

The Teaching and Learning Exchange Standards of Practice for Accessible Events

A Living Document since June 2024

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Introduction

The Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLX) serves as a “one-stop-shop” for all full-time and contract faculty at GBC (George Brown College) to support their teaching and learning-related needs. The goal of the TLX is to foster a culture of teaching innovation and excellence, from in-class to hybrid to fully online learning, by providing ongoing professional learning opportunities, support for teaching innovation, and “just-in-time” teaching resources and training. The TLX aspires to create a community of excellence in teaching and learning by fostering partnerships with and among faculty. We model innovative, evidence-informed practices, guided by five core principles. In all the work we do, we aim to be:

- Innovative
- Inclusive
- Authentic
- Supportive
- Collaborative

This Standards of Practice document outlines some considerations for hosting more accessible conferences based on the core values of the TLX. Though it provides guidance for conference organizers, it should not be considered definitive or exhaustive. True [accessibility](#) comes from proactive, consistent, and transparent communication; intersectional critical thinking; and a willingness to adapt. We hope that this text provides a starting point for deeper reflection and conversation about how to dismantle the barriers to full participation that come from [ableism](#), [audism](#), and other linked forms of social oppression. We consider this a living document and look forward to its growth. Feel free to modify or add to these guidelines as you learn more.

Accessibility in conference planning

A successful conference or event is one where everybody is welcomed and able to participate fully. Historically, events have been planned with one narrow idea of who will attend and what their needs might be. It is important to remember that [disabled](#) and [chronically ill](#) people ([people with disabilities](#)¹ and chronic conditions) comprise a considerable proportion of

¹ We have opted to use person-first language in the context of this guide (“people with disabilities”). It is important to note, however, that many disabled people prefer identity-first language (“disabled person”) to highlight both the centrality of disability to their experience of the world and call attention to the social construction of disablement. Variation, illness, and injury are inherent to the human experience; people are *disabled* by an ableist world. For more, see [Natalia Iwanek’s “Disability-Affirming Language: Person-First versus Identity-First Language”](#).

the population and deserve to be included from the beginning. It can be useful to have a dedicated access team, ideally with [d/Deaf](#) people and people with lived experience of [disability](#), as they can often recognize barriers or issues that others will not catch. It is also important to remember that people with disabilities also have multiple other identities and that many people – including those who do not identify as disabled – experience barriers and unmet [access needs](#).

One way to start thinking about accessibility is to identify barriers that might exist at a conference. Below are some examples of the types of barriers that conference participants might face:

Attitudinal barriers

are those that discriminate against people with disabilities. Some examples are:

- thinking that people with disabilities are inferior
- assuming that you can easily perceive someone's disability, or that disabled people do not have other identities and experiences
- understanding disability as a "tragedy" to be managed or "overcome"
- assuming that access needs are "one off" occurrences, best negotiated privately with an individual, rather than through structural change

Information and communication barriers

happen when the way information presented is inaccessible. Some examples are:

- print on a document is too small to read
- websites only work with a mouse
- there are no captions on in a virtual meeting
- signs are not clear or easily understood
- language or images do not represent the diverse communities we serve

Technology barriers

occur when a technology cannot be modified to support various assistive devices. Some examples are:

- a website platform or third-party applications used are not compatible with screen-readers
- a live conferencing platform is not user-friendly, lacks accessible functions, or does not allow Sign Language Interpreters to be consistently seen

Organizational or structural barriers

are policies, practices or procedures that discriminate against people with disabilities. Some examples are:

- not providing enough time between sessions for people to process information in an online event or to travel between spaces at an in-person event
- implementing “camera-on” policies in an online event or requiring people do not use their laptops or cellphones at an in-person event
- Restrictions or limitations on the way people can access various stages in the conference process, from registration, payment, conference participation, to giving feedback and accessing post-conference recordings and additional materials

Architectural and physical barriers

are features of buildings or spaces that cause problems for persons with disabilities. The following are some examples:

- creating events that are in-person only, with no online options
- holding in-person events without indicating the availability and encouragement of masking, distancing, and other safety measures
- using physical spaces that are too narrow for a person using a wheelchair, electric scooter, or walker to navigate
- holding an event in a space without ramps, elevators, and/or accessible, gender-neutral washrooms

Format considerations

When deciding upon the format in which to hold an event (fully online, [hybrid](#), [hyflex](#), or in-person), it is important think about the purpose and intended audience. Consider the physical accessibility and safety of any in-person space, as well as the distance people might have to travel to attend, and any time and money considerations. If you have decided on an in-person event, will there be meaningful and robust options for online attendance? If not, who might you be leaving out? Some comparable questions apply to online-only events. What technological barriers might participants face? Is technology support available to people who need it? If you are planning a hybrid and/or hyflex conference to meet a variety of access needs, do you have the infrastructure you need? For example, have you chosen a space that has the technological capacity for hybrid or hyflex options? Do you have enough people working on the planning team to provide dedicated support to those online and in person?

It is important to remember that accessibility is contextual; what may be needed in one space may not be in another, and not all people with similar disabilities have the same needs. People also experience fluctuating needs. It is best to provide as much choice as possible. For this reason, it can be helpful to plan for events that have multiple format options. In these circumstances, it is essential to put equal planning and support into each format, and not prioritize one over the other.

Before the conference

Whatever format you choose to hold your conference in, it is best to start by thinking about how you will foster diversity and welcome in a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, while ensuring that you remain true to principles of equity and justice. Having a planning team with a range of identities and experiences is a great place to start. Together, you can make plans about how you will invite alternative pedagogical and epistemological viewpoints and ensure that people can share their lenses and perspectives. Consider how you will create [brave spaces](#) where people can feel comfortable taking risks while also remaining as safe as possible from oppression.

Planning a virtual conference

If you have decided to plan a conference that will occur only online, start by considering which remote platform to use and how you will set it up. Consider the following:

- What kinds of technological requirements or barriers exist in this platform? For example, is it a paid or free service? Does it require a specific bandwidth? What kinds of device/systems variations might participants have to navigate?
- What kinds of physical requirements or barriers exist? For example, does it require a certain type of dexterity to use? Are there options for chat and speech input?
- What are the options for recording of video and chat components? How will you ensure that people are informed about recording and given the choice to opt out?
- How does the platform manage the need for interpreters and captioning? Does the platform allow for Sign Language Interpreters to be spotlighted? What kinds of live captioning options are there?
- What kinds of participation does the platform encourage? Can you create breakout rooms? Can there be alternative activities for anyone wishing to opt out of breakout rooms?

- How easily can people access and customize the platform to meet their own access needs?
- Is there clear communication on available accessibility features and welcoming accommodation requests?

You will also want to think about temporal elements of your event. Some things to consider include:

- Have you planned in shorter online sessions and/or gaps between sessions to ensure that people get a break from their screens?
- Have you considered giving more time for audience responses and participation in additional online tools?

Planning an in-person conference

If you have decided to plan a conference that is in-person, you will need to think carefully about the physical environment. Some basic guidelines include:

- Book a space that allows for social distancing and provide masks.
- Be sure the venue allows for reserved seats at the front of each room
- Check that there are clear sight lines for people using Sign Language Interpreters.
- Make sure presenters will be in a well-lit area.
- Check the presentation technology - if slide presentations or videos will be used, the images should be projected high enough to be fully visible to all persons seated.
- Be sure lecterns and/or microphones are adjustable with a clear path for people to move to and from their seats.
- Check that electronic wires are securely affixed to floor or wall.
- Look for wide, barrier-free routes of travel to and from all conference meeting areas.
- Watch out for things that can impede access, such as steps or sudden changes in level or flooring.
- If your event will take place on several floors, be sure that the building has enough elevator capacity to carry the people who cannot use stairs or escalators. Ideally, each elevator should have an auditory signal to alert people with low vision, and a visual cue system for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing.
- Ask the facility's manager about emergency evacuation plans and whether they take people with disabilities into account.
- Be sure there are movable tables and chairs.
- Ensure there are enough accessible gender-neutral washrooms located within distance of the event's active spaces.

- Ensure the entrance to each space is accessible (in terms of fit of device and electronic activated doors).
- Check to see if the conference venue has a reasonable number of accessible parking spots, with enough space between them for someone using a wheelchair, walker, or other mobility device to enter and exit their vehicle.

Planning a hybrid or hyflex conference

As with both online or in person conferences, hybrid and hyflex conferences should design for accessibility from the beginning, not as an afterthought. Though these may seem like new or unfamiliar methods, remember that some in-person conferences without an online hyflex option already use hyflex methodology, as in the case where a presentation occurs in one room and the audience is split into other rooms.

Hybrid and hyflex conferences have two basic options:

- A session is being **hosted in person and shared online**, like when an in-person panel or keynote has both an in-person and synchronous online audience.
- A session is **hosted online and shared in person**, like a virtual keynote or panel that is being shared with both an in-person and synchronous online audience.

Hyflex- Hosted in person and shared online

Planning to host a conference in person while sharing it synchronously online means taking both the online and in-person guidelines above into account. Additionally:

- Plan to have at least one dedicated conference staff person to monitor the video conferencing tool used and ensure that the online audience can remain involved.
- Source appropriate technology to keep online synchronous participants engaged. GBC owns several [Owl Labs](#) which are very useful for limited space video conferencing. Multiple Owls can be used for larger sessions. An Owl can be used to connect 20 in person participants to online participants.

Hyflex- Hosted online and shared in person.

Planning to host a conference online while allowing for in-person participation requires paying attention to all guidelines for virtual and in-person conference planning. Additionally, you will want to plan to have a moderator to ensure the audio and visual equipment work for both the in-

person and online components. The moderator will also be able to field questions from an in-person audience and post them to the speaker or panel.

Booking speakers

Call for proposals

When creating a call for proposals, consider how to proactively invite people with disabilities and others who might be historically excluded from conferences. Look at the language in your call-out – does it explicitly name a commitment to intersectional thinking, anti-racist principles, and accessibility? If not, you may be inadvertently indicating that these ways of thinking and engaging with the world will not be supported here. Make sure the Calls for Proposals are widely shared with disability, Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ and newcomer communities so that they have equal opportunity to apply.

You will also need to communicate basic accessibility measures that will be planned into the conference and identify any potential access barriers that you anticipate. For example, if you intend to have interpretation for d/Deaf or hard of hearing participants, advertise this in your call for proposals.

Inviting and communicating with conference speakers

If you are interested in bringing a keynote speaker, it is important to start the search as early as possible. Remember, you will need to determine their access needs. You will also need to go through a process to ensure they are paid adequately and on time.

Once you have confirmed your conference speakers, including any keynotes, you will need to support them in ensuring their presentations are accessible. You may want to support them to:

- Indicate their pronouns and use proper pronouns
 - Remind the audience of accessibility functions available
 - Use plain language
 - Describe any visual information in their presentation
 - Creating accessible presentation materials

You can find a method for creating accessible documents (**Appendix A**), a step-by-step description of making accessible PowerPoints (**Appendix B**) and sample letter of agreement for keynotes (**Appendix C**) in the Appendices.

Booking Sign Language Interpreters

It is important to book Sign Language Interpreters as far in advance as possible. To book at George Brown College, you can reach out to the Interpreter Scheduling Coordinator Devon Bean at: devon.bean@georgebrown.ca. Some things to keep in mind:

- When booking Sign Language Interpreters, it is important to provide as much information on the event as possible. Interpreters will need to know the date, time, and duration of the event, as well as the topic and any key words or phrases, especially those that may be unfamiliar to the interpreter and/or the audience.
- For most conference events, especially if they include numerous individuals participating or are over an hour in length, it is likely you will need to book two Interpreters.
- Be sure to ask the Interpreters in advance what they need for virtual, in-person and hybrid or hyflex conferences, and follow their guidelines

Promotion and registration

Once you have finalized the format and begun booking the speakers, you will want to promote the conference and open registration.

Promotional materials

Some tips for promoting your conference include:

- Follow accessible social media posts guidelines (see **Appendix D**)
- Include inclusive images of diverse groups including people with disabilities
- Make the conference website, agenda, and other conference materials accessible to people with disabilities. Ideally, share accessible versions of the agenda and presentation materials before the event, and provide these materials to interpreters and captioners
- Provide information on accessibility features and accommodations available in the promotional materials
- Event registration

Some basic guidelines for making registration more accessible include:

- Provide event information at least 4 weeks in advance so people can plan their participation (transportation, supports, assistants, etc.). This also gives you time to arrange for any accommodation requests
- Ensure the registration method/app is accessible, and offer alternate ways to register

- Allow participants to identify other supports they require such as child-care or assistance with transportation and be transparent about what you can help and support with
- Consider providing a parking map with information on accessible parking spots and public transportation (routes, stops etc.)
- If requested, send electronic meeting agendas or PowerPoint slides in advance
- If serving food, ask participants to identify any dietary requirements and allergies in advance
- Include a request for attendees to wear scent-free products
- When participants register or RSVP for an event, provide a confirmation with session details and contact information
- Give participants the opportunity to identify any accommodations they may need in your invitation or registration. You can use something like:
 - “To make this event as accessible as possible, please let us know if you require any accommodations to participate”
- If you want to include specific options, you may ask about:
 - Mobility device access
 - Allowing an accompanying assistant
 - The need for a workshop or event to be masked
 - American Sign Language (ASL) or Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ) interpreters
 - Note-taker
 - Assistive listening device
 - Video captioning
 - Large print
 - Braille
 - Providing information on a USB memory stick instead of paper
 - Orientation to the facility
 - Diet restrictions
 - Scent-free environment

Running the conference

Good planning can only take you so far – accessibility requires consistent communication and negotiation. It is important to pay attention to any access barriers or other issues that arise on the day of the conference.

Running a virtual conference

- Consider a brief technology check before you begin with any keynote speakers or other presenters and the Sign Language Interpreters. Ask

the interpreter whether they feel the chat function should be closed on a video conferencing platform so as not to interrupt the presenter or flow of information.

- Consider having dedicated individuals to support technology issues and have them indicate who they are in their username (for example, “anyone with a ** before their username can receive Direct Messages anytime to support you with technology needs”) and at the beginning of each session.
- Consider having chat monitors to keep track of conversations in the chat.
- Provide some read-outs or summaries of the chats in case some participants cannot access the chat function in a timely manner.
- Send email reminders to conference participants with clear information on how to access the virtual platform, including key commands. This is also helpful on the day of the event.
- Enable “mute participants on entry.”
- Enable “show meetings controls” on the virtual platform.
- Begin each session with a reminder of how the meeting controls work, using both the mouse and key commands, and what people can toggle on or off.
- Ensure people can add their pronouns to their username and encourage people to do so.
- Clearly communicate any intention to record and let people know if there are options to choose not to be recorded.
- Enable closed captions.
- “Spotlight” ASL interpreters so that they are included in the recording.
- Manually create breakout rooms when using interpreters and be sure to place interpreters in breakout rooms with people who are using their services.
- Remember to describe images and other visual content, including participant-generated annotations if using a whiteboard function.
- Provide instructions on how people can ask questions (e.g., using the “raise hand” function, putting questions into the chat, using a Q & A function, etc.)
- Send any resource links that you post in the chat out in a follow-up email afterwards.

Running an in-person conference

- Hang posters with Quick Response (QR) codes around the event premises for attendees to find maps, room locations or itineraries.

- Have masks readily available and normalize their use – consider having at least one member of the organizing team who will be visibly masked at the day of the conference.
- Have nametags available for everyone with space for people to include their pronouns.
- Ensure that each presenter has provided their access requirements and that the presentation area or stage is fully accessible for all presenters.
- Ensure presenters and all speakers use a microphone when speaking, and the acoustics in the room is not distracting
- Reserve sets at the front of each room for participants who are d/Deaf, hard of hearing or have low vision.
- Remove more than just one seat for each participant in a wheelchair or scooter; consider the turning radius of these devices.
- Provide portable microphones staffed by a volunteer, these are much more accessible than a microphone on a stand.
- Ensure that there is plenty of drinking water and food available throughout the event, not just at breaks and mealtimes (see **Appendix E**)
- Allow for sufficient space between rows or in aisles for people who use wheelchairs or scooters to navigate.
- Ensure there are sufficient volunteers or staff on hand to watch out for possible need for individual assistance throughout the conference

Running a hybrid or hyflex conference

The organization for running the hybrid conference is determined by how the conference is organized. It will often require conference organizers to follow both online and in-person guidelines above, though the balance will depend on where the conference is being hosted.

In either case, organizers should meet ahead of the event to ensure moderators and support staff are aware of any prior accommodation needs and ensure that those supports have been confirmed.

Options for ways conference goers can participate

Providing clear and welcoming participation guidelines and options can encourage meaningful engagement at conferences. It is important to ensure that participation is designed to be inclusive and safe.

- Be sure to establish clear safer guidelines for respectful and equitable behavior.

- Confirm with sign language interpreters their preference for audience participation. Some requests may include:
 - Holding off on questions until the end of the session (online, in-person, hybrid or hyflex)
 - Disabling a chat function during the speech to minimize distraction (online, hybrid or hyflex)
- In in-person, hybrid or hyflex settings, it is best practice to use microphones for the speakers *and* any participant questions. Consider using easy-to-pass microphones like a Catchbox. (Do not assume that you can throw a microphone, as the name “Catchbox” would imply-encourage participants to pass the microphone). Remind people who feel hesitant to use a microphone or are certain their voice is “loud enough” that using a microphone increases access in many ways.
- Make it clear that there are a variety of ways that people can meaningfully participate and provide options. Some common examples of ways people can participate include:
 - Raising their hand and speaking to the group
 - Sending questions to a moderator via email
 - Using online chat functions to share questions in a public chat or by Direct Message (DM) to a moderator
 - Responding to a session or asking questions on a social media platform and tagging it with the conference hashtag
 - Engaging in conversation in breakout groups or networking events

Conference evaluation

Receiving feedback

It is important to seek feedback on your conference. Organizers should provide anonymous opportunities in diverse ways to gather information. An electronic survey like Microsoft Forms, Survey Monkey or pen and paper options can meet multiple needs of attendees. A general open-ended question can be asked, “how well did the event meet your needs?” For more specific questions examples like “How easy was it to follow presentations and discussions” see this link provided by the [Council of Ontario Universities](#).

Collect data on feedback received to track gaps and progress in accessibility and inclusion

During the conference post-meeting debrief, special attention should be paid to the feedback. The results can be used to inform what successes need to

be celebrated and what changes need to be implemented for future conferences.

Helpful resources

[How can conferences, meetings, presentations, and events be made accessible? | AccessComputing \(washington.edu\)](#)

[Accessible Virtual Conferences | SIGACCESS](#)

[A Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences](#) (See checklist at the end)

Appendix A: Creating accessible materials

Want to ensure the materials you create are accessible to all?

The **POUR principles** are a great place to start. These principles define four qualities of an accessible experience, and they are at the foundation of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) an international standard for making web content accessible.

POUR stands for **P**ERCEIVABLE, **O**PERABLE, **U**NDERSTANDABLE, & **R**OBUST

PERCEIVABLE

Provide options for participants to adjust the presentation of information to suit their individual needs and preferences.

To make your content perceivable:

- [Add text descriptions to your images.](#)
- [Include closed captions and transcripts.](#)
- [Provide sufficient colour contrast.](#)
- [Do not use colour alone.](#)
- [Make your text readable and legible.](#)

OPERABLE

Provide options for navigation and interacting with the content with a mouse, a keyboard or even voice commands.

To make your content operable:

- Provide a [clear structure with headings.](#)
- [Create descriptive links.](#)
- [Check for keyboard accessibility.](#)
- Provide sufficient time.
- Avoid content that flashes.
- Ensure to put a period after every bullet point.

UNDERSTANDABLE

With understandable content, individuals can focus more of their effort on understanding the information rather than on working around barriers in the design. The content will be intuitive and behave in a predictable way for them. You can also support understanding using language that is appropriate for your audience's reading level, as well by including explanations of new or unfamiliar content and features (acronyms and abbreviations, subject-specific jargon, and idioms).

To make your content understandable:

Aim for consistency:

- Consistency, in both the structure and formatting of the information, can help your learners understand how the content works. Conventions can also aid usability. One example of a convention that is familiar to most learners is the use of underlining to indicate hyperlinked content. Underlining content that is not meant to be a hyperlink (or vice versa, removing the underline from hyperlinks) may prove confusing.
- If the content includes recurring features that are unique to it, consider including a “how to use this resource” section at the beginning that explains the meaning of special icons and other unique features. This will enhance usability for all your learners.

Use plain language:

- Use language that is appropriate for the reading level of your audience to make the content easier to understand. Sites such as [Hemingway Editor](#) will help you identify the reading level of your content. They will also suggest simpler, shorter sentences. To help those who are new to the topic, either provide a glossary at the end or link to online definitions of unusual words or phrases. This includes jargon and idioms that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Also, expand acronyms and abbreviations the first time they are used.

The [W3C video entitled Understandable Content](#) examines the importance of plain language and clear design in more detail.

Identify the language:

- Identifying the language will help screen readers select the correct voice and pronunciation rules. This is especially important if the content includes more than one language, as listening to the foreign language content with the wrong voice can be confusing. The University of Washington has created a tutorial on how to [identify the language for a document or its parts](#).

ROBUST

Robust content works for individuals using a variety of web browser and devices (including tablets and smartphones).

To make your content robust:

Provide descriptive metadata:

- Metadata is data or information about other data. The author of a work is an example of metadata, as is its title. Descriptive metadata will not only make your content easier to index on search engines, but it may also improve its usability for assistive technology users. An example is the document title. A descriptive title will help a screen reader user quickly determine if they are on the desired document.
 - [Change document metadata in Office Products](#) (Microsoft)
 - [Change PDF properties and metadata](#) (Adobe)

Perform an accessibility check:

- Even the best accessibility checking tools have their limitations due to the subjective nature of many accessibility techniques. For example, an automated check may reveal that an image has alternative text, but it will not indicate whether the alternative text accurately describes the content of the image. Despite these limitations, an accessibility check can help you catch some of the most common accessibility problems.
 - For Office 365: [Check Document Accessibility](#) (Video from Microsoft)
 - For older versions of Office that may not have the Accessibility Checker in the Ribbon: [Inspect files for Accessibility Issues](#) (Video from Microsoft)

Use a screen reader for accessibility testing:

- [Using NVDA for web accessibility testing on Windows](#) (WebAIM)
- [Using VoiceOver for web accessibility testing on the Mac](#) (WebAIM)
- [Mobile Accessibility Testing Guide for Android and iOS](#) (Paciello Group)

Involve people with disabilities in accessibility:

- To test the robustness of your content you should try to access it on all the devices people are likely to own and use to participate. This will help you identify problems with both the rendering of the content as well as its overall usability. Content that may have worked well on a computer when it is accessed with a mouse and keyboard may not be as easy to use when accessed on a tablet with only touch gestures. For

even better results, see if you can involve assistive technology users to review your content and report back on any accessibility problems.

Appendix B: Accessible PowerPoints

PowerPoints are extremely common at conferences. Below are some steps to take to ensure all presenters have accessible PowerPoint presentations:

- Use a template with a simple background and high contrast and be sure you use good color contrast throughout. Some thoughts on color contrast:
 - Is there enough of a contrast between the text and the background? Light colours on white backgrounds may look nice but can make the text difficult to read.
 - Do not use colour alone to convey meaning. If you could not see the colour, would you still understand everything the design is communicating? For example, are you using blue to indicate a hyperlink without underlining the text?
- Include a unique title on each slide. Titles should describe what the slide is about.
- Use a size 18-point font or larger.
- Use a sans serif font like BC Sans, Arial, or Calibri.
- Avoid putting a lot of information on one slide as it can be difficult to read.
- Avoid using all capital letters, excessive italics, or underlines.
- Use descriptive alternative text (alt text) for pictures, charts, and other visual objects. Some tips on alt text:
 - Describe the essential information contained in the image clearly and concisely. Think about why the picture is there and what meaning it intends to convey.
 - Do not include "image of" or "photo of" in alt text – however, you may want to indicate if the image is meant to be cartoonish or realistic, for example, if this is important to understanding its meaning in context.
- Use text over images sparingly. If you must use text over an image, add a solid background behind the text or a dark overlay to the image.
- Test your presentation with the Grayscale feature to see how slides might look for someone who is colour blind. To do this:
 - Select the **View** tab on the Ribbon.
 - In the **Color/Grayscale** group, select **Grayscale** or select **Black and White** to view your presentation in black and white.
 - To change the view back to Color, select Back to Color View from the **Grayscale** or **Black and White** tab.
- Write in plain language. See POUR guidelines (**Appendix A**) for basic guidelines. Some additional considerations include:

- Use clear, [descriptive page titles](#) and clear [descriptive headings](#) to identify sections of your content
- [Use lists](#) instead of long sentences whenever possible
- Write short sentences. Ideally no more than 15 to 20 words
- [Keep paragraphs to one topic](#). Aim for no more than 5 sentences
- Cut down your word count. Remove words that do not add meaning
- Use simple, [common words](#). If you need to use [complex terms](#), define them, or provide examples. If you are using many complex terms, consider creating a glossary
- Use [inclusive language](#)
- [Avoid using ministry, organization, or program names](#) unless required
- Define acronyms before using them
- Only include critical information. [Limit policy information](#) unless necessary
- Use the [active voice in the present tense](#)
- Use a [conversational tone](#). Use first and second person (we, us) rather than third person (he, she, it, they)
- Aim for a [Grade 8 reading level or lower](#). Test the readability of your content using a tool such as the [Hemingway App online tool \(external link\)](#) for non-sensitive information
- Have someone else [review your content](#)
- Use descriptive hyperlinks.
- Include speaking notes on each slide. Speaking notes provide additional information and context for your slides.
- If you are embedding a video, ensure it contains closed captioning.
- Follow accessibility standards when using tables.
 - To address both responsive design and web accessibility standards, tables should only be used to display tabular data, not to create page layout.
- Set the reading order of slide content so that screen readers know what order to read them in. A screen reader reads the elements of a slide in the order they were added to the slide, which might be quite different from the order in which things appear.
- Use the [Accessibility Checker](#) to find slides that have potential problems with reading order.
- [Set the reading order of slide contents](#)
- Run the [Accessibility Checker](#) for review.
- Avoid flashing or jittering animation
- Check video clips are accessible with descriptive language and captioning

Appendix C: Sample Letter of Agreement (LOA)

ON ORGANIZATIONAL LETTERHEAD

DATE

NAME OF SPEAKER

ADDRESS OF SPEAKER

Dear NAME OF SPEAKER,

On behalf of the **NAME OF ORGANIZATION**, I thank you for agreeing to a virtual appearance at **NAME OF EVENT** (Event).

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

You are scheduled to speak **FORMAT (VIRTUAL OR IN PERSON)** on **DAY OF WEEK, MONTH DATE, YEAR**, from **BEGINNING TIME INCLUDING TIME ZONE** to **END TIME INCLUDING TIME ZONE**. Additionally, you will participate in **(PLEASE LIST ANY OTHER TIME COMMITMENTS HERE I.E., TECHNOLOGY CHECK(S), PREP CALLS, ETC.)**

The topic is **TOPIC**. You will be compensated **\$HONORARIUM AMOUNT** for your appearance payable within 10 days following your appearance. We understand that we may not record Event, nor permit any third party to do so without the prior written permission of Speaker. We also understand that we must share our social media assets with CCMNT Speakers.

Please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

LETTER MUST BE SIGNED

NAME

TITLE

Appendix D: Accessible social media guidelines

Web source: [Accessible Social](#)

Appendix E: Considerations when serving food at events

Caterers should provide a food allergy plans when negotiating the event contract.

Ask guests about dietary concerns, allergies, and restrictions.

- If serving food, ask participants to identify any dietary requirements and allergies in advance.

It is important for organizers to be conscious that many people might require outdoor areas to eat to reduce the potential for COVID-19 and other viruses.

Glossary:

Ableism: Structural, systemic, and interpersonal discrimination against disabled people, which is linked to all other forms of social oppression.

Accessibility: The process of making products, devices, services and/or environments as welcoming and useable as possible to people with a variety of different disabilities and/or access needs.

Access needs: Something a person requires to communicate, learn, or take part in an activity. Everyone has access needs, but not everyone's access needs are anticipated, seen as legitimate and/or met by society as it is currently arranged.

Audism: Discrimination against or oppression of d/Deaf people based in the idea that hearing is superior to Deafness and that all people should aspire to behave like hearing people.

Brave spaces: A learning environment that proactively creates space to have difficult conversations about power from an anti-oppressive lens. Brave spaces require a group commitment to treat each other with respect, own intentions and impacts, and challenge oppression in ways that model mindfulness and respect.

Chronic illness: A long-term health condition that may or may not have a cure. Some people who are **chronically ill** identify as disabled and/or seek formal accommodations, while others do not.

d/Deaf: A term used to include both people who identify as culturally Deaf, and those who identify as experiencing hearing loss who do not necessarily identify with Deaf culture.

Disability: A social location where a person experiences physical, cognitive and/or emotional access barriers because of how mainstream society operates. While bodily and/or cognitive variation, illness, and injury exist in every context, disability comes from and forms within existing arrangements of power. A person may personally identify as **disabled** but not seek formal accommodations; they may also seek accommodations for a condition or need without identifying as disabled. Please see footnote 1 on person-first versus identity-first language for more information.

Hybrid: A combination of both in-person and virtual instruction, with multiple options. With this model, there is often an equal split between in-person and online components, and individuals may choose which option to engage with.

Hyflex: (Hybrid/ Flexible) A form of hybrid learning that seeks flexibility, allowing participants to engage in-person and/or online, in synchronous and/or asynchronous models, based on the principles of accessibility and learner choice. A

hyflex learning environment should provide the same amount of access to participants regardless of which modality they choose.

Thanks to the standards of practice team led by griffin epstein, Stella Bastone, Elena Chudaeva, Joanna Friend, and Gian Michele Pileri, Jason Inniss.

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