

# Adding Accessibility to Your Presentation: How & When to Include Visual Descriptions

## Why do we do a visual description:

A visual description is a verbal or written description of a person, object, or image. This is done to increase accessibility and inclusivity for individuals who are blind or low-vision and provide a richer experience. It also has benefits outside of this, such as allowing individuals joining a virtual meeting on their phones to better appreciate shared slides that may have complex graphics or images that would otherwise be too small to be understood.

## When to do a visual description:

In the context of an event, a visual description is done largely at two different times: 1) when introducing oneself or 2) when presenting a slide with an image/graphic. It may be appropriate at other times as well, such as when someone makes note of something in their environment (e.g. when a cat comes into frame, as this is an experience that should be shared).

## How to do a visual description:

For a person, here is a general template for how to do a visual description: “Hi, my name is [your name]. (Optional opportunity state pronouns here). I am a [race/ethnicity] [gender identity or expression] with [defining traits such as hairstyle, clothing, glasses or jewelry].”

- *Ex. “Hi, my name is XXX. My pronouns are she/her. I am a white woman with medium-length straight brown hair, large black and white glasses, and red lipstick. I am wearing a blue shirt.”*
- For an image, here is a general template for how to do a visual introduction: “On this slide, there is a [photo/graph/etc] [showing/demonstrating] [description of photo/graph/etc].”
- *Ex. On this slide, there are photos of our team members. On the top left is a photo of XXX. She is a white woman with medium-length straight brown hair, large black and white glasses, and red lipstick. In this photo, she is wearing a blue shirt. The photo depicts her from the waist up, and she is facing the camera and smiling. She appears happy.*

## What else can I do to increase accessibility (a non-exhaustive list):

- 1) State your name whenever you speak.
- 2) Utilize platforms with increased accessibility features (such as Zoom) whenever possible.
- 3) Ask about access needs in advance, such as during event registration, to ensure early recognition and appropriate modification.
- 4) Request feedback from those requiring modifications after the event to ensure their needs have been appropriately met.