



# COMMUNICATION ACCESS GUIDELINES

## FOR ONLINE EVENTS

Here are some tips for organizers, moderators, and presenters to enhance communication accessibility for individuals who use AAC during conferences, meetings, and other online events. We encourage you to use or adapt these tips to make your events communication accessible.

### 1

#### EVENT ORGANIZERS

Ahead of time, tell us about the accessibility features you will provide. For example:

- Tell us what platform will be used
- Activate accessibility features before creating sessions
- Share information about the accessibility features such as keyboard shortcuts, closed captioning, sign language, enabling chat box for participation, and, whether the host will be able to enable microphone access for those of us who want to use our AAC device and can not type in the chat.
- Tell us if there will be technical support if we experience difficulty.
- Add a question on your feedback form to find out how accessible the event was and if we have suggestions for improvement.
- Will the handouts be accessible or in electronic format?

### 2

#### MODERATOR OR CHAIRPERSON

- Begin the session by reading an accessibility statement like: *"We respect the communication access rights of people who use AAC. To ensure that participants who use AAC have equal access to this session, we ask that you be patient and give time to AAC participants when communicating"*. Alternatively you can choose to add a slide to your slide deck and read it aloud before the session.
- Tell participants who use AAC that they can signal that they want to communicate by using the raised hand icon, body language or by typing their message in the chat box and putting ROL (Read Out Loud) before their message.
- Designate someone or monitor and read items in chat box marked with ROL (Read Out Loud) in chat box, monitor the raised hand icon or body language indicating that an AAC user wants to communicate.
- If there is limited time for Q and As, ask if participants can meet with presenters after the session or via email.

### 3

#### PRESENTER

- If there is no moderator, begin the session by reading the accessibility statement (see moderator section).
- Use inclusive and respectful language.
- Speak clearly and at a reasonable pace and volume.
- Use a 22+ point font, ensuring high contrast between text and background for visual accessibility.
- Describe visual materials such as images, graphs and videos.
- Provide accessible or electronic based handouts.
- Tell participants who use AAC that they can signal they want to communicate by using the raised hand icon or body language or by typing their message in the chat box and putting ROL (Read Out Loud) before their message.
- Designate someone to monitor and read items marked with ROL (Read Out Loud) in chat box, monitor the raised hand icon or body language indicating that an AAC participant wants to communicate.



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### 4

#### PRESENTER WHO USES AAC

In addition to guidelines for presenters:

- Tell the organizer if you have accessibility requirements.
- Program your AAC system ahead of time.
- Make sure your AAC system is charged and working.
- Depending on how you are communicating, position your computer to pick up your speech, the speech from your device and / or your communication assistant.
- If possible, accompany your presentation with text on slides.
- Consider having a printed script as a backup in case of device issues, allowing someone to read it aloud if needed.

### 5

#### PARTICIPANTS

- Signal that you want to communicate something during the interactive section by using speech, raised hand, body language, AAC system or communication assistant.
- Type ROL before a message in chat box that you want read aloud to the group.
- If you think you may need extra time to formulate and communicate your message, it might be helpful to arrange a meeting with the presenter after the session.
- Be patient when other participants are formulating and communicating their messages.

The North American Alliance for Communication Access (NAACA) is a volunteer working group focused on communication access for people who use AAC. We have members from Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC), the International Society for AAC (ISAAC) Canada, CATIC in Mexico and the United States ISAAC Chapter (USSAAC). Based on a model and resources developed by CDAC, NAACA, with funding from ISAAC, was established in 2018 to help make the ISAAC Conference Cancún experience accessible for all participants who use AAC.

For a full description of NAACA's model and resources, please go to <https://isaac-online.org/english/communication-access/naaca-2/>