

Strategies to Cope with Virtual Meetings For People With Headaches

During the COVID crisis, many people are communicating by video conference instead of meeting in person. This can pose problems for people with headaches who already struggle with screen use. The following suggestions can potentially decrease the trigger load for people with migraines and other headaches while maintaining important contacts with family, friends, and clinicians.

Screen/Monitor:

- Decrease monitor brightness
- Place coloured overlay on screen (coloured transparent binder divider)
- Place paper/construction paper intermittently on screen
- Switch back and forth between video mode and audio mode during session
- Wear filters
- Use printed handouts vs. online handouts when possible

Lighting/Glare:

- Don't sit directly under light source
- Sit parallel to window, not facing it or backing it
- Close blinds when necessary

Pacing:

- Schedule shorter more frequent meetings
- Use the 20-20-20 rule: for every 20 minutes of screen use, take a 20 second break, look away to a distant point (up to 20 feet away), and relax your focus.

Neck Posture:

- Keep the top of your monitor at eye level. Place your laptop on books and add a peripheral keyboard and mouse.
- If using a cell phone for short meetings, hold it between chest and eye level. For longer meetings, support phone on books or pillows, secure phone on an angle, and use hands-free mode.