How to Invite Everyone:
Hosting Accessible Virtual Meetings

What is an Accessible Meeting?

A meeting is accessible when everyone has:

- Equal access to information; and
- The ability to participate in the ways that work best for them.

Accessibility should be part of the planning process, not an afterthought, as these features benefit everyone.

This guide provides recommendations through the various steps on hosting a meeting. Please reach out to Breaking Silences Advocacy Committee to collaborate on making your meetings accessible!

Before Publishing Meeting Announcement:

1. Designate a staff member to oversee accommodation requests.
2. Decide what accommodations you will provide regardless of the request and ensure that all materials are available in large print:
   a. List those accommodations on the meeting announcement.
      i. Example: We will provide an ASL Interpreter and CART Captioning. We will send a transcript one week after the meeting. The link to the recording will be available on request.
      ii. Ensure that font is a minimum of 14 and the font type is either Arial or Verdana.
   b. We recommend offering ASL Interpreters, CART captioning, recording of meetings, materials sent out prior to the meeting, and a copy of the transcript and recording link to attendees.

3. Ensure flyers, advertisements, PowerPoints, and other promotional materials are accessible via screen readers, braille, and other software and available in large print.
    a. It is important to note that accommodations for individuals are as unique as the individual needing or requesting the accommodation(s). It is important to have a dialogue with the individual to exchange ideas of what accommodations can and cannot be made, and why.
    b. WORD and TXT Documents are often the preferred, and most accessible format, for individuals with visual aide software.
    c. Photographs and images, without text descriptions, often cannot be translated by visual aide software.
    d. PDF documents often cannot be translated by visual aide software.
    e. Ensure that font is a minimum of 14 and the font type is either Arial or Verdana.
4. Include an accessibility clause on your flyer that shares what accommodations will be available and gives clear, and easy to find, instructions on how to request additional accommodations. For example:
    > ASL and CART will be provided, and a copy of the recording and transcript is available after the meeting. If you need additional accommodations, please contact:
    > Joe Schmo: joe@email.com
    > Voice: 555-000-0000
    > TTY: 555-000-0001
    > By: October 25, 0000
5. Book your ASL interpreters and captionists.
6. Use Zoom for virtual meetings due to accessibility features.
7. If you have questions, consult with disability organizations to ensure a meeting is accessible to all participants.
8. Advertise your meeting 2 weeks prior to the date and allow for accommodation requests up to 1-3 days prior to the meeting.

After Publishing Meeting Announcement:

1. Respond to all accommodation requests in a timely manner.
2. Email any meeting materials to registrants 1-3 days prior to the meeting.
3. Email polling questions to individuals who request information in advance.

During Meeting:

1. Give an overview of accessibility features available. "To view captions… Our ASL interpreters are… If you have questions…" Designate a staff member to respond to any access issues.
2. Spotlight the ASL Interpreter.
3. Request that all individuals participating in the meeting identify themselves before speaking during the entire presentation: "This is Joe S. speaking, my question is…"
4. Speakers should have their video on for those who read lips.
5. Speak clearly and avoid rushing.
6. Describe all visuals, such as graphs or images.
7. When choosing video presentations:
   a. Be aware of limitations for accessibility translation;
   b. Describe, whenever possible, videos being presented and / or captioning from a video that is not voiced; and
   c. Do not talk over video dialogue.
8. State which slide you are presenting on or what document you are presenting from and indicate what section you are on.

Post Meeting:

1. Email recording and transcript to all attendees.
2. Ensure all surveys are accessible for individuals with various disabilities.
3. Email accessible survey link to meeting registrants for easier access.

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