

ACCESSIBILITY TIPS FOR SPEAKERS AND PROGRAM LEADERS

This event is designed to be fully accessible for all participants. The following tips will help all attendees to participate fully. We will notify you of any specific additional needs of persons attending your session. Please refer to the “A to Z Road Map for Designing and Implementing Accessible Faith Events” for more in-depth information and references. Ask if you need clarification about anything. Thank you for making these accommodations.

Room layout

- We will set up the rooms with a minimum of 36” aisles and several dispersed wheelchair seating options. Please avoid placing obstacles in the path, e.g. chairs, power cords, etc. Ideally there will be 60” side aisles so that persons using wheelchairs can move through the room and have a choice of places to sit.
- Please let us know what type of table set up would best help you meet the goals of your session. For instance a circle of chairs or tables set up in a “U” shape may be effective depending on the type of participant interaction you plan to have.
- If no one is assigned to do this, please designate a volunteer greeter at the door to confirm the workshop title and assist persons to move chairs or find a place to sit as needed.

Handouts

- Please provide a copy of any handouts two weeks prior to the event so that we can print the materials and can generate large print or other alternative format versions as requested.
- If you use PowerPoint to generate handouts, please provide an advance copy of the text in a Word document. Briefly explain graphics and photos in this version for people who use screen readers.
- Select an easily read sans serif font and use a legible size, e.g. Arial 12 for most items. Large print handouts need to use at least Arial 18, but some participants will require larger print.
- If you print handouts use black ink on white or light pastel paper for good visual contrast and no distracting background graphics.
- If some persons are not given access to handouts (e.g. the handouts have not been provided in electronic format ahead of time), please refrain from passing out any handouts. They can be sent by e-mail or posted on the conference website.

Visual aids

- Flip charts or white boards are good for those with hearing loss, but always verbally describe or read anything you are showing visually for the benefit of persons with low vision or who are blind. Paint a picture with words.

- Give verbal directions rather than pointing and using gestures.
- For slides and transparencies limit information to a maximum of 8 lines per slide, with a minimum font size of 18 – larger for larger rooms.
- Chose a legible sans-serif font and high visual contrast between letters and background.
- Avoid busy backgrounds which make the words hard to read.
- Make sure any videotape you select has closed captioning, and caption any slides you use.
- For the benefit of persons who are blind or have low vision, either describe what is on the screen or have someone seated next to the person providing full descriptions.

Communication

- If provided for the size of the room or because it was requested please use the microphone, even if you have a voice that carries well. This also aids persons using assisted listening devices who need the input through the PA system.
- Always face forward when speaking, and keep your hands and the microphone away from your face so persons who speech-read can see your mouth. Stay in the front of the room, as those in the front row will often be those who need to see your face.
- If a white board or flip chart is used, recruit a volunteer to do the writing.
- Never stand in front of a window or strong light, but make sure the light is on your face and that of the interpreter.
- Speak at a moderate pace and spell any unfamiliar words if your session is sign-language interpreted. Have the interpreter stand near you so persons watching the interpreter can also see your gestures and facial expressions.
- If a participant microphone is not provided please repeat questions before answering them. Whenever possible pass around a microphone instead.
- Control background noise to the extent possible. If you break into small groups you may need to locate one or two quiet areas outside the meeting room to accommodate groups including persons with hearing loss.

Language

- Please use person-first language, e.g. “the person who has a disability” instead of “the disabled.”
- Avoid using the words “blind” and “deaf” in negative terms, e.g. “we turn a deaf ear to God” or “we are blind to the needs around us.”
- In the community of faith all of us belong – there is no room for the use of “they” or “them” when referring to people with disabilities.

Lynn Swedberg, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA, Disability Consultant

Resources for Learning More

- PowerPoint Accessibility – WebAIM (webpage) <http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint>
- How to Make Presentations Accessible to All – Web Accessibility Initiative (webpage) <http://www.w3.org/WAI/training/accessible>
- Presenter Guidelines: Accessibility & Inclusion – Association of University Centers on Disabilities (webpage) <http://www.aucd.org/conference/template/page.cfm?id=50129>
- Disability Style Guide – National Center on Disability and Journalism (webpage with downloadable PDF file) <http://ncdj.org/style-guide>
- Guidelines for Audio Describing Meetings and Presentations -- Elizabeth Kahn/ National Association of the Deaf (PDF) <https://www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh207.pdf>
- Event Planning for Universal Accessibility and Full Inclusion – Disability Visions – Ability Matters, Rocky Mountain Conference, United Methodist Church <http://www.rmcmc.org/files/content/missions/disability/event+planning+for+universal+accessibility+and+full+inclusion++disability+visions-ability+matters+final.pdf>