

# Accessibility Guidelines for Educators and Speakers

Thank you for being a Presenter for a MoAT related session! During any meeting sponsored by Missouri Assistive Technology all attempts are made to make the meetings as accessible as possible. Part of accessibility is reduced communication barriers including how information is presented during conference presentations. As a part of your responsibilities as a Presenter, please review the following information in remembering how to ensure access for all participants.

## Print Disabilities

The following are some guidelines while presenting that help individuals with print disabilities to ensure communication of your presentation:

* All print materials intended for handout use at your presentation must be available in alternative formats (large print, CD/flashdrive, and Braille). Our office can produce these and must have an electronic version of the document or a hand out at a minimum of 10 days before the presentation. Each attendee who requested electronic alternative format will have those files pre-loaded on their session flashdrive.
* If the Presenter provides visual materials/handouts that were not submitted to MoAT ahead of time, you will need to bring all alternative formats or you may not distribute materials at all. Alternative formats include Large Print, Braille or a word or text file on a flash drive/CD. Electronic formats of a Word document or text file can also be made available in the cloud if there is Wi-Fi/Internet access at the session location.

## Sensory/Hearing Disabilities

**The following are some guidelines while presenting that help individuals with sensory/hearing disabilities to ensure communication of your presentation:**

* If assistive listening devices are provided in the class, assure that the participants who requested the device(s) have them and that they are working properly. Make sure you use the appropriate delivery equipment and remember to speak clearly. This might be a microphone that is connected to the device at the person’s seat or to an amplifier in the room.
* Repeat all questions from the audience to assure that people who are using assistive listening devices have heard the question.
* Ensure that only one person speaks at a time by asking the group to wait until they are acknowledged before commenting or asking a question.
* It is necessary to face the audience when speaking and to not obstruct the area around your mouth for those people who use lip reading. Speak and face the audience before writing on a chalkboard or flip chart. One way to avoid this is to have an assistant, co-presenter, facilitator or audience volunteer do the writing for you.

## General Guidelines

**The following are some general guidelines while presenting visual material that will help all individuals with disabilities to ensure communication of your presentation:**

* PowerPoint slides, charts, and flipchart presentations need to be accompanied by a brief oral narrative. Verbal descriptions of visual aids not only help people with a variety of disabilities, those sitting in the back of the room often appreciate them.
* Ensure that all visual aids are printed in as large a size as possible. Visual aids include an iPad, PowerPoint slides, charts, or flip charts. To maximize readability, PowerPoint slides should not contain more than eight lines of text and as a rule of thumb, use a minimum font size of 18.
* Use contrasting colors such as black and white or yellow and blue for readability.
* For new terms or concepts you present, write them on the board. This is also a good idea for your name.
* Break information into small steps while instructing a participatory exercise. Provide follow up with an aid or yourself directly with the participant one on one to see if they need additional instruction.

## Sign Language Interpreter Considerations

**The following are some guidelines while presenting with a sign language interpreter:**

* Auxiliary lighting may need to be provided for the interpreter. If you recognize that this issue has not been addressed, please notify an onsite contact as soon as possible.
* Do not walk in front of the interpreter while they are signing.
* If you tend to speak rapidly, do your best to slow down your speech rate.
* Spell out unusual terms, names and any possible foreign words.
* If you are using slides, or referring to handouts, allow extra time for attendees to look at each item when you are finished discussing it. People using interpreters cannot examine items while they are using an interpreter.
* All videos,soundtracks of films, and slide shows must be captioned (live or other). Open captioned videos have the spoken words and/or audio effect displayed as text that is visible without the use of a decoder. Closed-captioned videos do not have the spoken words and/or audio effect displayed as text unless a decoder is installed on the television.

## Mobility Disabilities

**The following are some guidelines while presenting with an individual that has mobility impairment, or uses a mobility device such as: a prosthetics, a power chair, walker, brace or wheelchair.**

* Space should be made available around the tables, at the table and to the room exits.
* Although the class host should have this verified up front, know where the accessible bathroom is to ensure a participant knows how to get to it and that there is access to this bathroom.
* A participant made need to record the session or arrange for a note taker if they are unable to take notes physically.

## Cognitive/Learning Disabilities

**The Following are some guidelines while presenting to an individual that has a cognitive or learning disability:**

* Present with various modalities (verbal, visual and participatory) to provide the support for a good cross section of participants’ learning styles. A combination or presentation modalities is effective for everyone’s comprehension and will enhance your session for all.
* Be prepared to explain a point in more than one way.
* Repeat key points of your session several times in the session.
* Summarize your key learning points at the end of the presentation.
* Be aware of distractions in the room. Help reduce distractions to ensure participant’s energy used in their attention process is on you, and not the distraction.
* Offer them a seat closer to the front for increased focus of the presentation.

## How to Ask for Clarification

**The following are some guidelines while presenting to an individual with a disability that affects their speech pattern:**

* If you are unable to understand what the participant is asking or trying to share, it is ok to say, “I did not catch what you are saying; can you repeat your point (or question)?” If the host of the class is close by, they might be able to assist in clarifying the participants point or question. If it is still unclear, it is ok to say that you don’t understand.
* Repeat the question back and ask if you understood what they were asking. This is helpful for all to ensure everyone heard each question.

**We thank you for taking the time to ensure an inclusive educational experience for all!!!**

Should you require additional information beyond the information in this guide or have any questions or comments please contact Missouri Assistive Technology 816-655-6700

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