Opening Remarks

[Example 1]
Welcome [Party One] and [Party Two] to mediation.

Can you both see and hear me?

Can you see and hear each other?

Good, and I can see and hear both of you as well. When we are using this type of technology, sometimes things happen and we might lose the connection. If that happens, please [reiterate contingency plan such as dialing a phone number.]

The purpose of this mediation is for the two of you to talk to each other to try and figure out a solution for the issues that you're having. Whether we meet in person at an office or are using technology to communicate like this, it is important to remember that the mediation process is confidential and to think of this as a private conversation between the two of you. I want to ask you both to check that there is no one in the room with you. [Wait for affirmation from both parties].

I also want to remind you that none of us are able to record this session.

When we are communicating like this, it becomes even more important that only one person speaks at any one time or none of us will be able to really understand each other. Ok, I want to start by asking why you both are here today and what it is that you would like to sort out.

[Example 2]
Welcome everyone to the online mediation platform where we will have our facilitated dialogue. Thank you for joining us today from your respective locations.
There are a couple items to get out of the way before we can begin so let’s briefly review the mediation guidelines sent prior to today’s session. Does everyone have access to a copy?

Great. I want to draw your attention to the phone number in the top right corner of the page. This is a number that can be used to contact me directly if you are disconnected from the session.

Next, I want remind you of my role in this process. I will serve as an impartial, third party to facilitate the conversation, both in this joint session and in private meetings. Each of you have brought an advocate so I will not be serving in this capacity nor will I be making any judgements on who is right or wrong. It will be up to you who will make decisions on any type of settlement agreement at the end.

As a mediator, I am bound by confidentiality and these rules are explained in the mediation guidelines. None of us are able to record this session and I would like to take this opportunity to ask each of you to check that there is no one in the room with you now or that could overhear this session.

Thank you.

During this process, each side will have an opportunity to meet privately and confidentially with me. So we will all see each other when we are in the main room, but while I am in the caucus with you, the other side will visibly disappear. We will not be able to hear them and they will not be able to hear us so we can talk freely. I will do this with both sides so it is a great tool that each side can use during the mediation process. Are there any questions before we begin?

**Breaking into Caucus**

It is quite common in mediation for me to spend some time talking with each of you separately. I’ll start with [Party One] and we are going to move to another virtual room where we can only hear and see each other. [Party Two] if you need anything during this time you can send me a chat message. While I am talking with [Party One], feel free to take a stretch break.

**Switching Rooms**

Ok, now what I'm going to do now is to meet with [Party Two] in the same way I’ve just spoken to you on your own now. I will speak with [Party Two] for about the same amount of time so please take a stretch break. If you need me, you can send me a chat message.