



The following factors may play a role in terms of effective participation in discussions:

- the degree of hearing loss of those involved.
- the functional impact of hearing loss on the person as well as:
 - the type and effectiveness of the individuals hearing devices and/or
 - the availability of assistive listening devices such as loop systems, audio streaming, headphones, etc.
- The sensitivity amongst participants regarding the impact of hearing loss on the individual, specifically during interactive participation is of the utmost importance
- The collaboration of all participants greatly contributes to successful communication during meetings.
- It is important to circulate background information on the topics for discussion in written format to those involved, before the meeting.
- The formal minutes of the meeting are important. Even if only the decisions made during the conversation or informal discussions are noted.
- Long meetings/discussions can be exhausting and good planning is important. Pace the proceedings and ensure regular breaks
- Introduce all participants before the meeting starts; this gives people with hearing loss time to adjust their sound and devices and get orientated.

Access to virtual meetings/discussions for deaf or hearing impaired persons who use hearing technologies to communicate.

To all participants;

- It is best to have lighting in front of you rather than behind you. Back lighting can make it difficult for others to see your face.
- All participants must wear a headset with a microphone to improve sound quality
- Speech- or lip-reading is a major challenge and even more so during virtual meetings. Keep hands, hair and clothing away from your mouth and face.
- Use the mute button when not speaking to reduce unwanted background noise.
- Don't interrupt others, as it is harder to shift listening from one speaker to the next in a virtual meeting situation
- Record the meeting for people with hearing loss, so that they can review it later at a slower pace, if needed.
- Make sure that there is no echo and avoid using areas with wooden floors
- Make sure that staff elsewhere in the building respect the virtual meeting in terms of their own activities
- Video material provided must have sub-titles or captioning where possible and applicable
- Consider the provision of lip speakers if needed as a form of reasonable accommodation

Please note:

- The provision of note takers (as a form of reasonable accommodation) may make it almost impossible for the persons involved to participate in real time discussions.
- However, the provision of real-time captioning during the meeting would be ideal but this facility is not necessarily available and/or affordable. Click here for information regarding zoom captioning [https://chcheating.org/blog/zoom-captioning-hearing-loss/...](https://chcheating.org/blog/zoom-captioning-hearing-loss/)
- To note: persons with severe to profound hearing loss or total deafness who use for example texting or lip-reading/speech-reading to communicate are most of the time completely excluded from virtual meetings due to the lack of real-time captioning.
- The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD 2015) is clear regarding the diversity in the field of hearing loss, the definition for communication, augmentative and alternative communication, etc

Contact the NCPD: _____

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