Practice

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Professional Development 201: From Basic to Dynamic. Before the Webinar - Preparations; Practice. Image of PD practices: Sustain, Design, Promote, Deliver, Follow Up, and Evaluate. CDC logo.

Video Summary

Familiarity with the tools used during an event reduces anxiety, as does conducting a run-through. A best practice is to split hosting duties into facilitator and producer roles.

Audio Script

Failing to prepare is one way to derail a webinar or other professional development event. If hosting a webinar, unfamiliarity with the platform can easily lead to user error with the software. You should familiarize yourself with all tools that may be used during the event, including the webinar platform and its features and conference line. Being able to seamlessly operate the technology will help reduce anxiety during the event.

Another best practice during the preparation stage is to do a run-through of the event. Ask coworkers or friends to sit in as participants while practicing the slides and activities. This exercise is an easy way to pinpoint any glitches, such as awkward transitions between activities or tools, periods where there is too much time between activities, or other areas where the event can be improved. This exercise may require the planner or facilitator to experience the event through the eyes of the participant. Things can feel quite different on the "other side of the screen." What may seem logical to the designer may not seem logical to a participant.

A best practice for conducting webinars is to split the hosting of the event into two roles: **facilitator** and **producer**. The producer will act as the technical assistant. This can relieve a lot of the pressure on the facilitator. While the facilitator is hosting the event, engaging with the participants, and leading them through the content, the producer can work behind the scenes to load and manage content on the whiteboard, prepare activities to go live, or go offline to handle any technical issues participants may have. While this does require additional manpower, it allows the facilitator to focus on the most important aspect of the event: guiding and engaging the participants.

Finally, it is important to have a **backup plan**. When you are using technology, there is the potential for issues such as hardware crashes, software freezes, and power outages. A backup plan — even one as simple as taking a 15-minute break to reboot — will help you be more confident if something goes wrong.

Let's review webinar preparation activities before moving on to the next section of the course.