Tips for Participating in Zoom Meetings

Connecting with others via Zoom meetings has become a way of life for us now. Here are a few tips:
Lighting tips - Don't sit with your back to a window. If you do so, your background will be washed out and you will appear as a silhouette. Facing a window gives you soft, people-pleasing light. In the evening, one steady lamp directly by your face gives even, steady lighting.

Video and audio on or off - Sometimes the meeting host will set audio and/or video (your picture showing) to be on or off for everyone joining the meeting. Other times you will be asked when you join if you want audio and video on. You can also control these functions when you are in the Zoom meeting. For example, if the host has set video on for all participants but you don't want your picture showing, you can click on the video icon to turn it off for yourself. On an iPad the video and audio icons are on the top right of your screen. On a PC they are on the bottom left. (On a PC you have to move your cursor down to the bottom before the bar with the icons comes up.)

Background noise during meetings - One of the biggest problems during meetings is background noise from participants--somebody coughs, a dog barks, or someone's spouse is making noise. Not only is it distracting to the speaker but the picture of whomever is making the noise becomes the focus. When the meeting starts it is usually best to mute yourself (turn off audio) until you have something to say. Click the audio icon to mute and unmute.

Projecting your best self when you are talking - You want to engage with your audience when you are talking on a Zoom meeting. If you're reading from notes you need to look up at the audience periodically, just as you do to engage with people in the same physical room.   Be sure to look directly at your camera when you're talking. People are looking at a close up of your face so if you're looking down or off to the side you're not engaging with them. You should place your notes centrally so that you can stay mostly focused on the camera.

Looking your best when you're on the Zoom call - It makes a difference where you are located in relation to the camera on your device. Stay back a bit from your screen. The closer you are to the camera, the more distorted you will look. If your camera is too high, then your head is cut off. If the camera is too low, then people will be looking up your nostrils. If needed, you can put boxes or books under your computer to raise it up. Remember too that if you are having a "bad hair day" you can turn off your video. Lastly, Zoom provides some extra features for video. For example, if you want an air-brushed look you can use the "Touch up my appearance" option. You can use Google to find information about how to use such advanced Zoom features.