

Accessibility Guidelines for Trainers & Presenters

A practical checklist for creating accessible, inclusive presentations and training experiences. Originally created for an organization's all-staff convening; lightly generalized here for broader use.

•Before Presenting

- ☐ Ensure all materials (slides, handouts, etc.) are accessible.
- ☐ Use an accessibility checker for PDFs before distribution.
- ☐ Use built-in accessibility checker tools for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
- ☐ Offer multiple ways for participants to engage and interact, considering different accessibility needs.
→ e.g., alternative methods for submitting questions; allow participants to request accommodations
- ☐ Consider accessibility issues with participant activities.
→ e.g., online polling, sticky notes, quick-response activities
- ☐ Turn off potential distractions (cell phone, email notifications, Slack).

•Preparing Materials for Presentations

- ☐ Organize slide decks into clear sections with an outline or table of contents.
- ☐ Use alt text for all images.
- ☐ Create high-contrast slides. Note: graphs and charts may need extra review even in branded templates.
- ☐ Avoid animated images that blink or flash.
- ☐ When including hyperlinks, use descriptive link text instead of generic phrases.
→ Use "the How to Collect Demographic Data guide" instead of "click here"
- ☐ Throughout the presentation, limit the amount of text on each slide.
- ☐ Run the accessibility checker in PowerPoint and address any identified issues.

•During a Presentation

- ☐ Kick off with an accessibility review — explain what steps have been taken and welcome accommodation requests.
- ☐ Describe yourself at the start of your presentation. Keep it to one or two sentences; include your pronouns and basic identifying information.
→ e.g., "I am a white woman in my early 30s with black glasses. My pronouns are she/her."
- ☐ Speak clearly and avoid speaking too fast. Use [Microsoft's Speaker Coach](#) to practice and prepare.
- ☐ Use simple language; avoid or explain jargon, acronyms, and idioms.
- ☐ Allow time for participants to process information by pausing between topics.
- ☐ Narrate or describe content on slides, whiteboards, or other formats — including images and charts critical to your message. You do not need to describe decorative images.
- ☐ Make sure you are easily visible and well-lit when speaking; avoid turning away from the audience.
- ☐ During events with multiple speakers, say your name each time you begin speaking.

•Specific Guidance: In-Person

- ☐ Use a microphone if available.
- ☐ Ensure live visual text meets minimum visibility standards:
→ Dark colors on white/light surfaces (e.g., whiteboards)
→ Light colors on dark surfaces (e.g., blackboards)

•After a Presentation

- ☐ During Q&A or collaborative discussion, rephrase or repeat questions for the full group.
- ☐ If there is important discussion not in prepared materials, take notes for follow-up.
- ☐ If sending a follow-up email, ensure all included materials are accessible:
→ Images should have alt text
→ PDFs should pass an accessibility check before distribution

✦Additional Resources

Disability & Philanthropy Forum

How to Make Accessible, Inclusive Self-Introductions

Microsoft Speaker Coach

Rehearse your slide show with Speaker Coach

Adobe Acrobat

Create and verify PDF accessibility

Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker

Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker