

ACCESSIBLE VIRTUAL MEETINGS

TIPS FOR VIDEO INTERPRETERS

LIGHTS, CAMERA, AUDIO, ACTION!

TOOLS OF THE TRADE:

Some suggested items to maximize user experience when interpreting remotely:

- Small dry-erase board
- Dual Monitors
- Height adjustable work-top

Lighting: Sufficient lighting from multiple sources. Face a window for natural light if possible. Background should be free from visual distractions.

Camera: Add-on cameras offer more features and better picture quality than built-in cameras.

Audio: If possible use a headset and microphone.

Action: Dress professionally from the waist up in solid contrasting color. Work area should be ergonomic and allow for sitting and standing to minimize fatigue. Keep your sign space in mind when setting up your at-home station. You want to ensure that you are visible from just above your waist to the tip of your head.

KNOW THE ROLES

HOST: The person responsible for setting the agenda and keeping the meeting on track. Usually the main presenter.

FACILITATOR: A facilitator guides turn-taking between all participants. The facilitator can also coordinate interpreter switches when needed.



PRO TIPS:

- Join the call as early as possible to secure a front page spot in multiple-user calls.
- Change your screen name to “Interpreter—(Your Name) when interpreting.
- Set up a line of communication between you and the deaf participant(s) and between you and your team if needed.
- Be clear and direct when announcing interpreter switches. Say something like, “There will be a switch of interpreters now. Please find (team’s name). Thank you.
- Check your sign space so that the frame is at the top of your head to maximize visible torso space.

TEAMING MODIFICATIONS



Due to the demanding nature of virtual work, effective teaming is critical. You should meet with your team prior to the assignment. You will want to discuss new challenges presented when teaming from a distance such as:

- Length of time between switches and how to signal a switch. It is recommended to stay within a 15 minute interpreting duration in large meetings or “presentation” style format. If there is a meeting facilitator, he or she can break into the meeting to announce a pause for interpreter switches.
- Feeds: Are you able to monitor feeds if sent to you through a chat feature? Do you prefer that your team come in and take over? How can you signal a need for a switch or feed when you are on? This type of support may need to be more overt than if you were at the same location.
- Use the participant list to assist team in spelling of names if needed.
- Conversations with turn taking: It is preferable to avoid confusion by having only one interpreter handle all voicing and signing needs while on. If individuals are talking over each other, the team could send the facilitator a private chat to remind participants of communication ground rules.

GIVE SOME GUIDANCE TO PARTICIPANTS

Being clear about what you need creates a better user experience for all. Sending these instructions to the host or facilitator *prior* to the meeting allows for a more successful start.

- Set the interpreter’s screen to ensure they are always visible on your screen.
- Keep your audio/video off unless you have the floor when the meeting involves five or more participants to allow for maximum space for interpreters and shared screens.
- Use the raise hand or chat feature to indicate a desire to participate in discussion.
- Wait for acknowledgement from the facilitator before commenting.
- Announce name before speaking/signing.

Resources:

- National Association of Interpreters in Education, NAIE, COVID-19 Resources: <http://naiedu.org/covid19/>
- National Deaf Center, NDC, Help Center: <https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/get-help>
- *Video Interpreting; Minimum Requirements and Best Practices for Business Meetings and Education*, Sara Brown; https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SZww20x9mKw4MxFt5qNH_4-UAPbvLiSyqtIhoipY4A4/edit

