**FOR CLIENTS - TIPS FOR ONLINE MEDIATION OR HEARINGS:**

**BEFORE:**

1. Documents - Pre‐load any documents you might need to refer to on your computer.
2. Software - Open any software you may want to use, e.g. Adobe Reader, photos, calendars.
3. Papers - Organize any papers, documents, notes or photos you may want to refer to and have them close by. A tabbed binder may be convenient.
4. Background - Be aware of what’s in the background! Look at yourself on your monitor, check your space and put away confidential materials or anything that might embarrass you.
5. Comfort - Have a comfortable chair and clean, wide work area in front of you.
6. Drink and snacks - Have available, but not visible. You can drink water or coffee during the meeting, but leave nibbling or eating to a meal break or caucus with your lawyer.
7. Dress - business‐casual is good. (Men – wear a shirt with a collar, but a tie or jacket is not required.) Wear bright or solid colours, rather than gray or colours that make you look pale.
8. Lighting - 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. Noise and interruptions - If you have pets, children, family members or roommates who are noisy or may burst into your office or room, deal with this ahead of time. Make all adults in your home or office aware that you’re in an online mediation or hearing.
10. Dry run – check out the software to be used, your camera, and your microphone. You don’t want to be too loud or to quiet. Know how to mute yourself.

**DURING:**

1. Let the mediator or arbitrator steer the meeting.
2. Follow the rules or guidelines for taking turns, raising your hand (electronically!), bathroom or meal breaks, caucusing, sharing documents onscreen, etc.
3. 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. Remember you can smile.
4. **Listen attentively**. Try to listen without making comments, offering rebuttals or solutions. Everyone wants to be heard, understood and respected. This is particularly important at the beginning of the mediation. However, don’t be shy if something important is missed. Have paper available so you can make notes to yourself of what you may want to add or say in response.
5. Keep the original Zoom or MS Teams link easily available. If you get dropped, or your computer freezes, you can always click the link again.
6. Minimize loud typing, mouse‐clicks and paper‐shuffling.
7. Mute your desktop phone, your smartphone and everything else that beeps or makes noises. Turn off your printer and electronic devices that you won’t need.
8. Be aware that it’s really obvious when you’re not paying attention.
9. Again - Listen carefully to the other party, counsel and the mediator. This may get more difficult as you get tired. Remember you can ask for breaks.
10. Be aware of your body language. Don’t roll your eyes, mock, or make unkind or frustrated gestures. Don’t get too casual – if you slouch, adjust your clothing, or put your hands behind your head – everyone else will see it. Try to minimize talking with your hands – as it can look fuzzy and be distracting on screen.
11. Pay attention to your tone of voice and other noises you make (e.g. sighs, throat clearing, tut-tutting). Sighs are audible eye-rolls! If you or your ex-spouse have habits that drive each other crazy – be prepared to minimize your own and ignore theirs.
12. Remember the mediator and lawyers are trying to do their jobs.
13. Be patient if you or anyone else has technical problems that need to be remedied.