

Client Information for Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) by Zoom (Video Conference)

When family dispute resolution (FDR) is conducted by Zoom (a video conference platform) by an FDR Practitioner (FDRP), the process is similar to a face-to-face service, with some additional considerations to take into account.

This guide will assist you prepare for and participate in FDR by Zoom (video conference.)

Practical tips

- You will receive a Zoom invitation with instructions on how to join the meeting. If you do not have Zoom downloaded, you should be able to join via a browser link.
- Zoom works on both computer/laptop, iPad and smart phone. However, the advanced functions may differ between these devices.
- You will need access to wi-fi, or internet, and we discourage using mobile data due to the amount of data required for sessions.
- Ensure you have a full battery as Zoom meetings use a significant amount of battery charge.
- Using headphones can block out external distractions and make it easier for you to be heard.
- Have pen and paper ready, and water at hand.
- It is important to allow enough time for the appointment, The FDR assessment appointment usually takes between 60 and 90 minutes, and the joint FDR session up to two hours, unless otherwise agreed. If you need to finish earlier, please let the FDRP know at the start. A break can also be planned for the longer sessions.

Your Safety

If any safety concerns arise during a joint session, you can ask the FDRP for separate time (Private session) to work out the next steps. This could mean that the process becomes a shuttle FDR, where the FDRP will speak to you each separately. For information about family violence, and for support, visit www.rav.org.au/familyviolence

If unexpected interruptions occur during the session, please explain this to the FDRP so that they are aware of what is currently happening.

The Zoom Appointment: Assessment and FDR sessions

Once you “join” the Zoom meeting, you will be placed in a virtual waiting room until both clients have joined the meeting and FDRP is ready to convene the FDR session.

Before commencing joint FDR, the FDRP will explain the process and establish ground rules about respectful communication to enable the session to run smoothly. It may be helpful to “raise your hand” if you have a question or need to make a comment.

The FDRP will explain any additional steps such as the use of breakout or waiting rooms for private sessions and how the FDRP may use the mute button so each client has the time and space to be heard.

If the ground rules are not being followed, the FDRP may end the joint discussion and continue the session as a ‘shuttle’ session.

Although video conferencing is a form of face to face communication, it is still different from being in the same room. It’s important to speak one at a time so that everyone can hear each other as Zoom will only pick up one person’s voice at a time. To aid this it may be helpful for the FDRP to mute your microphone when you are not speaking to minimise background noise. The conversation may need to be slower and more structured than in a face to face situation.

It’s important to let the FDRP know if you are feeling distressed, confused or need a break. The FDRP will also regularly check in with you. Please ask them to clarify or repeat anything you are not sure of.

Please let the FDRP know if you wish to speak separately with them. The FDRP may also decide to have some separate time with each of you during the process in the breakout/waiting rooms used for this purpose. While waiting, it is important to stay nearby so that the FDRP can talk to you in turn or you can return to the joint meeting.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Your private information is kept on our system and not inside Zoom. All personal and clinical content is kept securely on your client file. No information or documents are sent through Zoom.

Maintaining the privacy of the information discussed in FDR sessions is a fundamental part of the FDR process. As such, please note the following, which applies to both assessments and joint FDR.

- During your session, you require a private space where you will not be interrupted or overheard.
- Protect your privacy. As other users can view your background put away anything you do not wish others to see e.g. photographs or other personal aspects of your environment
- No other person can be present or within earshot of the video conversation, unless previously discussed with the FDRP and agreed on before the session.
- Please ensure that children are not present and cannot see or overhear the video conference, because research informs us that it is not in the best interests of children to be exposed to issues relating to their parents’ separation,
- The recording of any part of a session is not permitted.
- The FDRP will check that you are aware of these requirements and ask for your consent to them at the start of the session. They will also check in with you during the session, if concerned that others are present or that the session is being recorded

Keeping Track

The FDRP may take notes during the session and you are also welcome to take notes if helpful.

The FDRP may use the shared screen function to create a “whiteboard” or other joint record of items such as the agenda, proposals and any agreed outcomes of the FDR. Alternatively, the FDRP may write up and summarise these items. The “whiteboard” notes or an equivalent final summary will be emailed to you at the end of the session.

At the end of the session there will be a discussion about the next steps and the timing of another FDR session, if it is needed