

**Session:** Introduction

**Aim of session:** Creating a comfortable and safe learning environment, in which the participants can get to know each other before the physical training starts.

**Material needed:** None; this is an online session

**Time of session:** To be opened around 1.5 months before the physical training; can remain open until the start of the physical training.

**Description of session:** The facilitator opens a course activity in the online platform, preferably called “Introduction” or something similar.

Before the first post, the facilitator creates a discussion group and posts the first post. This is done in order to stimulate a discussion among the participants, during which they can get to know each other. A suggestion for a first post could be:

“Dear all,

We are looking forward to meeting you all soon in [place of physical training]. In order to get to know each other better before the training, we would like to you all to introduce yourself to the rest. We would like you to send in this discussion group:

1. Your name, where you work and what you work with.
2. One fun fact about yourself.
3. A picture of yourself, in which you do something that you love doing.
4. Short expectations of this training course.
5. One aspect of student experience that you think is very relevant.

We are looking forward to seeing your input here.”

Of course the post above is just a suggestion and it can be adopted according to the wishes of the facilitator. Once the first post is posted, the facilitator opens up the course description. The text can be short and straight-to-the-point, for example:

“In order to get to know each other a bit before the course starts, please go to this [discussion group](#) [link], in which we ask you to present yourself briefly.

Also, please be prepared to present yourself at the first webinar (more information about that soon).”

If the discussions do not take off quickly – this can happen, since participants who do not know each other might hesitate to be the first one – then the facilitator him/herself, or a colleague of him/her going to the event, can take the first step and be the first one to post something.

**Other notes:** When communicating to the participants about logistics, administration, etc. it might be a good idea to state something like “Do not forget to complete the first assignment: the introduction and getting to know each other in the discussion group [link].”