



WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY

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Speakers Presenting to an Audience with Disabilities

Best Practices

1. Prepare and use person-first language.

While preparing your presentation, assume there will be people with disabilities in attendance. Most people with disabilities prefer person-first language. For example, rather than using out-of-date language, such as “mentally handicapped person” or “wheelchair-bound person,” say “person with a cognitive/learning disability” or “person with a mobility disability.”

2. Turn in your presentation early.

Make your presentation available to conference organizers before the conference starts. Either email the presentation or download it onto a USB drive. This ensures that your presentation can be made available in electronic format, in case anyone in the audience cannot hold or see a physical handout or cannot see a PowerPoint. This allows all attendees using accessible technology to follow along in real-time.

3. Speak slowly and clearly throughout your presentation.

Speak slowly and clearly throughout your presentation in order for captioners and/or interpreters to keep up with you. Also, explain all acronyms.

4. Repeat questions and comments from the audience.

Repeat questions and comments audience members make via your microphone so captioners, interpreters, and audience members do not miss a word.

5. Verbally summarize visuals.

When presenting, be sure to describe any important visuals on your PowerPoint for audience members who cannot see your presentation. Verbally summarizing important texts, graphics, and videos included in your slides for those who cannot see or read visual content will ensure all your audience members have equal access to key visuals.

Bonus Tip: When listing categories of people, include “people with disabilities.” (E.g. Housing discrimination affects African Americans, Latinos, and people with disabilities.)