



Sound Connections: Being Inclusive in Your Practice When Presenting – WORKING DOCUMENT

We are committed to the ongoing process of becoming more inclusive in our practice, and hope that this is a helpful tool to support people who are presenting or leading sessions in an online or a face-to-face environment.

We acknowledge that this document is not extensive. Please help us to grow this based on your own experiences of delivering workshops/talks by emailing any additions to admin@sound-connections.org.uk.

The Sound Connections team

[Delivering a session online](#)

This section has been developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It specifically refers to Zoom as the platform Sound Connections uses to deliver our training, however this could be applied to other platforms.

Before a session

- If you haven't used Zoom before you can do an online test [here](#).
- If you have issues with Zoom there is a troubleshooting guide [here](#)
- Check your bandwidth using an online speedtest such as [nperf](#), [Speedtest](#) or [Comparitech](#). Details about optimum bandwidth and connectivity for users on Zoom is available [here](#)
- Consider your background: opt for minimal distraction in your background, personal photos etc. You can select a virtual background in Zoom. Make sure your face isn't obstructed by sunlight or by a glaring light in your background

- Session design needs much pre-thought – there is less room for spontaneity in an online session
- Have all of the materials you need with you. Make sure your device is fully charged (or you have easy access to a charger), and that you have water!
- If you haven't spoken with anybody that day do some vocal exercises to warm up your voice before presenting

During the session

- Avoid a deficit mindset. Focus on what we do have via technology, and who is in the session
- Be fully 'present' throughout the session – remove distractions (phones, switch email off) so that all of your attention is on the delegates
- Be clear and articulate about the session content, format and purpose
- Be aware of grounding yourself and others
- Be aware of your virtual presence when speaking: your voice takes on more importance

in an online setting. Slow down, pause, allow for silence if necessary

- Consider 'engagement' rather than 'telling'. Consider the use of breakout rooms for small group discussions, setting tasks and asking people to regroup, using the chat function to encourage participant sharing and so on
- Create spaces for people to think and reflect on what you have said
- Schedule in regular comfort breaks – recommended every 45 minutes
- Be aware that some people may not feel comfortable with participating via audio and video, and that the chat function can be used.
- If using any creative facilitation techniques, be very clear about ground rules and expectations

General guidelines

Preparation of materials

- If using slides, a cream coloured background with dark text is easier to read for people with dyslexia

- Use large (at least 24 point), simple, sans serif fonts (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Helvetica)
- Minimise the amount of text on slides
- If using visuals, be mindful of describing these for any participants who may be visually impaired
- Make sure any videos are captioned, and audio is described. Sometimes it is appropriate to give a brief description of what is in a video before playing it

Environment

- Have a relaxed policy where people can get up and take 5 minutes out of the room if required
- Include non-intrusive fidget toys if required by participants.
- Provide as much info as possible about what a meeting/session will involve and what will be expected from participants
- Schedule a comfort break every 45 minutes

Delivery style

- Avoid or explain all jargon and acronyms

- Consider your body language: open, friendly, inviting
- Pace of speech: speaking faster makes your listeners have to work harder. Consider how fast you are talking, especially if you have people in the room for whom English is not their first language
- Have eye contact with people when you are speaking
- Breathe often! Save energy for your voice, and make yourself and everyone in the room feel calmer
- Pause between phrases – let people digest what you have said
- Don't be afraid of building in silence
- Consider how you use questions in your session – there is a useful guide for asking questions in our toolkit
- Ensure any question and answer sessions are accessible. If there is a microphone for questioners, make sure it is used. Otherwise, repeat the questions so everyone can hear them.

Awareness of who is in the room

- Be aware of your own position of privilege that you are starting from and how this might affect the way that you present and interact with participants. This is a useful article explaining [privilege](#)
- Sound Connections has shared [this compilation](#) of anti-racism resources and links
- Avoid unconscious bias and making assumptions about delegates in the room. This [short film](#) from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion provides a general overview of unconscious bias and how it affects our interactions
- ‘Talk to think’ or ‘think to talk’: in group discussions and conversations, be aware of the different needs of introverts and extroverts. This article outlines [How to design introvert friendly workshops without frustrating extroverts](#)
- Consider the needs of those who identify as neurodiverse: Universal Music’s recent [‘Creative](#)

Difference' handbook is an excellent guide on embracing neurodiversity in the creative industries, much of which can be applied in a professional development context

- Drake Music's [What is Inclusion: Music Making is Key](#) is a useful document framing principles of inclusive practice that could be applied