



AERA Annual Meeting Presentation Tips for Presenting to Persons with Disabilities

AERA works to make its conferences and meetings accessible so all persons with disabilities are able to attend. Therefore all sessions and activities should be designed so everyone can join in.

Be sensitive and flexible to the needs, feelings, and opinions of people with disabilities. Some may have a better or more comfortable way to accommodate themselves, and some may not want the adaptations you have arranged. Accommodations are generally requested or selected by the individuals needing them.

Remember that disabilities may not always be obvious. It is wise to assume there will be some members of your audience who will have trouble seeing visual aids (such as slides, overheads, etc.) and/or some who will have difficulty hearing what is said.

Adaptations for Visually Impaired Individuals

1. Vary the tone and level of your voice and the pace of your delivery. (Such variety will help keep the entire audience stay alert.)
2. If recordings of your session are not available, offer to provide large-print copies of your presentation. (These copies are easy to make using a computer.) When possible, provide copies of handouts, graphs, charts, or other visual aids in sharp, black print on white paper. (Avoid color paper.)
3. Visual aids need to be accompanied by an oral narrative. Describe in detail the information that is being presented on the chalkboard, overhead project, or screen.
4. Repeat all questions or statements from the audience. (This techniques is helpful for everyone.) Try to have one person speak at a time, and try to identify the speaker so the listeners will know who is talking.

Adaptations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals

1. People who are deaf or hard of hearing need to sit where they can see the speaker easily. When using an interpreter, they must be able to see both the speaker and the interpreter. The interpreter may stand close to the speaker or within a direct sight line to allow viewing both the speaker and the interpreter within a quick glance. Interpreters will generally give significant environmental sounds, such as laughing, as well as various directions and cues.
2. When not using an overhead projector, turn it off. Reducing background noise helps focus audience attention on you, the speaker.
3. Speak at a normal rate.

4. Allow extra time when referring to a visual aid or handout or when pointing out the location of materials because the listener must look, then return attention to the speaker/interpreter for further information.
5. Be aware that volunteer note-takers may have been requested. (Those participants with mobility impairments may also have sought out such assistance.)

Get More Information

[Section 508 - U.S. Government Accessibility Standards](#)

[Making Presentations Accessible to People with Disabilities: Guidelines for Presiders, Presenters, and Discussants](#) (PDF) Princeton University

[A Guide to Making Documents Accessible to People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired](#)
American Council of the Blind