have passed)
- If you feel stuck in a role, call for 'time out'

### Feedback

At a stopping point, either during the consultation, by you or the tutor, or at its natural end,

- Often the tutor may decide to stop a role play scenario to emphasise a teaching / learning point
- The person playing the role is invited to comment on how things are going, focussing on the strengths of the consultation process so far
- Other members identify strengths and reflect on how and why they occurred
- Other strategies for particular moments could then be discussed

The emphasis needs to be on DEVELOPING SKILLS

### At the end of the scenario

- Ensure the actors have fully come out of role
- Are there any issues which still need to be addressed?
- Are there other strategies that could also be used in this situation?
- Are there learning points which you can summarise as a group?
- What are the ongoing learning and development needs or wishes of the group and how will they be addressed

#### ROLE PLAY

- *Although stressful to contemplate it allows participants to practice under safe simulated conditions*
- *Is a useful way to reflect and learn providing that certain guidelines are respected*

