Planning Engagement Sessions on COVID-19 Vaccines and Public Health Measures

Tips & Best Practices
for Organizing Virtual
Meetings

Spring 2021

Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

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Contents

Before the Event

- When choosing a presenter for your session, consider the specific attributes of your audience and what expertise is available in your community or organization. A health expert who is knowledgeable about COVID-19 vaccines and public health measures or another trusted and credible community member is an ideal choice.

- Schedule a **practice session prior to your event**.

- Invite participants to **send their questions ahead of time**. This will help frame the discussion, address specific concerns and provide a starting point for the question and answer period.

- Let participants know if the event will be recorded in any way and/or shared afterwards if you intend to do so. This can be mentioned via email and as part of housekeeping items.
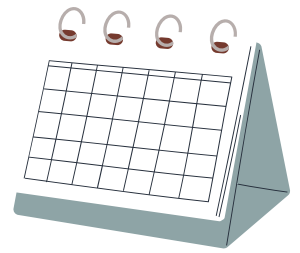
Event Registration

- **Identify a mechanism for tracking registrations and participants' emails.** If using an event management website, a video conferencing, or social media platform, most will help track event registration, social media promotion, and email event promotion.

- Close registrations at the latest, the morning of the event.

- Send a **reminder email prior to the event** and attach the presentation, the agenda and rules of engagement/standard operating procedure, if possible.

   Most event platforms send automated registration and confirmation emails and even allow you to download events to your calendar once you've registered.

Bilingual and Accessible Sessions

- If your event participants speak another language, you might consider hosting a **bilingual event**. In this case, it's recommended to solicit the help of language professionals, such as interpreters, or invite experts that can answer questions in your participants' language of choice.

- **If you wish to host an accessible session**, secure necessary services in advance (i.e. American Sign Language (ASL), Langue des signes du Québec (LSQ), speech reading, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services, etc.). CART captioning is a speech-to-text interpreting service.

   Live captioning benefits persons with disabilities and allows for a more inclusive event.

- **Choose a platform with accessibility features,** such as assistive device compatibility and a "pin" video feature.

Day of the Event

Platform

- Consider the set-up of the **platform that best supports your event and participants**. If you use a chat function, consider having a moderator who manages the chat and mention its intended use in the housekeeping notes at the beginning of the session.

- All presenters should be responsible for muting/unmuting their own mics, and keeping their video feed turned on for the entirety of the event.

- **Disable the chat function** on your platform **if you do not intend on using it.**

  This will allow presenters to remain focused on the presentation and the questions asked.

  Note: The chat function can be used to encourage participation and dialogue among participants. You will need to gauge whether the use of the chat function will benefit or detract from the format of your session.

- It may be helpful to have a **contact that can provide support in the event that connectivity/IT issues arise** during the meeting.

- You may choose to send a password to participants to access the platform.

  Tip: Plan a **sound/video check for all presenters 30 minutes prior** to the event.

Question & Answer Period

- Provide **multiple ways for participants to ask questions** (ex: using your platform's chat function).

After the Event

Ensure continued dialogue with stakeholders by providing:

- clear information about how to receive updates after the event (newsletter, web link, social media or contact information)

- links to information, resources and tools to stay informed

- away for participants to **share feedback** (ex: post-event survey or email)

- any **follow-up actions committed** to during the session

This information can be included in a follow-up email thanking participants for attending (see document titled **Email Templates**).

Post-Event Promotion

Share a blog or social media post to highlight the work you are doing to support your community and inform them about COVID-19 vaccination and public health measures.

You could:

- highlight the **number of participants** who attended

- include **key messages** encouraging community members to:
    - get educated on vaccine health and safety
    - continue to practise healthy behaviours and
    - get vaccinated

- thank participants and presenter(s) for their time

- mention an interesting story or a topic that was raised during your session (if any)

- share any media article or blog about the event

After the Event

If sharing information about COVID-19, cite your sources and link to them. The **COVID-19 Government of Canada website** is a good source to use.

Social Media

Respect **character limits.**
- Twitter: 280 characters per tweet
- Facebook: 63,206 characters per post
- Instagram: 2,200 characters per caption

Use hashtags already in use, this allows your post to be easily searchable and associated with similar posts.

Include visuals to increase your post's visibility.

You can reduce the number of characters on your post by:
- using a free URL shortener (ex: https://bitly.com/)
- using emojis instead of words (ex: using the Canadian flag emoji instead of Canada)
- using alternative text (ex: "&" instead of "and")

Social Media Resources

- **COVID-19: Social media and promotional resources for Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada**

- **COVID-19 related graphics and images**

- **COVID-19 general information**

- **COVID-19 related hashtags**

- **Suite of health-related apps**

Sample Social Media Posts

Key message: Get educated on vaccine health and safety!

Example of a tweet

> What a great turn out! Over **[#]** participants joined today's session on #COVIDVaccines & public health measures! Vaccines are an effective way to control the spread of #COVID19, especially when combined with public health measures. Learn more: bit.ly/38FAPwV #COVIDwise

Example of a Facebook post

> It was great to see the many faces that were eager to learn about Canada's immunization plan during our information session on COVID-19 vaccines and public health measures. Free vaccines will be available over the course of 2021 to everyone who lives in Canada. Looking for more information about Canada's COVID-19 immunization plan?
>
> Get the facts: bit.ly/3vmqmAI

Example of an Instagram post

> Thanks for the great turnout at yesterday's session on #COVIDVaccines & public health measures! Missed out? Get the facts from @HealthyCdns : bit.ly/3vmqmAI

Key message: Continue to practice healthy behaviors!

Example of a tweet

> Thank you **[speaker name or Twitter handle]** for educating us on 🇨🇦's immunization plan. Over the next few months, we need to keep taking care of each other by wearing masks, washing our hands & following public health directives. More on Canada's #COVID19 immunization plan: bit.ly/3vmqmAI

Sample Social Media Posts

Example of a Facebook/Instagram post

A special thank you to **[speaker name]** for **[his/her]** leadership in providing information on public health measures and COVID-19 vaccines at today's session. Free vaccines will be available to everyone who lives in Canada over the course of 2021. But, it is critical to keep practicing healthy behaviors to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and save lives. Remember that you can protect yourself, your family, and your community from COVID-19 by getting vaccinated and following local and provincial health directives.

Learn more at https://bit.ly/38FAPwV

Key message: Get vaccinated!

Example of a tweet

Thank you **[speaker name or Twitter handle]** for educating us on 🇨🇦's immunization plan. We all play a vital role in ensuring that we get back to the people and places we miss. More on how you can #GetVaccinated: https://bit.ly/3Inibz9 #VaccinesWork

Example of a Facebook/Instagram post

It was great to see the many faces that were eager to learn about Canada's immunization plan during our information session on COVID-19 vaccines and public health measures. Did you know? Ongoing monitoring and assessment activities of emerging safety issues as well as information sharing with domestic and international partners are some of the ways the Government of Canada intends to ensure continued safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines: https://bit.ly/3tgWCTi