Do's and Do Not's for Effective Study Groups

Etiquette for groups that use phone/audio

Do use a fully charged land-line phone whenever possible to reduce static and background noise. If a land-line is not an option, test cell phones or speakerphones ahead of time to determine the amount of background noise they might pick up.

Do make sure you are in a quiet location with minimal background noise where you will not be disturbed.

Do introduce yourself when you begin speaking.

Do learn to use the mute button and other phone technology. If you have a cold or a child or pet in the background, use the mute button when not speaking.

Do not have additional conversations with those in your house or office while on the call.

Do not shuffle papers, tap pencils, type, chew gum, hum or do any other activities that may be distracting.

Do not put your phone on HOLD to do something else. If you are calling from an office, the hold music may play into the conference call, and make it impossible for the other participants to continue the meeting in your absence.

General tips

Do arrive to the session on time or early.

Do come to each meeting prepared. Be sure to finish your assigned reading, review notes, and a list of topics you want to discuss.

Do ask any questions you have. Your questions may be in the minds of many other students. They may be reluctant to ask, or they may be too confused to even generate a question.

Do make it a goal whenever you communicate to keep your message brief, crisp, and to the point. This is good practice for real-life meetings. Brevity helps to crystallize your understanding.

Do try to keep discussions and disagreements focused on topics/issues, avoiding personal criticism.

Do not allow the group to become a substitute for individual learning.

Do not stay in a group that is not working for you. Try to determine why it is not working for you and think of ways to address those reasons. Communication is key!

- If there is conflict within the group, always attempt to address and resolve the issues with the group first. Review Capella’s Conflict Resolution in Online Learning Environments resources for helpful tips and strategies.
- If your expectations are not being met, again, address it with the group to make sure everyone is on the same page with the purpose of the group.
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- If you do not feel like the group time is moving your learning forward, it might be best to leave the group so you can make better use of your study time.