Creating Breakout Rooms in Zoom.

One of Zoom's lesser known features is the breakout room. Breakout rooms let you separate people in a meeting into smaller groups, where they can have their own private conversations, and then come back to the larger meeting later.

To create a breakout room in Zoom, you'll need to enable this setting first (see diagram below). Once you do, you can create up to 50 breakout rooms in a single call. However, you can only create breakout rooms if you're using the Desktop version of Zoom, this does not work on the mobile app. If you are using the mobile app, you can join the breakout rooms, but cannot create or manage them.

This guide will show you how to do this systematically. I have also created a video tutorial here.

1. Sign into your account and select ‘Settings’ - at the bottom of the ‘General Tab’ you will see an option for ‘View More Settings’. This will then take you to a web page for the advanced settings of this account.

Simply scroll down this list of options on the right until you see ‘Breakout Rooms’ – then set the toggle switch to the ON position. (As illustrated below)
2. Select "New Meeting" or "Schedule" to schedule an upcoming meeting. Either way, you must be the Host to create breakout rooms. Once in the meeting, you will notice a new Breakout Room button at the bottom. Click this button to proceed in setting up your Breakout rooms.

3. Set up

This window (above) will appear after selecting the Breakout room Button. Zoom will automatically assign participants into 2 rooms by default, or if the number is larger it can automatically assign 3-4 participants to as many rooms as required to keep the numbers even.

In this case, I will choose to do this ‘Manually’ and illustrate how to place participants into 4 rooms.
As illustrated above, we have created x4 Breakout Rooms. We can see that each room can be ‘Renamed’ and if you select the Assign button, you can ‘tick off’ which participant/s are going into this room. As you subsequently move down each room, the user list will get smaller as some are already in the first room etc.

The Host can also add another room if required, simply by clicking the add a room button at the bottom.

Next, we will look at what options are available for these rooms by selecting the Options button

4. Options button
Here we have x4 options for our Breakout rooms.

1. **Move all participants into breakout rooms automatically.** This will place participants into the rooms automatically as soon as ‘Open all rooms’ button is selected. If unticked, the user will see an invitation window pop-up asking to Join breakout room X.. (The room they are assigned to).

2. **Allow Participants to return to the session at any time.** Tick this box if that suits your meeting requirements. This will simply allow the user to come back into the main meeting room at any time.

3. **Breakout rooms close after 30 mins.** You can set the time limit for when the breakout room will close and bring all participants back to the main session.

4. **Countdown after closing breakout room.** Once you have selected the time limit for the room and it expires or you close the rooms manually, the participants will receive a countdown timer notification of 60secs (default). This will enable them to bring the conversation to a close before the timer runs out and returns to the main session.

The host will now see the participants start to filter out of the main session and into the breakout rooms.

As the Host you are able to enter any of these breakout rooms as you wish, as illustrated below.
As you can see from the top of the window, there is a timer showing how long is left until the Breakout room closes and returns to the main session.

Participants in the breakout rooms will have an option to ‘Ask for Assistance’ if there are any queries about the session or need help. This will then pop-up on the Host’s screen i.e ‘Lorna has requested assistance’. By clicking the OK button it will bring you into the breakout room that the user is in.

That concludes this brief introduction to breakout rooms, I hope it has been informative. If you have any questions, please email me at e.haughey@hospiceuk.org.