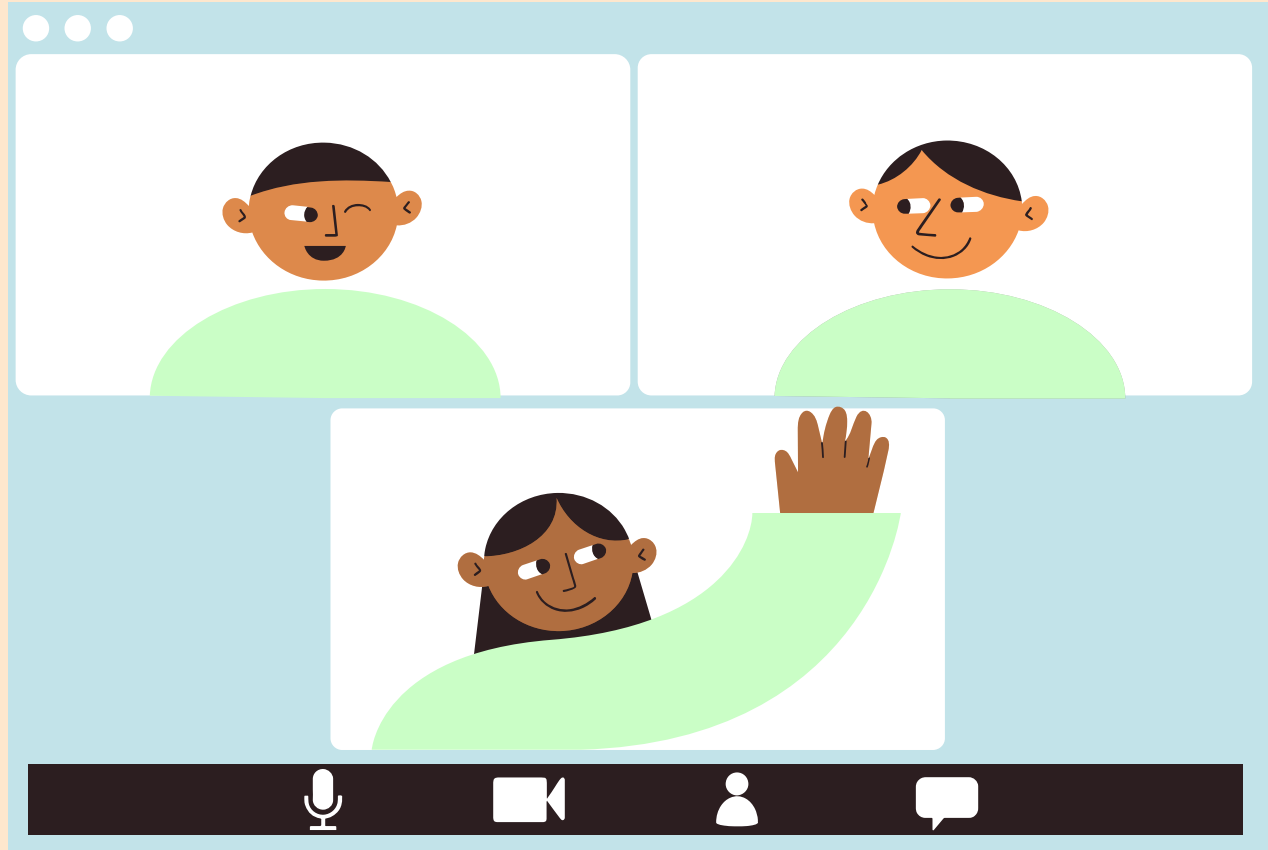


*Tangram Celebrates*

Disability Awareness Month



# Accessible and Inclusive Virtual Meetings



As we continue to deal with COVID-19 and its aftermath, it feels like we may never return to in-person meetings. While this is likely untrue, it's safe to assume that the "virtual" option is here to stay (at least for the foreseeable future).

As such, it's important to ensure that your virtual meetings are accessible and inclusive so that your meetings can be productive and efficient. In honor of Disability Awareness Month, here are some of our best tips for hosting accessible and inclusive virtual meetings.

1

## **Offer accommodations.**

Be sure to include instructions for how someone can request an accommodation to participate in the registration materials or calendar invitation. This can be as simple as saying, "If you need an accommodation to participate in this webinar, please e-mail [someone@somebusiness.com](mailto:someone@somebusiness.com) with your request at least 7 days prior to the event."

2

## **Distribute agenda and materials in advance.**

Sending materials in advance ensures that all attendees are able to participate fully and can be prepared for the meeting.

3

## **Check your name and say your name.**

Check to make sure your name is displayed properly so that other attendees can correctly identify you. It's also helpful to include your preferred pronouns. Before speaking in a virtual meeting, identify yourself as the speaker.

4

## Get to know accessibility options and enable them.

No matter which virtual meeting platform you use, there should be a menu of accessibility options. Options may vary depending on the platform, so it's a good idea to spend some time familiarizing yourself with the options and how to enable them. Even if you don't get requests for accommodations, it's a good idea to ensure that accessibility options are always enabled. Keep in mind that, while built-in options, such as live transcript, are helpful, they don't take the place of true accommodations, such as ASL interpreters.

5

## Take a pause.

If you are leading a meeting, build in some pauses throughout. This could be a pause for questions or for audience participation or just a pause to move between topics. Building in pauses allows participants to process what is being presented and gives time for interpreters to catch up.

6

## Do some housekeeping.

Sharing some basic meeting rules and other important information at the beginning of a virtual meeting ensures that all participants know how to get the most out of the meeting and be respectful of their fellow participants. This might include a reminder to stay on mute, a directive to ask questions in chat, instructions on how to use accessibility functions, a reminder to introduce yourself when speaking, or other items.

7

## Give yourself and others a little grace.

Though it feels like we should all be Virtual Meeting Experts by now, circumstances, technology, and best practices continue to evolve, sometimes faster than we can keep up with the changes. Do your best to extend some grace to your fellow humans as we all navigate these unusual times.

*Tangram provides customized trainings on a variety of topics to help organizations become more disability inclusive. Visit our Disability Inclusion webpage for more info:*

*<https://www.thetangramway.org/disability-inclusion>*