DeafHope

Remote Interpreting on Zoom

For Facilitators

As we work together for social justice, full participation is critical. With patience, compassion, and solidarity we can make that happen!

- **Prepare:** Two interpreters are recommended for most virtual meetings. Book as soon as possible as availability is limited. Open the room at least 15 minutes early and do a tech check with interpreters. Ask the interpreters how they plan to switch and how you can provide support. For example, the facilitator could watch the time and at 15 minutes say: "we are going to pause the meeting for the interpreters to switch" then proceed when the interpreter gives the thumbs up.

- **Who's who:** Ask participants to change their Zoom name to include their name, pronoun and agency or role. This helps everyone, including interpreters. Here's how to do that. Also ask participants to show their video and say their name before they begin sharing. Knowing who is sharing is extra hard to track in virtual space, so take advantage of Zoom tools.

- **Virtual meetings are better with strong facilitation:** This is even more important when interpretation is happening. The facilitator should call on the next person to share. Or you can use the chat box to indicate who shares next. Or as one person is finished, they can call on the next person to share. No matter what, only one person should share at a time.

- **Communicate**: Share the interpretation and turn-taking plan with meeting participants. Use the Chat box to spell out names, acronyms and jargon that the interpreter might miss.

- **Pause**: Pause the meeting when the interpreters need to switch. Pause if participants have technical issues. If you are transitioning to a break room or screen sharing PAUSE to make sure that interpretation is complete first.

For ASL Interpreters

You got this! We already have a lot of practice tuning out distractions, applying intense focus, and multitasking. Tech check and prep are the keys to success with virtual interpreting.

- **Prepare** your equipment:
    - Make sure you have reliable internet. It may have worked fine yesterday, test it again today with enough time to troubleshoot before the meeting.
    - Have a computer with a webcam and the Zoom app. Accessing the meeting through a phone app severely limits functionality, computers are best.
    - Connect headphones or earbuds with a mic for best sound quality. We like bluetooth options, wires can add visual distract and impede signing space.
    - Set your Zoom name to appear in the room as INTERPRETER.
    - Set up in a quiet space with as little visual/auditory background noise as possible.
    - Pro tip: some interpreters find it useful to prepare large cards with bold text (slow down, repeat, pause) to hold up to the camera as needed.

- **Practice helps!** Play with the Zoom app, test out buttons, options and preferences. Practice with the mute / unmute button, that is often a spot that trips us up. Pro tip: you can set zoom to temporarily unmute you while you hold the space bar.

- **Coordinate**: Meet with the other interpreter ahead of time to coordinate your teaming plan.
    - How will you communicate, provide feeds, or address tech issues? Do whatever is quickest and easiest for you. We have found DIRECT PRIVATE CHAT within the app to be the best. You can also have your phone nearby to text.
    - Brady Bunch effect: we recommend that the "off" interpreter stop their video to reduce the number of windows in the meeting. Even better: cover your camera when you are off with a post it or plastic cover you can buy cheaply. When you stop video feed, the order of squares changes which throws off visual tracking. Make sure to pause and repeat to ensure Deaf eyes are on you if someone else changes the Brady Bunch order of squares.

- Plan your switch. 15 minutes is a good ballpark switch time. Ideally the facilitator can watch time and initiate a pause in the meeting for you to switch. At the designated time, the "off" interpreter resumes their video. At a good pause, the "on" interpreter indicates a switch to the other interpreter, then stops their video feed. Anything we can do to support visual tracking is useful so give Deaf eyes lots of cues on where to look next.
- Be prepared to jump in quickly if the "on" interpreter freezes or has some other difficulty.

- **Set Up:** Log in to the Zoom room at least 15 minutes early. Have nearby water and anything else you need to do your best work.

- **Communicate** your teaming plan to the meeting facilitator and Deaf consumers at the beginning of the meeting and ask if any adjustments should be made. Hopefully people are self-identifying before they share, regardless, include that information whenever you can.

- **Remember** that equitable communication is a shared responsibility. Be responsive to the direction of participants at the meeting and ask for what you need to be effective.