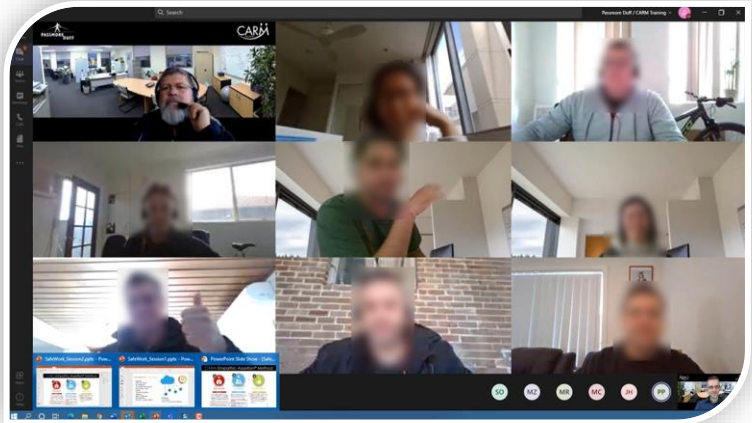




# CARM Training for remote workers Live Virtual-Classroom Sessions

## Benefits

1. Interactive, engaging and with immediate impact.
2. Provides a safe and convenient way to cater to learning uninterrupted by social distancing or remote location.
3. For behaviour based training, ideas can be shared and key skills and techniques discussed, demonstrated and given 'on the job' relevance.
4. Reduced time and cost associated with remote workers attending venues.
5. Multiple short sessions can conveniently be integrated into working schedules for reduced operational disruption.
6. Sessions supported by paired e/m-learning and microlearning strategies for seamless online continuity.
7. Integrates your organisations specific scenarios, enabling learning to target your current needs, issues & concerns.
8. Train staff conveniently and efficiently to address your business needs and risks and improve staff knowledge, skill and capability.
9. Practical and outcome focused. Providing the flexibility, engagement and responsiveness sought in a fully online COVID-19 safe way.



## Skilling your remote workforce

Remote employees must maintain and advance their skills through learning and development opportunities. With social distancing and an increase in remote working, many challenges have been created for the way in which learning is facilitated. Never more than now have we turned to technology for an answer. Whilst eLearning isn't a new concept, nor live online training, blended learning, microlearning or many of the other technology solutions, the increased motivation to adopt and adapt technology for learning as a consequence of the recent pandemic has seen the rise of some wonderful initiatives. Equally some less than effective productions and learning strategies have entered the circle. Learning technology solutions are on the minds and the task lists of an ever increasing number of businesses. As the intrigue of something different and new for many wears off, organisations are also seeing more clearly that not all online training is equal.

Lessons are being learnt rapidly and continually. Face to face is still an incredibly purposeful learning environment – but when it's just not possible to include this in your learning strategy, we must focus our professional learning and organisational development talents and resources towards learning strategies that offer an effective alternative for both the interim and in the longer term. We need to 'deliver' so that people can still propel their skillsets and professional capabilities to the next level, and so that organisations can continue to upskill their staff to perform on the job, despite the constraints of physical distancing.

As professionals in the learning and development space for more than 2 decades, incorporating technology in our training products and services since very early stages of its evolution, we are proud that we continue to meet these challenges head on, and enable organisations to confidently offer learning solutions that take their people to the next level.

## CARM Training live

### WORKPLACE AGGRESSION

- Managing Aggressive Behaviours
- Managing Telephone Aggression
- De-escalation and Influence

### WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

- Engaging in Confronting Conversations
- Negotiations Skills
- Assertiveness Skills
- Constructive Coping Skills

# LESSONS LEARNT HOW LIVE VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS CAN ACTUALLY HELP

With our specialist focus on workplace violence, workplace aggression and workplace relationships, we've had to adapt extremely successful and popular face to face offerings to a multi-faceted approach. Our online learning programs, the earliest releases dating back to 1998, provide a solid foundation for mastery within the topics. Excellent asynchronous learning in and of itself.

Our experience and exposure to the breadth of clients, industries and work environment, is a privilege and enables us to deeply appreciate just where and how we can add value. Through virtual classroom settings we continue to advance staff skills in responding to actual and current work challenges. We bring models, processes and theories to real life. We can engage staff in discussion, case study review, skills demonstration and practice. We've learnt valuable lessons in facilitating learning using live classroom formats.

There's so much for us all in the learning community to know and share, and so in this article we share some important insights about facilitating virtual live classroom training from our experiences.

## 1 Good preparation & pre-session checks:

Aside from ensuring the content is suitable and the session designed for virtual class-room delivery, making sure everyone is familiar with the software being used for the session is an absolute must. Regardless which software you use, whether its Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WebEx, BlueJeans, GoToMeeting etc, it's important that people can use the program in the way suited to your session.

Everyone needs to know how to access the session to begin with, and what functionality will be available during the session, such as how and when to show hands, to operate the microphone and video, to vote, use breakout rooms, share screens etc. These features enable the session to be more interactive and engaging, so it's really important to ensure that they can be operated by the learners if you plan to use them. Otherwise valuable time is lost helping learners problem solve their access or functionality issues. Time you don't have during an actual session, and learning that then is unlikely to hit the mark and deliver the outcome you were relying upon.

With more and more people using these systems more frequently, they are increasingly comfortable with the programs features, but it's still really important to check beforehand that this is the case.

They may not have used features in the way you plan to in an interactive training session, so ensuring you have a quick, easily understood functional overview at the very start of the session will be helpful also. Create a visual that supports this brief and share your screen during the overview to help make it easier for your learners to know what to do.

Lastly, it's a good idea to schedule 5 or sometimes even 10 minutes arrival time prior to the session. This enables all the welcomes, final system configurations and functional overview to be completed without impacting on the shorter session timings.

## 2 Keep the session short.

It's an interesting challenge to determine an effective session time period. Anyone who's facilitated live workplace training sessions knows only too well that there are many distractions for remote learners, and sessions that are low on interaction and span too large a time frame risk losing people's attention and focus along the way. However, making a session too short may leave little time to properly canvas topics or issues and incorporate interactions to keep the learning active. Interactions, whether they involve typed comments, questions for polled input, inviting mic on discussions or breakouts will eat time rapidly.

It's an important part of any active learning process and most certainly contributes to learner engagement, however we've also found that engagement levels can be improved by planning to hold multiple shorter sessions in preference to sessions that just run too long for an online environment. 60 to 90 minutes enables a reasonable time span without stretching the friendship and risking losing people to those many and varied distractions of remote work spaces. Even just enabling a 30-minute break in between two 90-minute sessions provides a much needed interval for people to refresh – including a bathroom visit and food/drinks break.

If more than 2 sessions are needed, and its logistically possible, it's better to wrap these further sessions into subsequent days rather than chain session after session together over a whole day. For many people, sitting still in isolation with just a screen, no matter how great the session is, doesn't offer the same benefits from a learning perspective when sessions aren't broken down into smaller chunks.

Enabling a larger overnight or multi-day break provides learners valuable reflective time. People can process, reflect, and critically analyse the learning more deeply over time, including overnight, and bring greater insights and energy to the sessions that follow.

## LESSONS LEARNT HOW LIVE VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS CAN ACTUALLY HELP

For our topics, it can also be a great learning asset if sessions are split over multiple weeks to enable case studies to be applied, questionnaires to prompt reflective thinking, new learning to be applied back to the workplace, and new experiences to contribute meaningfully to the next session.

### 3 Keep live online sessions interactive

People are kept engaged in the learning cycle, not just through highly relevant content, but by ensuring they are constantly involved through reflective questions, 'mic on' discussions, whiteboards, show of hands voting, eliciting views, offering opinions and input via comments and interacting with those comments via shared hosting.

Oh...did we mention shared hosting? Yes...this is particularly important. The main presenter or host is very busy driving the learning, conversations etc, and people will post and share their thoughts along the way. It's just too overwhelming for one host to manage all the benefits offered in this setting. In our case, both primary and support hosts are SME's. We've found it very helpful when the support host responds to comments often independently.

It helps to vary what participants see on their screen...swap out shared screen visuals for direct interaction – engage with the participants person to person – using the camera and mic to connect at an interpersonal level. Experienced trainers can draw upon skills learnt from the breadth and depth of their facilitation experience.

When talking with the learners, you can connect more powerfully by consciously using your interpersonal engagement skills. People interact with people, so it helps when as the host facilitator, you're on-screen for discussions and interactions in preference to leaving a shared screen up. You may just be looking at your web camera, but it's important to engage that camera as though it's a person. Having eye contact and ensuring your facial expression is "emotional" and matches what's being said all helps engage people by creating a more realistic interpersonal environment. Consciously animating your voice to match what's being discussed creates that warmth and human connection and helps to stimulates others to think, feel and actively be involved.

Whilst being mindful not to 'spotlight' a person and have them flounder in full view of their peers, it's also stimulating for everyone if you select people to contribute by nominating them from time to time.

Periodically, its useful to also ask people for a visual check-in. Ask them to turn their camera on and give a thumbs up. If you've got a comfortable connection with the learners, you could do an action or run a brief activity that makes them laugh. This not only provides a change of pace and offers an opportunity for a little fun; it also signals again to everyone that they could be asked to come on camera at any time, and so it better ensures they remain engaged and participate in the learning.

You can get creative with how you display feedback. As an example, we've created wordclouds from lists populated from live discussion / question feedback using [www.wordclouds.com](http://www.wordclouds.com). You just need to ensure you set up and test any display aids you plan to use in the session, so that their integration is as seamless and time efficient as possible. It can add great value by reducing cognitive effort, enabling learners to quickly interpret results from their feedback. Equally, inputting data into charts 'on the fly' during a session enables information obtained from participants to be immediately converted and displayed in a visual way. This creates interest, shows that you value the learners contributions, cognitively reduces learning and memory effort, and enables a snapshot data grab for possible post-session usage.

Breakouts will need clear instruction to help learners know how to use the time and what will be expected as an outcome from the group process. If you're enabling people opportunity to do this small group work, it's important to have a process for them to contribute their findings at the end of their breakout. If, for example, you ask them to be prepared to contribute three points arising from their group work, then ensure you randomly select at least one group to share their findings so everyone knows that there is an expectation at the end of the allocated time. With time limits preventing all feedback from being heard, you can provide a minute or two for others to type their points into the text area so that their feedback can be captured in the session recording and later reviewed.

### 4 Reduce distractions

As hosts, we know to keep our framing movements limited to minimise visual "noise". As hosts, we keep our backgrounds professional and our faces well lit. Peoples natural curiosity will have them wondering the meaning of all things, so you don't want a background to be so intriguing that people are constantly distracted thinking about what your interesting items actually mean.

## LESSONS LEARNT HOW LIVE VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS CAN ACTUALLY HELP

Having your face in the dark and not particularly clear not only reduces the interpersonal effect, but it can cause irritation to others, and this becomes just another learning distraction.

Reduce further distraction from poor technology by using quality camera and mic equipment. If you wear glasses, and you are sitting in front of a screen to conduct the session, beware that computer screens will directly reflect their light from your glasses back to your camera and can create a real distraction and inability for people to see your eyes. As the host, this is important to manage. If you have glasses with non-reflective lens treatments, this helps a lot. It also makes a big difference turning down your screen brightness. Operating at 50% or even lower if possible, can reduce the glaring effect to a level that is no longer distracting – so very much worth the adjustment.

### 5 Effectively link the learning to systems, processes and models where they apply.

People look to systems, processes and models to help consistently guide their decisions and actions. If you're looking to introduce people to these processes and models during live sessions, then greater time will be needed in constructing this knowledge with the learners. It will of course depend on what the topic is, and what outcome you may be looking to achieve when planning your approach.

In our case, high value gains are achieved from our live classroom sessions when they form part of a blended strategy. We intentionally create our e/m learning program's to be both rich in the validity of their content, but also in their instructional design. Our goal in these programs is to enable an asynchronous product to facilitate learning across the breadth and depth of the topic. With this as the foundation, our live sessions can then focus further learning on the application of directly and immediately applicable areas to targeted and current issues in their workplace. In this way, live sessions aren't walking someone through something that might be unfamiliar. Where models and processes have already been explored in the e/m learning courses, they can just be refreshed in the live session, with a focus to their application 'on the job'.



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Where we can, we start our live sessions from that shared familiar point in the learning cycle, ensuring shorter live sessions make direct and immediate connections to the learners work application.

We've found this blended approach presents some real value in the learning chain.

### 6 Make it real world / scenario based

The goal of live sessions in our context, is to bring all the key elements of our CARM Approach (underpinning knowledge, theory, models etc from our core e/m learning programs) into operational focus. By using real examples directly related to the participants context, setting and need, our discussions, demonstrations and practical applications all have immediate workplace relevance.

Any training plan we recommend, will focus on building capability with direct reference to workplace context. We often develop case studies that reflect particular concerns, issues and challenges and then use the live session time to facilitate building skill and capability directly related to these areas.

Focusing on the issues that are on the minds of the participants, enables the session to direct learning to those things that are immediately relatable and applicable to the learner.

## Final note

We hope you find these experiences useful as you contemplate and plan your approach.

We look forward to supporting your efforts in any way we can.

You are welcome to contact us to discuss and progress your ideas and plans for training.

Best regards,

**The CARM Team**