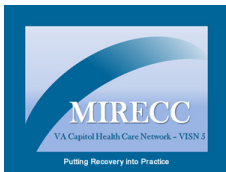**VISN 5 MIRECC DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES
FOR WEBINAR PRESENTERS

Photo by Jopwell

The Veterans Affairs VISN 5 Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) collaborates with Veterans and stakeholders to support and enhance the recovery, longevity, health and wellness, and community functioning of Veterans with serious mental illness, defined as a diagnosis with a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that has substantially interfered with an individual's daily life. To ensure recovery-oriented care for all Veterans we invite presenters to review and incorporate the below guidelines into their presentations to acknowledge past inequities, demonstrate inclusiveness, and enhance access to a diverse audience.

Demonstrating Inclusiveness

1. When introducing yourself, share your pronouns to promote gender inclusivity.

2. Find out what indigenous land you are on and open with a land acknowledgment statement. Click here for an example from a local university.

3. Thoughtfully consider the use of language when referring to individuals with disabilities/disabled people in your presentation. Person-first and identity-first language are both respectful choices. Recognize that individuals and communities differ in the language which they prefer. Utilize recovery-oriented language guidelines and opportunities for people to speak for themselves and about their lived experiences.

4. Evaluate and acknowledge your background, identity, power, privilege, and positionality as it may influence your values, lens, or approach in your work.

5. If applicable, acknowledge your own U.S. military service.

6. Acknowledge, as you feel comfortable, your own lived experience with mental illness.

Inclusion of Traditionally Excluded Populations in Research

7. Note how inclusive samples were in terms of country, geographic location, race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, age, and/or other relevant demographics.

8. Acknowledge when traditionally excluded groups such as people of color, people of working-class backgrounds, older adults, rural-dwelling adults, or people in low-income countries, are not included in the

mainstream literature. Highlight researchers or publications in your field that focus on these traditionally excluded groups.

9. When discussing gender, highlight that people's sex assigned at birth may not match their gender, and that multiple genders exist beyond the gender binary (e.g., non-binary, agender, bigender).

10. Acknowledge history of health care disparities as relevant for your study population, including, if known, the role of inequities as a causal factor.

11. When sharing clinical recommendations, include culturally aware care considerations and how recommendations may or may not apply to specific subgroups.

12. Report stakeholder and local community involvement in research development, implementation and dissemination, including relevant demographics of stakeholders.

13. When known, acknowledge contributions of clinicians, providers, Veterans, and community members who have lived experience of mental illness.

Enhancing Webinar Access and Engagement

14. Speak loudly and clearly, in short concise sentences.

15. Confirm your volume and clarity prior to webinar, particularly if you are calling in via cell phone.

16. Consider audience background and limit use of inaccessible technical and/or scientific jargon.

17. Use large font, high contrast text and simple backgrounds.

18. Use clear and brief wording on slides, limiting text to a few short core message bullets. Use clear communication to expand content in the slides, offering a clear connection between what is on the slides and what you are saying.

19. Define acronyms both on screen and in your delivery.

20. When you use images of people or case examples, try to have these images and case examples reflect the diversity of VA employees and Veterans. For free stock photos featuring people of color, see for example The Jopwell Collection, picnoi, or #WOCInTech. Please credit the source when using these images! Images of collaborators should be of equal quality to each other.

21. Provide spoken descriptions of visual content, including images, graphics, and your visual appearance on video if applicable, to ensure accessibility for people who are blind or low vision. When referring to images and graphics, provide a clear, brief description of the key takeaways.

Photo by WOCinTech Chat

22. Indicate whether resources that you highlight in your presentation are available in different languages.

23. Make the presentation interactive with poll questions and opportunities to participate in the chat.

24. Invite the audience to take brief breaks to stretch and move partway through the presentation.

Additional Resources

Click here for more tips on how to create inclusive presentations!