WEB CONFERENCING SECURITY
an Information Sheet

Concerned About Security and Privacy?

The Australian Government has partnered with the Australian Cyber Security centre to provide guidance and recommendations when selecting or using web conferencing platforms (Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams etc).

As Support Groups transition to online platforms to conduct their group meetings, it is essential to reduce any potential security, privacy and legal risks that are involved.

Below is a summary of the Government and Australian Cyber Security's suggestions.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN SELECTING A CONFERENCING PLATFORM

IS THE SERVICE PROVIDER BASED IN AUSTRALIA?

Overseas providers introduce security risks, as they may be subject to different standards, laws and data access that would otherwise be considered unlawful in Australia.

WHAT IS THE SERVICE PROVIDER'S TRACK RECORD?

Look for a service provider that engages promptly with their customers, advocates for data security and proactively addresses cyber security issues.

ARE PRIVACY, SECURITY, AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS BEING MET?

Groups should seek privacy, security and legal advice before accepting the terms and conditions. Specific clauses should acknowledge an organisation's legal, privacy and security requirements. In particular, attention should be paid to whether a service provider claims ownership of any recorded conversations, content, or files that are created or shared when using their platform.

WHAT DATA DO THEY COLLECT?

Understand what information and metadata they collect. Most providers collect metadata such as names, roles, email addresses, usernames and passwords. Ensure that none of this collected data is sensitive information and inform group members of what should be disclosed when registering.

DOES THE SERVICE PROVIDER USE STRONG ENCRYPTION?

Service providers should be encrypting data at rest and while it is in transit. Encryption is to ensure that the data can't be read or accessed by others. A good example of this is web conferencing platforms that exclusively support Transport Layer Security versions 1.2 and 1.3, as it offers more protection for data transmitted across untrusted networks such as the internet.

IS IT RELIABLE AND SCALABLE?

Make sure you are using a software that isn't easily overloaded. Understand the capabilities and restrictions of the program before introducing it to your group.

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USING A CONFERENCING PROGRAM

CONFIGURE A WEB CONFERENCING SOLUTION SECURELY

Review the documentation of the service provider's security features and note that some provider's default settings might require configuration to suit your group. Make these changes to the default settings and inform your group members.

ESTABLISH MEETINGS SECURELY

Do not post invitations for meetings on any public platforms (websites, social media pages etc). Send meeting details and access credentials separately via email or encrypted messaging apps.

BE AWARE OF UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANTS

Only allow invited participants to join a meeting, and once all participants are present, consider locking the meeting so no one else can join. Make sure all unknown participants identify, otherwise they should be disconnected by the host.

BE AWARE OF SURROUNDINGS

Try to maximise privacy and security by being aware of surroundings. Find a private location before accessing the meeting, use headphones, and all participants that aren't speaking should be muted. Also consider your backgrounds and position your camera accordingly.

BE MINDFUL OF CONVERSATIONS

Be aware of the potential private nature or sensitivity of group conversations, and limit discussions in meetings to those approved to be conducted using a web conferencing solution.

ONLY SHARE WHAT IS REQUIRED

Be mindful of what is being shared to the group. Some share screen functionalities allow group members to share their entire screen or just the application being used. Try to disable full screen sharing.

For further guidance with transitioning to online Support Group meetings, contact ConnectGroups on 9364 6909 or email info@connectgroups.org.au.

Intensive Support to help you achieve your Support Group goals is available via telephone or video meetings.

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