

FOR COUNSEL - TIPS FOR ONLINE MEDIATION

BEFORE:

1. Pre-load any documents or software on your computer you might need to refer to during the mediation or hearing - such as legislation, DivorceMate software, Rules of Court, Excel, Adobe.
2. Organize any papers, documents, notes or photos you may want to refer to during and have them close by. Have a comfortable chair and clean, wide work area in front of you.
3. Prepare for the meeting just as you would prepare for chambers.
4. Provide your materials to the mediator in an organized way; bookmarked PDFs are fantastically easy to use.
5. Don't feel obliged to stuff yourself into a suit, but business-casual is a good compromise. Wear bright or solid colours, rather than gray or colours that make you look pale.
6. Consider doing a dry-run with your client to test the technology and your client's familiarity with the technology. Schedule a preliminary videoconference with your client. Check the quality of the client's video feed, and the quality and volume of the client's audio feed.
7. Drinks and snacks. Have these available, but not visible. You can drink water or coffee during the mediation, but leave eating to a meal break or caucus.
8. Check that you are well-lit on-screen, but be wary of bright backlight. Close windows or blinds if the light is bright. Add background lights if you are dark on screen.
9. Let your colleagues know your office door is closed because you are in an online mediation or hearing. If you have a home office, plan to prevent pets, children, or family members from bursting into your office or making a lot of noise.
10. Pay attention to your tone of voice and other noises you make (e.g. sighs, throat clearing, tut-tutting). Sighs are audible eye-rolls!
11. Be patient and gracious if you or anyone else has technical problems that need to be remedied.

DURING:

1. When you're talking, **talk to the camera**, not to the display on your monitor. Make eye contact! It helps to have the camera in or mounted to your monitor.
2. Be aware of how loud typing, mouse-clicks and paper-shuffling can be online.
3. Mute your desktop phone, your smartphone and everything else that beeps. Turn off your printer and electronic devices that are noisy.
4. Mute yourself if you're not talking.
5. Be aware of what's in your background! Look at yourself on your monitor, check your office space and put away confidential materials or anything that might embarrass you

6. Be aware that it's really obvious when you're not paying attention and are working on something else. If you have to look for a document or case, let the others know you're looking, but still listening carefully.
7. **If you'll be sharing your screen:**
 - a. Be sure you don't have confidential or inappropriate materials bookmarked, or open in another browser window.
 - b. Shut down any apps that display desktop notifications, including email programs, your calendar, messaging programs.
 - c. Check the propriety of your desktop wallpaper, and shortcuts, links and documents on your desktop.