

Emerging Minds

National
Workforce
Centre for Child
Mental Health

Webinars

A webinar is like a training session or seminar conducted over the internet. There is a chairperson who does introductions and manages the time, and usually 2-4 professionals and/or family members talking from their own perspective on the topic. Some webinars are audio-only (accompanied by PowerPoint slides), and others are both audio and video.

Emerging Minds are involved in webinars covering a variety of topics, with our overarching aim being to improve the wellbeing of infants and children. All of our webinars are done in partnership with other organisations who are experienced in running webinars and they provide the technical platform and support.

Emerging Minds highly values the experiences of families. Capturing these experiences in webinars adds huge value and learning opportunities for workers. It is the goal of Emerging Minds that your participation is also of benefit to you, and a source of fulfilment. There are some very important factors to consider first. Webinars contain special features; they are created 'live' and potentially available to view by a wide audience later on, and therefore need you to be particularly well prepared.



Things to consider before doing a webinar

Ensure you are provided with enough information

Firstly, ensure you understand what the webinar is about and what would be expected of you. Talk with Emerging Minds' staff about the purpose of the webinar. What will be discussed in the webinar? Have you been provided with a list of questions or topics that will be discussed? Will you be talking about your own experiences, or reflecting on a case study? Will the webinar be recorded and available online for many years or not? Who will the audience of the webinar be?

Where will you do the webinar? Sometimes you will travel to another location to do the webinar, or you may do it from your home computer if you have good internet connection and a webcam.

Ask: Is this the right thing for me to do at this time?

Participation in a webinar may create certain pressures due to it being live. Are you at a point in your life where you feel ready to do this? Do you have good support from family, friends or professionals? If so, then now might be a time to be involved in a webinar. If you are under stress, in a time of crisis, or already have a lot of family or other commitments, then it may not be the right time to agree to participate in a webinar.

Think about your motivations for being involved. These might include giving others the benefit of learning from your experience, supporting the values of Emerging Minds, being able to say what is important to you or has been helpful that may be of benefit to others.

Confidentiality

Then, consider confidentiality. This not only includes your own privacy, but also your family's privacy, especially any children. It may be important to discuss these issues with your family and you may feel you

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need to ask your family's consent. You may also need to consider the privacy of other third parties, such as services, health professionals, schools, and so on.

When preparing to tell your story, consider that although you may be happy to share certain information now, at another time in your life, you and your family may not feel the same way. What could happen if a colleague of yours, a family friend, or a school friend were to somehow view the webinar?

Some people may prefer to use pseudonyms to protect their, their families, and third party privacy. Consider also removing any identifying information from your story. If you use social media, you may like to consider the pros and cons of this if you were thinking of sharing your work online. Take the time to think about these issues to help you make the right decision for you, your family, and your support network.

If during the webinar, you will be talking about your children and family, then our staff can help you work through this tip sheet beforehand: *Talking about your Children and Family Publicly* (under development). Please ask us if you do not have a copy.

You can change your mind ... up to a point

Remember, it is ok to change your mind about being involved at any stage leading up to the webinar. It is very hard to change your mind once it has started (although not impossible!) so please do consider this. In addition, once the webinar is complete, and if it is recorded and made available online, we may be unable to remove it. Please do consider this.

Take the time to talk to Emerging Minds' staff, your family and friends, professionals who support you and any other people with lived experience you may know. We can put you in touch with other people who have participated in webinars to discuss what the experience has been like for them.



If you decide to go ahead with the webinar

Beforehand

- You will get lots of technical support from the webinar provider (as well as Emerging Minds staff if required) in the weeks prior to the webinar to make sure everything is in working order.
- You will probably be asked to provide a brief 'bio' about yourself. This will be up to 200 words, but less is fine. Some things you could include are:
 - » a description of your work as a partner with Emerging Minds and/or in other forums;
 - » what is important to you that has led you to be involved as a partner (for example to contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of others, including children);
 - » anything else that is linked to the focus of the webinar;
 - » remember that considerations of privacy are relevant for the bio too!
- You will already have an idea about what the webinar is about from discussions with Emerging Minds. Have a think about what things from your personal experience you may like to share. You don't need to disclose your diagnosis or your experiences of other adversities.
- Also think about the things that you wish to keep private. Remember that although you may feel comfortable saying something at the time, your audience could be very broad (and if recorded it may be available on the internet for years to come).
- Also remember that a webinar is live, so it is good to have an idea ahead of time what you are and aren't comfortable talking about. Sometimes recalling an experience can be emotional and we don't want you to feel uncomfortable during the webinar.
- Take note of how long you spend preparing for the webinar, as you will be paid for this time as negotiated with Emerging Minds, as well as your time actually doing the webinar.
- Consider whether you wish to have a support person with you when you do the webinar.
- Be yourself – wear whatever clothes you feel comfortable in.

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- If the webinar won't be from your home computer, but at a different location, plan what time you need to leave to arrive in time without feeling rushed.
- If you find it helpful, plan self-nurturing and enjoyable activities to do after the webinar and reduce other commitments as much as you can. You may like to organise to have a coffee with a friend, or just to do something alone that you enjoy. You may wish to celebrate your participation!
- We have found that people sometimes experience a range of emotions after doing a webinar. If these become a problem for you, remember you're really welcome to contact Emerging Minds staff.
- You may also find some helpful ideas in our 'Self-Care Tip Sheet'. Please ask for a copy if you don't have one!

What support is available through Emerging Minds?

Emerging Minds are committed to your wellbeing and have people here to support you: Lydia Trowse (0403 842 014) and Chris Dolman (0415 574 365). These people are available before, during and after your involvement and can provide confidential support. If Lydia or Chris are both unavailable, then you are welcome to call their manager, Dan Moss on 0438 387 431.

What are my other support options?

Some people prefer to seek support from family, friends or peers, whilst others prefer to seek help from professionals such as GPs, psychologists, social workers or psychiatrists. It is important that whatever support you choose, that you feel safe and comfortable in discussing your thoughts and feelings.

During

- We highly value your input. Please let us know what will help you to feel welcome and comfortable.
- We use professionals to provide technical support for our webinars. If you are unsure about something, please ask them for help. Even things like getting the camera in a good position so you feel comfortable.
- Remember that:
 - » there will be no judgement from Emerging Minds' staff.
 - » no one is expecting you to be 'perfect'. None of us are!
- There should be no surprising topics for you in the webinar, but if certain topics come up that you feel uncomfortable with, it is ok to say "I don't feel OK commenting on this topic".
- If you don't understand a question or discussion topic, please ask the webinar chair to explain it differently for you. There are no 'silly' questions and there will be no judgement about anything at all that you may ask.

Afterwards

- At the end of the webinar, please don't hesitate to let staff know how you found it and offer any suggestions for how we can do better next time.
- Emerging Minds staff will provide you with positive and constructive feedback, pointing out what insightful or unique points you may have contributed without realising.
- Emerging Minds staff will be available to chat with you about how you are feeling, but you may also want to arrange for someone else supportive to chat with a day or two afterwards.
- We will also call you a day or two after the webinar to thank you and check-in with how you are going.

For immediate free assistance call Lifeline on 13 11 14 for confidential 24 hour counselling and referrals.

This document was co-designed with Emerging Minds' Child and Family Partners. Special thanks to Louise Salmon for her considerable input.

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