Working Remotely: Effective Virtual Teams; 4-8-20 Webinar Chat

Self-Care Inspiration:

* I am walking in the park 4 miles every day
* Fishing!
* Explore my yard through a daily walk
* Reading for pleasure.
* Run (with and without my dog)
* 30 day yoga challenge (10 days in)
* Taking walks.
* Not traveled miles and miles and miles! No car seat overkill...
* Exercise
* Walking my dog during lunch!
* backyard birding has been really therapeutic
* get fresh air daily!
* walking with my dogs and children
* Yoga and walks in our neighborhood
* call a friend
* Walks and indoor exercise
* 1 day of birding so far.
* Walking
* all of that
* Walking daily, aikido, photographing
* jogging in place on zoom calls

Transition to Virtual

Gains:

* Equity – e.g., participation tools help address power imbalances
* No commute! Less travel; Allows for doing more each day and attend more trainings (like this!)
* More intentional organization
* More flexibility
* Better meeting management
* Collaboration/bonding through crisis
* Purposeful communication
* People are more participatory in meetings
* Ability to be more human and personal--see into other lives!
* Talk to my supervisor more because even if she’s on a video call she’s on her computer so can see and respond to a message from me. G chat works really well for us!
* Seeing people I haven't seen in person (only email exchanges)
* Babies and young children on lap - on the positive.
* Lack of commute/save on gas, understanding technology that's out there that i've never worked with before

Losses:

* My mind:)
* Social interaction
* Connection with my team
* Undergraduate student workers
* Immediate communication on arising issues
* Really struggling to communicate effectively with team
* Human connection with co-workers
* Volunteers - a major part of our ecological restoration work
* Unstructured time with colleagues and partners
* Casual communication is lost
* Too many back-to-back meetings that are sedentary
* Making connections with new colleagues. I only started this position about a month ago so didn’t have tons of time to connect yet.
* Separating work & personal time
* Screen fatigue
* Community engagement can't happen
* Separating work and personal time, agreed
* “Accidental" interactions with people
* Yes TOO MUCH screen time, giving me headaches
* Fear of furlough and layoff
* My good desk chair at work.
* Still doing inspections but can't meet with contacts on site to discuss issues, have to call or email.

Breakout Report Back: What is working/What challenges & how to address

* If we had more time/smaller group we may have done that first check in (about selfcare) as a conversation. Good to make personal connection at the beginning.
* I follow the rule that however long a meeting is that’s how long it should take to prepare.
* We had a lot about time management/getting overwhelmed with meetings and how to add blocks/buffers to their calendar to have more realistic time in our calendar. Buffer: add 15-30 minutes before and after meetings in calendar so you have time to follow up after meetings.
* We talked about utilizing chat options like GChat to stay in touch and support informal conversations
* Lots of good stuff. we focused on WHAT’s WORKING! And didn’t go there on what’s NOT working. :) 1. Mixing up/Using different platforms and mixing it up. 2. Jobs that req a lot of travel - we now have time to get more done - because we are not doing all of the miles and appreciate this! 3. working with volunteer driven teams - and helping them to get the Zoom access needed - but recognizing that dial-in is critical. 4. Virtual happy hours, coffee breaks, visits with colleagues and the value of being in others’ homes, with their children, pets, etc. 5. The humanity of this experience e- and recognizing that the good practices for virtual meetings are the very practices we should be incorporating into all meetings - even post COVID19. 6. Recognizing our privilege in convening and working online/remotely - and remembering those who are working in different environs. 7. Improved interaction of full teams within virtual meeting environments.
* I work at my coffee table and then make sure to put all of the work stuff away afterwards to gain back my personal space. Also, i have to take time off to take care of my friend's dogs while she is stuck out of the country and that makes my work day longer when having to make up for that time.
* Some is seasonality...to transition a predominantly outdoor work right as the most beautiful spring/outdoor season begins is very challenging...once the virtual system set, should calm down
* We also talked a lot about equity and how this virtual experience can help give more people a voice (due to the nature of the meetings and the ability to call in)
* Love what Kelly added. I do the same thing. I’m in a teeny apartment with no official work space!
* I feel like we started out really engaging on slack and trying to stay connected, and it seems like some of the enthusiasm is really dropping off. I worry about how to sustain this in the long term.
* We talked about streamlining too - what can we make shorter or combine to minimize meetings
* In our small group we talked about how this time helps us to have more meaningful calls/outreach; can we use coronavirus solidarity as a motivator to tackle environmental sustainability/climate change through this experience. Reality of working harder now - is facing the very real fears of layoffs or furloughs
* On my Google Calendar, I set up the default meeting lengths build in breaks (Pick "speedy meetings" in your calendar settings.

Next Steps/Things to Try

* Small group: broader way to include others who don't have budgets to travel (when in person conferences was what we previously insisted upon as the norm); Also lowering our carbon footprint so are addressing climate change actions (conservation people walking our talk)
* Can we stay aware of the social justice (disproportionate impacts) of coronavirus re: education, job losses, and health/mortality; similarly in our envtl work: /environmental justice dimensions
  + That's why having the automatic number generation for dial-in is important.
* Open video calls early so people can chat before the meeting
* More structured meeting agenda with rotating roles
* Block & buffer
* Breakout groups and polls...figure out how they work - I've experienced them but not tried them
* Encourage colleagues to be more explicit about meeting intentions.
* Walking meetings (I personally do that anyway haha) and the 15 minutes "chat time" before the start of a meeting
* Log into a meeting early to chat with co-workers
* Asking people "what's new and good" at the beginning of meetings
* Start meeting early for informal chit chat
* I loved the intentionality of inviting person-by-person the check-in.
* Use the poll option to allow Board members to vote
* Agreed! Happy ice breakers to start meetings
* Using the poll option in zoom
* I am going to try using zoom with a small number of people to work on these kind of meeting skills.
* Didn't know that zoom could do polling and breakout sessions so that is a great option if we need to move workshops online