

So, You Want to Deliver Training Online?

A Guide to Facilitating the CCAR RCA and other Programs in a Digital World.

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As a whole, CCAR Staff believes that the CCAR RCA and supplemental training programs are best delivered in person. The rich dynamic intimate conversations that are encouraged in our training programs and the environment that is ultimately created and cultivated by our facilitators to support the vast learning is what makes our trainings so unique. To create this same, safe, nurturing environment can be established online, but it takes a great deal of planning and preparation on the part of the facilitator and presenter to do so.

First, we think it's important to understand the need to host an online training. We have been sensing a real urgency to deliver our programs. But why? Because people have time on their hands? We see the goal of our training is providing folks with a basic understanding of the Recovery Process, Recovery Coaching Foundational Principles and how they may play a part in that process so they may be successful as they begin looking at what a career in this field might look like for them. In some states the RCA is the only requirement to become employed. Is a rush to train online short-cutting their process or setting them up for success? CCAR has always wanted each and every participant to leave their training having had a transformative experience. Our expectations for online training are no different.

Roles:

There are two roles at play when training the RCA or other CCAR curriculum digitally, one is Facilitator and one is producer.

The CCAR Facilitator is the authorized CCAR Trainer whose role is to make sure that fidelity to the model is intact and each participant meets the established learning objectives outlined in the course. Through small group work, one on one conversation and large group discussion, the Facilitator plays an important role in making sure ALL participants are engaged and learning throughout.

The Producer is also an authored CCAR Trainer whose role it is to set up the online classroom, organize the exercises/breakouts/activities that will encourage engagement and learning throughout all while helping with individual technology needs of participants. The producer may lead some portions of the training, e.g. working agreements, plusses add wishes, etc. so there is another voice other than the lead facilitator's.

The Facilitator and Producer should have an established method to communicate during the training that is outside the view of participants.

Platform:

CCAR utilizes Adobe Connect for our digital training programs due to its security, functionality and accessibility. The selection of a platform is extremely important, as CCAR Trainings utilize small groups, one on one and large group discussion. We do not know the functionality of the plethora of options out there, but encourage you to understand the capabilities and limitations of the platform you choose.

Zoom is an extremely popular platform right now, but it is also open to what is known as Zoom Bombing where people can take control of your room, microphone and screen. Be sure to know how to shut these actions down as it can make a space unsafe for your participants.

Technology Needs of Participants:

Every participant in a CCAR training should be seen and heard. We recommend the use of separate headsets with microphone and webcam and the use of a laptop/desktop computer. Although many platforms have accessibility on smartphones, staring at a small iPad/tablet or smart phone screen that is displaying PowerPoint slides, webcams, and chat boxes is not the best way to attend a training of this caliber. We recommend utilizes the tech requirements that provides participant with the best optimized visual display, and sound capabilities possible in order to participate and engage fully.

Materials:

Although the training is being delivered online there is a need to provide participants with their manual. The CCAR Training manuals serve as a guide and record of the work product. Many coaches utilize their RCA manual as reference and use the worksheets with people they subsequently coach. It is the responsibility of the Facilitator to purchase and disseminate hard copies of the manuals prior to the start date of a scheduled training.

Before the session:

Provide contact information for both the Facilitator and Producer in case anyone has trouble getting in to the training room or has specific technology questions.

Providing everyone with the tech needs, links for entry to the digital classroom and materials is essential to the success of your event. So is a mandatory tech session to check participant equipment. Ever get a session and not have your technology work? It can create stress for both the Facilitator and participants, while taking up much of your class time figuring out what is wrong. Schedule a tech session a few days in advance so you are sure everyone has the equipment and settings enabled so they can be seen, heard and hear and see you. By doing this a couple of days in gives anyone time to get missing / incompatible equipment corrected. Many people are getting very familiar with the different digital platforms as the world continues to communicate and work differently due to COVID-19, however tech issues still may arise.

The day of:

The Facilitator and Producer should be in the class at least 30 minutes prior to a session so they you can work out any last-minute tech needs of participants. The producer should also check voicemail/email in case people are having trouble locating the links to access the room.

Introductions:

This is where the Producer can provide a brief overview of the room, its capabilities and how everyone will work together to meet the learning objective of the session.

This is where the producer can share how the group will communicate in the digital space:

- How to mute/unmute one's mic

- Pause a webcam
- How to raise your hand
- Use of the chat box

The facilitator can then introduce the working agreements, typical for any CCAR training. The working agreements along with methods of communicating will help drive the expectation for your digital space. You can then practice by sharing your introduction and inviting others to introduce themselves one by one. Then you can further introduce the training and how this rest of the training time will be spent. Sometimes getting through those first few modules will provide enough of a safe space in order to continue on this path of online learning which may be relatively new for many of us. But you've established trust and set the stage for a productive program.

Ensuring Participation:

It is essential to ensure everyone has a voice in a digital space. Just like a live CCAR training, the less you say (as facilitator) the better. This still applies in online training. Let the participants speak – often. If the facilitator or producer notices that someone isn't contributing, that could mean they are disengaged in the learning. Call on that person to read a slide, or answer a question – try to get them back in the game. Using a print out of your class roster, you can indicate who has contributed so that you can call on people who haven't spoken in a while to encourage their participation. If you have ever played a video game as a kid you know that there are games where Player 2 sits and waits until Player 1 has finished in order to take their turn. While we want everyone to take turns speaking, we want everyone engaged at all times so no one gets bored or distracted which can happen in a digital space. Think of good questions to ask, and ways to share the microphone with others who you may be losing the attention of.

Much of the energy of a training comes from interaction which then sparks even deeper conversation. It is harder to feel that energy in a digital space. To help sense what you may not see in a digital classroom, some platforms show an engagement meter. Use that to gauge and change course if needed. If you noticed people are stepping away, or yawning, take that five minutes stretch break. Screen fatigue is a real thing that could derail your training if you don't pay attention to it.

Ensuring Fidelity:

Best practices state that any online offering is about 50-60% less time than the live version. Don't feel that you have to keep people staring at a screen for 6 hours at a time. Each of the CCAR trainings have worksheets/exercises/readings/videos (RCA/EDRC) that can be done as pre or post work. Utilize those activities for the time spent off screen. Our digital offerings of the CT CCAR RCA and Ethics training were 4 hours per day with 2 hours of pre/post work. You can have people share phone numbers and have them do one on one phone calls for any pair activities outside of the digital classroom. Get creative....just know that even though your time in class in may be less than contact hours required, that work still need to be completed so the certificate is valid. In your work plan to CCAR this must be explained in order to be approved.

Think about how you will facilitate large group discussions, small group discussions/break out groups and one on one discussions in the digital space. Utilize the capabilities of your chosen online platform to make your training as dynamic and interactive as possible. Again, think ahead and plan these out in

advance. You need to plan for each activity because the expectations of learning in the live version and the capabilities of what your platform can support maybe quite different. Think about what your platform can do to get the best outcome for your participants.

We are still navigating this space and are figuring much of this out as you are. We don't have all the answers and we don't have scripts written for these uncertain times that are in front of us. CCAR Training is counting on you to do your best in creating a meaningful experience for anyone who participates in our trainings be it online or live.

Recovery is all about the connection....our training programs rely on that connection as part of the process.

Lessons Learned:

Facilitating several online trainings over the past months, has shown us that opportunities to engage and connect with other participants is still the most effective way to practice the Art of Recovery Coaching. No one likes listening to one single voice, idea or perspective. You can read an article or watch a video to do that. Although people do have time on their hands these days, doesn't mean they don't want to use that time in meaningful ways. On the contrary, people are seeking ways to enhance their skills, learn new ones, all while sharing their own unique perspectives in a space that invites vulnerability. The CCAR Curriculum invites these opportunities, both in person and online.