Setting up virtual ASCA meetings may seem challenging at first; but virtual meetings offer some distinct advantages. For example:

- *People who live in remote areas can participate in an ASCA meeting and find mutual support for their recovery*
- *Co-facilitators don't have to travel, search for appropriate meeting spaces, or negotiate rent agreements*
- *Virtual meetings can also supplement regular attendance at face-to-face meetings*

Tips for Setting Up Virtual ASCA Meetings

1. Virtual meetings, like all ASCA meetings, agree to abide by the guidelines and spirit of ASCA. Each group member is responsible for keeping the meeting safe and mutually supportive.

2. To ensure group safety and support, we recommend using a web meeting service (e.g., Jitsi Meet, WebEx, Go To Meeting, Zoom, etc.) where you, as a co-facilitator, can "see" who is on the meeting and, if necessary, mute or remove a participant from the meeting.[1] You will need to order and pay for the service ahead of time, as the meeting organizer. However, you can ask participants to donate money to the meeting in order to keep paying for the service. If you decide not to go this route, then services such as Free Conference[2] allow for participants to call in and pay "as they go". Just be aware that co-facilitators will not be able to screen or block inappropriate participants from the meeting.

3. It's important to keep technology as simple as possible. We want to keep the focus on our personal recovery and healing. Keeping it simple, also allows co-facilitators to fully participate in the virtual meetings without having to worry about handling technical problems. We recommend giving meeting participants **just the call-in number** information. If you decide to also provide the login link for web meeting services, be aware that logging in to the virtual meeting means participants need to be comfortable with things such as:
   - Using/not using webcams
   - VOIP and using/controlling headsets and audio
   - Online meeting etiquette

4. We also recommend keeping the meeting "closed" by asking people to register or contact you ahead of time if they are interested in attending. You can then send the meeting call-in information to just those who are on your list. Most of the services listed above do limit the number of attendees you can have in your meeting --- depending on the service plan.

5. To help group participants understand the meeting guidelines and format, make sure you send out copies of the following **at least one week in advance:**
   a. *Welcome to ASCA Virtual Meetings* handout, which includes the *Statement of Philosophy*, and *Stages and Steps*
   b. PDF version of Survivor to Thriver Manual or a link to the file on our website: http://www.ascasupport.org/manual.php

6. It's also a good idea to send out a reminder e-mail with instructions on how to join, one or two days before your first meeting. **See the Sample E-mail we've provided.**

> **ADDDITIONAL RESOURCES: If you'd like to receive some coaching or training on how to conduct safe and supportive virtual ASCA me etings, please contact The Norma J. Morris Center at info@ascasupport.org**

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[1] The Norma J. Morris Center does not endorse any particular service provider; these are given as examples only
[2] Same as above