# Icebreakers for virtual meetings II

*Targeted icebreakers can help you kickstart creative thinking, surface learning goals and needs, and increase comfort with digital platform features. Recently we put together a list of some of our favourites. Here are a few more we've found useful in our remote sessions of late.*
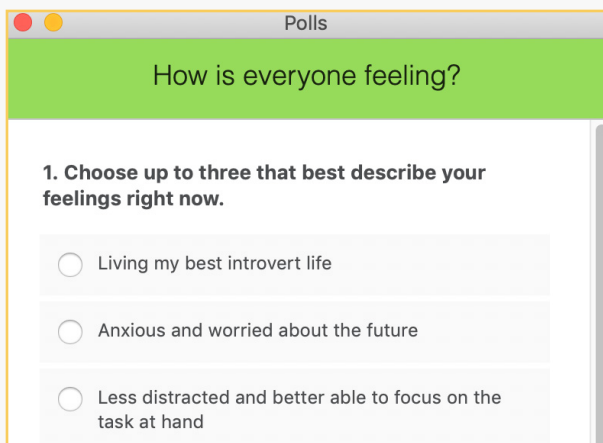
## 1. Topical question

*When to use:* To kickstart ideation, surface learning goals and needs, or introduce a platform tool.

After introducing the workshop topic, divide participants into groups with Zoom's breakout rooms* and give them 5 minutes to discuss a question relevant to the topic. Call the groups back to the main session. Ask one team member to share their group's answers. Question suggestions:

- What's one question you hope will be answered in this session?
- What's your favourite experience related to [topic]? (E.g., in a session on self-serve digital experiences: "What's the best self-serve digital experience you can remember having?").

Optional: Write suggestions on a shared board (sticky notes in Mural or a whiteboard with annotation tools in Zoom).

Polls
How is everyone feeling?

1. Choose up to three that best describe your feelings right now.

○ Living my best introvert life

○ Anxious and worried about the future

○ Less distracted and better able to focus on the task at hand

## 2. Word clouds

*When to use:* To kickstart ideation or introduce a platform tool.

Ask participants to think of as many words as they can relating to the workshop topic. (In a discussion of diversity and inclusion, e.g., participants might suggest "equality," "privilege," "bias," "intersectionality," "neurodiversity," etc.) Write all suggestions on a shared board (sticky notes in Mural, or a whiteboard with annotation tools in Zoom). Cluster the words by theme and discuss the patterns you observe with the group.

## 3. Anonymous poll

*When to use:* To kickstart participation or to buy time to create breakout groups.

Use Zoom's polling feature to launch an anonymous poll to understand your audience's mood and get the interaction started. E.g., at the start of our first remote all-staff meeting, our CEO broke the ice with a "How's everyone feeling?" anonymous poll.

## 4. Fortunately, unfortunately

*When to use:* To practice collaborating, listening, storytelling, building on each other's contributions, and switching between an open and closed mindset.

Ask participants to take turns telling lines in a story, alternating between "Fortunately …" and "Unfortunately …" Share a screen assigning each participant a number so they know when to take their turn. Go around once so that each participant contributes one line.

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*\*Zoom breakout room tips*

- Assign a facilitator to each breakout room to work alongside participants, help navigate any tech problems, and make sure they stay focused on the task.
- You can pre-assign participants to breakout rooms if you schedule the meeting in advance; this is helpful in enabling specific workshop teams to get acquainted during an icebreaker.