



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

## Tips for Increasing Equity and Access When Running Remote Meetings

- **Needs Assessment.** Your first step should be to ascertain your group's needs. One of the best ways to learn what they need is to ask them. Do they have access to all they will need to work remotely? Do they have particular needs concerning access and accommodations? The information you gather will be vital to the success of your meeting. Be prepared to connect individuals to resources that can help them if they disclose they are in need of support.
- **Streaming Videos.** Keep in mind that streaming videos require strong internet connections. They can also deplete data plans as well as memory on certain devices. Consider carefully whether videos are indeed necessary.
- **Recording.** It is considered good practice to record virtual meetings. This allows those who could not attend to view it later.
- **Transcription and Captioning.** Strive for making transcripts and captions of audio and video accessible. This benefits not only those who are hard-of-hearing, but also those who are participating in the meeting in noisy locations (which, these days, it is likely to be their own home with kids running around, dogs barking, etc.). This is also important for those who are not native speakers of English.
- **Narration.** Remember to narrate the material you are showing (e.g., a diagram, a chart, a photograph). This is essential for those who are blind, have difficulty reading on a computer screen, or who are otherwise unable to view the video or slides.
- **Mobile-Friendly Materials.** Ensure materials are mobile-friendly. PDFs are generally more accessible for those with disabilities and who may rely on screen-readers. PDFs also adapt to different devices and cell phones more readily than other formats.
- **Time Zones.** Keep in mind that individuals may be in different time zones. Giving them the flexibility of an asynchronous meeting is important. This gives them the opportunity of accessing the materials at a time of their choosing, at their own pace. Whenever possible, offer individuals additional flexibility to meet deadlines, adjust workloads, and the necessary time to adapt to their personal situations.
- **Dealing with Bias.** Understand that misinformation spreads easily in a time of crisis. Unfortunately, some groups may become targets of bias and even hate crimes. In fact, Asian-American advocacy groups are indicating a surge of verbal and physical assaults on Asian Americans. These individuals are afraid of going grocery shopping, taking mass transportation alone and even letting their children play outside. They will carry these hurtful incidents into the meeting so be prepared to address the tension, and to step in and shut down inflammatory or hurtful language.
- **Starting Your Meetings.** Give special consideration to how you start your meetings. It is essential to build community! Hogan and Sathy suggest a few activities. For example:
  - Invite students to pick a virtual background that tells something about them (if their subscription allows it).
  - Suggest a theme. For example, a place you would love to visit, the food you are most craving, etc. Use your imagination!
  - You can also pose a question. For example, "What's one thing that you're grateful for today?" Participants can answer through the chat tool and then scroll through responses as they get settled.

*\*\*For additional suggestions, read [8 Ways to Be More Inclusive in Your Zoom Teaching](https://www.chronicle.com/article/8-Ways-to-Be-More-Inclusive-in/248460), by Kelly A. Hogan and Viji Sathy (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/8-Ways-to-Be-More-Inclusive-in/248460>)*

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### Remember to practice self-care!

We are all being required to work remotely with very little preparation and during a highly stressful time. Forget perfection! Be flexible, be transparent, and expect the unexpected. For example, when your kid yells for the whole group to hear: "*The cat just barfed on the couch!*"

