

Facilitation tips

Tom has already mentioned that we are planning to set up an online group meeting with you all before the end of the year, so we can explore what is continuing to work well, any issues we need to address and further support and guidance you may need from our team. Planning for this is work in progress.

In the meantime, as part of our ongoing support to you and following up on some recent tips Tom sent you in response to feedback received from some VSE volunteers and attendees. We wished to give you further facilitation tips.

From time-to-time volunteers have raised the issue of a dominant speaker at an event they've hosted and wondered if there was more they could do to manage this more unique scenario, so we wished to share some tips on this.

It can be a bit of a lottery regarding the types of people that turn up at times, and whether they are accommodating to the structure we try to put in place. It is difficult when attendees wish to either talk over others or become very dominant by talking a lot more than others - all we can do is try to protect the meeting for everyone.

At start of the meeting, when you share with attendees how the meeting will run, this can be an opportunity to advise all attendees that you may ask people to take a break from speaking if it's felt you need to get others involved and an equal chance to share and learn. Also for the introductions phase you can ask people not to interrupt others as it helps us to get through this section faster.

If there is a dominant speaker you can continue to proactively manage this by asking open questions to other people in the room and try to stay clear of asking open questions to the whole room if you think the same person will just keep responding. At times you may simply need to ask the person to politely take a break and allow others to share their experiences. We do appreciate that this can be hard to balance though, of knowing when to be more of a proactive controller of the chat or when it's fine to let it flow, especially if they then talk over you.

Where the above steps haven't been successful. you always have the option to remove someone from a meeting. We know that you would not take this decision lightly and only as a last resort. However, you may opt to do this if you feel that someone's behaviour or contribution is impacting negatively on the discussion/others in the meeting and if this continues, despite attempts to sensitively address and manage this directly by speaking to the person or using the direct message/chat function.

On the very rare occasions this may be necessary, then where possible, please let the person know via direct message that you may, or intend to remove them from the meeting, and please inform the volunteering team at your earliest convenience so we can follow up as needed.

Sharing personal contact details

As you're aware, we advise attendees not to share their personal contact details, either verbally or in the chat. Attendees who share these details in the meeting do so at their own risk and Crohn's & Colitis UK cannot take any responsibility for connections made outside of the meeting.

For those who do wish to share their details, but don't wish to do this at the event, they can contact us, asking us to pass their details on, however, we can only do this when both attendees wish to connect and contact us directly asking to do so.

This is because we are mindful that not everyone may appreciate or feel comfortable being approached in this way, even though it is entirely at their discretion as to whether or not they respond.