Best Practices for More Inclusive and More Equitable Virtual Meetings
As of 09/15/2020

General best practices for all participants:
● Commit to an inclusive culture where everyone can participate, and where each voice carries equal weight.
● Consider your biases, privilege, and power in the meeting space. Think about your power, race, gender, language, ability, and knowledge privileges. Adjust your participation accordingly!
● Refrain from multitasking.
● Practice self-awareness by focusing on actively listening and appreciating what others are trying to say, not only on what you are hearing.
● Use simple, accessible language; avoid jargon & acronyms, so all may fully participate.
● During collaborative conversations, make just one point and then let others contribute. “In a group of “n” people, speak no more than ‘1/nth’ of time.” If you are teaching or presenting during a meeting, make space for questions and comments
● Pay attention to meeting dynamics: if you feel like it was exclusive, or if someone shares that concern with you, share your feedback and advocate for improvement. If a meeting is silent, something is probably not working.

For Participants: Inclusive practices during remote participation

Meeting preparation:
● Add your pronouns and organization to your Zoom name
● Let at least one meeting attendee know if you are going to miss a meeting. Or, email the group if it is small.
● Acknowledge if you are routinely missing meetings. Folks might feel devalued.
● Read any meeting materials ahead of time.
● Decline the meeting invite when appropriate.

During the meeting:
● Inquire about your role in the meeting if you do not know.
● Be a self-aware and mindful participant:
  ○ Indicate you want to speak by raising your hand on video; if you cannot use or raise your hand, speak up, but try not to interrupt others.
  ○ Consider if you should stay muted when not speaking: sometimes, staying muted stymies active conversations; other times, muting yourself is a helpful way for others to stay focused on the speaker. unless the format of the meeting requires more active participation
  ○ Be mindful of background noise and join the call from a quiet location.
● Serve as an ally to others during the meeting.
  ○ Raise awareness if participants are interrupting others.
  ○ Assume others’ best intent.
  ○ Speak for yourself when making comments using "I" or your organization name. Don't speak for the assembled group by speaking as "we."
Practice caution when sharing traumatic news that may be triggering for colleagues.
Practice understanding of colleagues' emotional state or work-from-home situation when they opt-out of sharing their video.

- All parents and caregivers shall enjoy an irrevocable "background kid and dependent noise" exception at all times, but muting etiquette still applies.

For Facilitators: Planning and leading inclusive meetings

Meeting preparation:
- Schedule mindfully (at least 2-3 days prior) and share an agenda (at least 24 hrs earlier).
  
  **Keep in mind that many have remote childcare/school duties during lunch hour/s. Try to avoid the lunch hour.**
- Consider who is invited and, more importantly, who was left out.
- Send out a link to where you will take notes and where others can contribute notes.
- Offer accessibility and accommodation support.
- Share how participants can receive technical support.
- Plan opportunities for less dominant participants to participate either through direct questions, polls, readings, Zoom chats, whiteboarding, etc.
- Before difficult conversations, ask participants, **"What do you need to feel safe in this meeting? & How can we be held accountable for upholding these agreements?"**

Meeting facilitation:
- Convey the meeting goals and purpose in simple, concrete, inclusive language, and request input and feedback from all participants to maximize value and relevance.
- Make time for introductions to value the presence and voices of each participant.
- Build and maintain the meeting narrative - remind everyone of the goals and purpose of the meeting.
  - Periodically check-in to ensure you are building towards the goals.
- Ensure everyone has access to agenda/notes doc and can contribute.
- Look out for dominators and interrupters. Be ready to redirect the discussion.
  
  **"We've heard from X already on Y... who else has something to contribute?"**

Post-meeting tasks:
- Send out a high-level summary from meeting notes for folks who couldn’t attend.
- If you find that many attendees did not participate, think about what could be improved. Ask for feedback to see whether there were any exclusive practices that you can fix since there is likely a reason some attendees did not participate.
- When applicable, follow-up with opportunities to allow for participants to contribute. This might capture voices from those who were not ready to participate during the meeting.

Resources used:
- Power Dynamics and Inclusion in Virtual Meetings | Aspiration
- How to counteract 3 types of bias and run inclusive meetings - Work-Life by Atlassian
- To Build an Inclusive Culture, Start with Inclusive Meetings - Harvard Business Review
- How to Run Inclusive Meetings? - NeuralShifts