

Transcript

>>Ariel Simms: Hi, everyone. My name is Ariel Simms, and my pronouns are she/hers or they/them. I lead The Arc's work on access, equity, and inclusion.

We are working to make sure all of our events are as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Presenters play a big role in ensuring our events are accessible, equitable, and inclusive, and in this brief session, we will give you a few tips on how to do just that.

Let's start with an overview of the platform, Zoom.

As a presenter, we encourage you to join using your computer and not from a mobile device.

I'll review some of the features available in the desktop application.

You can find your meeting controls at the bottom of your screen in a black bar with icons and short phrases. There are several features that will be important to you as a presenter, including connecting to audio, the chat function, turning on or off your closed captions, and of course, leaving the meeting.

You can connect to audio using your computer or by dialing in from your phone. We encourage you to wear a headset for the best audio quality. If you do connect to audio using your computer, you can test your speaker. Select "test speaker and microphone," and follow the instructions on your screen.

In Zoom, you will be able to mute and unmute yourself, and you will also be able to turn your video on and off.

Depending on the layout and the setup of your screen, you may see the other presenters and the American Sign Language interpreter, or just the American Sign Language interpreter. We encourage all of our presenters to

stay in gallery view so you can see all of the presenters and the ASL Interpreter at the same time.

Most of our events will be closed captioned. If you would like to see the captions as the presenter, simply select closed captions and then show subtitle. You can also change the size of your captions if they are too large or too small. Select closed caption, and then subtitle settings.

As a presenter, you can also use the chat feature of Zoom. You can send chat messages to the host, to other panelists, or to all attendees. When you click on the chat, the chat window will automatically appear. You can decide who to send your chat to by selecting the dropdown arrow in the "to" line in the chat box.

For some of our events, the Q and A function will be enabled. This means that we will be asking the participants to submit their questions using the Q and A feature. You can reply to questions in the Q and A feature in the window directly, or you can answer the questions aloud.

Zoom offers a few different platforms for virtual events, and at The Arc, we use both Zoom Webinar and Zoom Meeting. Zoom Webinar and Zoom Meeting have different implications for how the participants can interact with you as the presenter.

In Zoom Webinar, the participants are in listen only mode, and they cannot unmute themselves. You will not see their videos. And they do not see the full participant list.

You may notice that the participants are interacting through the chat box, through the Q and A, and through the polling function.

In Zoom Meeting, it's much more interactive. We use Zoom Meeting for regular meetings, but also breakout sessions for our larger virtual events. In Zoom Meeting, all participants can mute and unmute their audio, and they can also choose to share their video. In Zoom Meeting, everyone knows who is in the meeting. Chat and polling features are available, but there is no Q and A feature in Zoom Meeting.

When it comes to tech support, in general, we will invite you to a practice session before the event. We will make sure that your tech is working and that your audio connection is clear and strong. If you have technical problems during the event, send a message to the host or to all panelists using the chat box.

For questions about any of our virtual events, or to set up another time to practice, please email events@thearc.org.

I also wanted to share a quick note about branding and language.

For The Arc's main events, we often provide branded slide deck templates. Our main events include Disability Policy Seminar, the Summer Leadership Institute, and National Convention.

It's really important to use the branded templates whenever possible. They aren't just branded. They are also accessible.

There is definitely some confusion out there about our name, The Arc. Please note, The Arc is not an acronym. It does not stand for anything. And please never refer to us as just "Arc." You can think of The Arc as a title or phrase.

At The Arc, we use people first language. This means that we put the person first and the disability second. Some examples of people first language include saying a person with a disability, instead of disabled person. Or, a person with autism, instead of an autistic person. We encourage all of our presenters to use people first language in our events.

Next, we will talk about ensuring that your presentation materials are accessible, with a focus on PowerPoint.

I'd like to give you a few brief tips, and we have also included some resources at the end of the presentation.

In Microsoft PowerPoint, always be sure to use the accessibility checker. You can find this in the review menu. Microsoft will review your presentation and highlight any access concerns that it finds.

It's always important to use accessible fonts. Think about both the size of your fonts, as well as whether the font is easy to read. In general, for PowerPoints, the minimum font size is 28.

For any images or visuals in your presentation, you are going to want to add alt text. Right click on the image and select edit alt text to provide a brief description of what the image is so those who cannot see the image will know what the image is about. You can also describe images during your actual presentation.

Be sure to use titles and/or slide numbers to help orient participants where you are in your presentation.

And please share your slide deck with the event organizers as soon as possible. This gives us more time to review the slide decks for accessibility and help you make any needed changes. We also will provide this to attendees in advance of the event for those especially who are requesting it for access reasons.

Let's talk about what to expect during the event itself.

For many presenters, they may be new to working with access services, including captioning and American Sign Language, so we will review some of the basics around these access services and provide some tips for you as a presenter.

We will start with captioning. There are generally two types of captioning. Open and closed. Open captioning means that you can never turn the captions off. They are always present.

Zoom uses closed captioning, meaning people can turn them on if they would like to see them. In Zoom, the captions are also integrated, meaning that they appear in the same platform that the participant is using to also interact with the main event.

Remember, to turn on closed captioning, select CC and then show subtitle. When an event is captioned, there is also a transcript that gets produced of everything that was said during the event or during the presentation. In general, the event organizers will take care of making sure the transcripts are accurate and recorded everything that was said, but we may need to reach out to you as a presenter for a few questions.

Here are a few tips when working with captioners.

Be sure to present at a steady pace. And if you tend to speak quickly, do try to slow down. Sometimes, there can be a lag between what the presenter is saying and when the captions appear to the participants. Be sure to spell out tricky words and proper names or to make sure that the captioner has that information ahead of time. You should also identify yourself before speaking, especially in a group setting.

Now let's talk about American Sign Language.

For our virtual events, we use video remote interpreting. That means our interpreters are interpreting for us from a remote location through video. For our events, the ASL interpreter will always be spotlighted. Now for participants on some mobile devices, they may only see the ASL interpreter. They won't necessarily see you or your co-presenters.

During your presentation, you can expect that we will pause every 15 to 20 minutes to change interpreters.

ASL interpreters typically work in pairs. We are actually going to take a brief pause right now to change interpreters.

[Pause]

Here are some tips when working with American Sign Language interpreters.

Speak naturally as possible. Interpreters need the nuance and the emotion of your words to interpret more accurately. Please be prepared to slow

down or repeat yourself if necessary. The ASL interpreter will usually let you know if you need to stop, pause, or repeat something.

If your presentation includes technical jargon or other difficult words, you should provide a brief explanation to make sure that the interpreter is able to use the right sign.

Best practice is to provide this information to the interpreters ahead of time, so again, you want to make sure that you turn in those slide decks to the event organizers as soon as possible.

A few other access considerations.

One of the great things about virtual events is, sometimes it's easier for one person to speak at a time, and muting can be a great way to ensure that people can hear and understand the person who is speaking.

Now, make sure to consider your audience and have some patience. It may take a while for individuals to process the information and fully understand what you are saying.

Provide an overall structure to your presentation and give the participants clear instructions and expectations about how you want them to interact with you during the event.

If you would like any assistance with facilitation during your event, please email events@thearc.org. We would be happy to moderate a Q and A portion of the event for you.

All right, just a few more equity and inclusion tips.

These are really important because, the other thing we would like to do with our events is make everyone feel welcome. And not just welcome, we want people to feel like they truly belong.

At The Arc, we think about diversity, access, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity asks the question: Who's in the space? So, we might ask, who are the presenters and who are the participants? And it's really important that we have a diverse audience and a diverse set of presenters.

For access, we ask the question: Is a space accessible? Can anybody get into the space? And, can they participate in a meaningful way?

Equity asks the question: Who received an invitation? But also challenges us to think more about who has power in the space?

And finally, inclusion. Do people feel like they truly belong? As presenters, we have a lot of power to make people feel as if they are welcome and they belong in our event.

Some key equity matters to keep in mind as a presenter are the following.

Technology and internet connectivity. Not everyone has access to the internet or, their internet connection might not be great.

So, you might notice participants dropping in and out, or they might be asking you to repeat yourself, so be mindful of that with differences in technology and internet connectivity.

Regardless of your content, you should be thinking about the communities most likely to be impacted. So, let's say you are giving a presentation about education and you are talking about students with disabilities. Think about the other identities who are also going to experience marginalization in the education system and be sure to include that information in your presentation.

It's really important to think about intersectionality – how identities can overlap and lead to oppression.

It's also important to consider lived experience and perspectives of those with that lived experience. Something that could be helpful is ensuring that you have that lived experience on the presenter panel itself.

And finally, for general equity, be mindful of language and cultural differences. It's possible that some of the participants may speak English as a second, third, fourth or who knows how many languages. We also often present to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, so, remember that when considering your language level.

And finally, a few notes on inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community. As a presenter, you can help this community feel more welcome by identifying your pronouns. You can say them in the beginning when you introduce yourself, and you can also change your Zoom name to include your pronouns. You can also encourage others to do the same, especially in a group discussion and when people are introducing themselves. Always use gender neutral language in your presentations and never make assumptions about someone's gender identity.

A few resources for more information on accessible, virtual events. First, there is some great information out there about how to make more accessible slide decks.

You can visit Microsoft Office Support for some tips and suggestions. There are also some great checklists and other information materials out there on creating accessible PowerPoints.

For more resources on how to create virtual events that are accessible, we encourage you to check out these resources, one from Rooted in Rights and the other from the Vera Institute.

Remember, if you have any questions about the event, getting prepared, or about access, equity, or inclusion, please feel free to reach out to events@thearc.org.

Thank you for joining us and good luck with your presentation!