

Participant's Guide to Inclusive Meetings

For AFMC Committees and Networks

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Introduction

The success of any meeting depends on the active participation of all invited participants. This guide has been created based on a valued, inclusive approach to help facilitate meetings that allow for the full participation of all attendees. Every participant plays an important role in ensuring that meetings are inclusive and productive by respecting diverse perspectives, actively engaging within their comfort level and by following the guidelines outlined in this guide.

Before a Meeting

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the AFMC team if you would appreciate accommodations during upcoming meetings. To aid in increasing accessibility, live transcription will be available for all participants via Microsoft Teams. Participants are strongly encouraged to review circulated documentation in advance of the meeting to allow for full engagement during the session.

During a Meeting

Shared Guidelines

These stated rules will help foster a safe space for discussions, free of judgement as well as ensure we are productive in accomplishing our purpose. Meeting participants have a shared role in ensuring the guidelines are respected.

The Chair(s) will be in charge of ensuring the shared guidelines are followed.

- 1 Listen respectfully without interrupting.
- 2 Speak from your own experience rather than generalizing (use I statements instead of they, we and you).
- 3 Ask if you don't know. This is a learning environment, you are not held accountable for what you don't know, but you are responsible for educating yourself.
- 4 Commit to learning not debating. Come ready to share information, not persuade.
- 5 Do not ask individuals to speak on behalf of their (perceived) social group.
- 6 Engage within your level of comfort (ask questions, provide input, etc.)

Post Meeting

Following each meeting, we recommend taking some time to reflect:

What went well?

What could be better next time?

What do I need to learn more about?

Should you wish to schedule a debrief call with the AFMC team, have any thoughts or feedback about how the meeting went, or have suggestions for future meetings, please do not hesitate to reach out to your AFMC support staff.

Accessibility Tips

To ensure the meeting is as accessible as possible for all participants, we encourage you to use the following tips.

Participant Tips

- Use plain language: Whether in English or French, use accessible, jargon-free language to support comprehension for all language levels.
- Be aware of background noise during the meeting and handle it by muting your microphone when not speaking.
- It is best to aim to have your face well-lit to support lip reading.
- Ensure you identify yourself when speaking.
- Feel free to get up, stretch or move about the room throughout the meeting. Breaks will be planned for longer meetings; however, we understand that participants may have additional need to stretch throughout a meeting.
- Be aware of the language you use. Use people-first language if you are uncertain of someone's personal preference. For example: "He is living with bipolar disorder" instead of "He is bipolar."
- Refer to a person's illness or facets of diversity only when pertinent to the content.
- Do not use mental-health terms to describe situations. For example, don't say "the agenda was crazy."

Presenter Tips

- If you are presenting, ensure meeting materials, such as PowerPoint presentations, use accessible fonts and avoid flashing or strobing animation. Choose legible colors and a colourblind-friendly palette (ex. blue and orange) with dark and light contrast. Consider utilizing an accessibility checker tool (such as the Microsoft Accessibility Checker).
- As much as possible, visual supports (PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.) should be bilingual or provided in both English and French. Use consistent formatting to distinguish between the two languages (e.g., side-by-side layout or color coding)
- Periodically check in with participants to ensure they understand what you are saying and can follow along.
- To keep your audience from feeling overwhelmed when using a PowerPoint, the text on each slide should be short and to the point. Some experts suggest using the 5/5/5 rule: no more than five words per line of text, five lines of text per slide, or five text-heavy slides in a row.
- Ensure visual images are narrated. If you are showing a video, search for an audio-described version.