



# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) DEI COMMUNICATION TIPS

## WHAT CAN REDUCE OUR IMPLICIT BIASES DURING COVID-19?

**Patience - Reflection - Empathy - Sympathy - Selfcare**

**P.R.E.S.S.** creates time to reflect on our new normal. What we are experiencing during this pandemic individually, locally and globally is unprecedented. Many of us may be feeling a range of emotions and stressors, combined with our concern for our loved ones, community members and society. Although our lives and routines may be altered, we still have a unique opportunity to apply issues of diversity, equity and inclusion concepts in our personal and professional lives.

## HOW TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE VIRTUAL ATMOSPHERE?

- Make sure that you allow space for people to share how they are doing as it may take a few minutes to respond.
- Faculty and staff members should build a digital foundation by holding virtual office hours for students.
- Lead by example and organize a digital peer program for students, faculty and staff members.

- Develop digital programming to foster community and belonging through [MSU Center for Community Engaged Learning](#).
- Support digital health and wellness by providing guidance for students, subordinates and colleagues to visit [2019 Novel Coronavirus Resources](#)
- Be aware of everyone's new environment and climate change of regular routines, technology resources, community domestic/relationship violence resources and food access.
- Develop a digital student employment plan for those who are now experiencing access to limited resources.
- Create a list of questions to host a group chat and reflect on the responses.
- Share MSU assistive technology and software resources by visiting [RCPD Technology](#).
- Identify your patterns and surroundings by thinking in a clear direction to host virtual sessions.
- Provide routine and consistent anonymous surveys that inquire about the well-being and resources of others.

## WHAT IS NOVEL CORONAVIRUS?

Public health officials across the globe are responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus first detected in China that has now spread worldwide. The novel coronavirus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

## COVID-19 BASIC HEALTH GUIDELINES

It's important to remember the steps you can take to prevent the spread of any virus, including the flu.

- Practice social distancing, avoiding close contact with others when possible.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid large crowds.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean your doorknobs, light switches and commonly touched areas with disinfectant wipes frequently.



## COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES OFFICE OF DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

### HOW CAN I PREVENT MICRO-AGGRESSIONS WHILE WORKING FROM HOME?

- Being aware of the impact of differences across identities such as race/ethnicity, class (socioeconomics and role within an organization), gender, gender identity, disabilities, sexual orientation and other human differences.
- Keep in mind that our international faculty, staff, and students cannot return to countries that are a level 3 crisis for COVID-19.
- Be aware that there are those of us that are dealing with interruptions in the household.
- Be curious and open to understanding how the intersections of people's identities are "showing up" to pinpoint challenges or signs of resilience.
- Practice empathy and deep listening instead of judgment as people share their concerns and realities.
- Diversify the resources you are reading or listening to in order to learn about how this pandemic is impacting different individuals and communities.
- Look for examples of resilience by diverse individuals and communities of differences across race/ethnicity, class (socioeconomics and role within an organization), gender, gender identity, disabilities, sexual orientation and other human differences.
- Return to DEI goals and outcomes that you have identified by reviewing and reflecting on ways to incorporate them today.
- Strike down negative terms about COVID-19 virus, such as references to the virus and particular identities or ethnicities.
- Affirm that this is a global pandemic that we are experiencing.
- Acknowledge that our communities will rebuild from this pandemic.
- Touch base with Asian student organizations and offer support.
- Host a virtual community call to discuss the micro-aggressions that are happening.
- Adjust expectations for yourself and others.
- Understand that your well-being comes first.

### DEI THOUGHTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN WORKING WITH STUDENTS

- Students (rural, limited financial resources, first generation of college, and of color) less likely to have their own laptops, tablets and reliable internet at home.
- Vulnerable students are personally responsible for paying all their technology and related costs.
- Vulnerable students may rely on devices that are older, slower and more problem prone (laptops with missing keys, phones with shattered screens, and hardware that cannot keep a charge).
- Students that mostly need tech accommodations will be most reluctant to ask.
- Not all students have a practical understanding of technology.
- For students, this could be the biggest interruption in their lives, but learning and access to their courses online should not be the biggest obstacle.

### VIRTUAL MEETING CONSIDERATIONS

Below are some considerations to help make virtual meetings accessible and secure for all.

**If a person is not speaking in a virtual meeting, they should mute their audio and stop their video** to avoid screen flipping that can distract from the person speaking, as well as cause audio feedback that can interfere with the content of the meeting.

**Live captioning is a feature within virtual meetings in Microsoft Teams** that can provide real-time captions when selected to those who are viewing the calls. It is not perfect, but can be a helpful starting place. If people have trouble with the live captioning, the feature to record the call is available so that people could listen to the call later or use separate assistive technology.

**Provide agendas prior to a virtual meeting** to help set expectations and for tracking of items during a meeting.

### CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE

For the latest information at this time follow the MSU website [msu.edu/coronavirus](https://msu.edu/coronavirus). If you have any questions, call our toll-free coronavirus hotline: **888-353-1294**.

#### MSU Police

If experiencing racial indictments contact the MSU Police at **517-355-2221**.

#### Office of Institutional Equity

To file a report due to discrimination or harassment, please visit <https://oie.msu.edu/>

**It can be difficult for people to focus on two types of conversations happening at once.** This can be common in a virtual meeting that also has an associated chat function happening simultaneously. Trying to flip between the chat and video, as well as follow the audio conversation can be incredibly difficult, particularly for someone who uses assistive devices.

**People should avoid eating or covering their mouths during virtual meetings.** This can impact audio quality, cause feedback, and make it harder for someone who may rely on lip reading to understand important aspects of the conversation.

**When using the Zoom platform, make sure to secure your meeting** so people who aren't invited don't have access. Two tips include using randomly created Zoom links for each meeting and enabling password protection to enter a meeting. (Zoom has more information in its post, [How to Keep Party Crashers from Crashing Your Zoom Event](#).)

**When speaking** say who you are prior to addressing the audience.