

## Access check-ins

Science is a human endeavor and humans have dynamic physical and cognitive needs. We can support accessibility within our Center by considering the access needs of our members.

Access needs are something every person has, and these needs may change over time. For instance, because our members span the globe, setting meeting times so that everyone in our working group can attend during relatively normal working hours is important. Moreover, because we interact in different formats (Zoom, Padlet, in-person, etc.), these different formats can affect how easy or challenging it is for people to participate within C-CoMP. For instance, participating in both a Zoom conversation and simultaneously on Padlet could be an access issue for some folks. To create more accessible groups for our members, we need to understand and normalize access needs. One tool to help us understand the access needs of our groups is to conduct access check-ins.

Access check-ins originated within the disability justice movement (e.g., Sins Invalid, 2019) and were recently introduced to science contexts (Reinholz & Ridgway, 2021). The spirit of access needs is to normalize that each person has needs that may fluctuate over time. Access check-ins are short check-ins that often occur at the end of introductions in a meeting format. For instance, during a meeting, we typically share our names, our current positions, and what institutions we are from. We can expand on this type of introduction by sharing our preferred pronouns and what types of access needs we have. When we are disclosing our access needs, we do not have to disclose any information we do not feel comfortable disclosing. Examples of accessibility check-in statements could look like this:

*For someone who is not able to type notes during a meeting for disability-related reasons.*

Hi, my name is [first name]. I am a [academic level] at this [institution name]. My preferred pronouns are [pronouns] and this week I am experiencing a flare-up of carpal tunnel syndrome, so I am unable to type notes for our working group, or contribute to Padlet boards.

*For someone who needs to leave at a particular time for family commitments.*

Hi, my name is [first name]. I am a [academic level] at this [institution name]. My preferred pronouns are [pronouns] and my access needs are to have meetings that end by 3:30 PM so I can pick up my children from daycare.

*For someone who has no current access needs to address.*

Hi, my name is [first name]. I am a [academic level] at this [institution name]. My preferred pronouns are [pronouns] and my access needs are currently being met.

Once we are aware of what the access needs of the group are, we can take steps to address them so that C-CoMP members can fully participate in our collaborations. As an additional step,

we can also send access surveys to members ahead of our meetings to ensure that access needs are being planned for accordingly.

An extension of an accessibility check-in is to ask the members of our working groups, “What do you need to do your best work?” This type of question allows people to think about what resources or possible accommodations they may need to accomplish scientific tasks. Once someone shares their needs, it is important that we are committed to helping them address their needs as a leader within the group.

Read more about access needs in [this article](#).

Citations:

Reinholz, D. L., & Ridgway, S. W. (2021). [Access needs: Centering students and disrupting ableist norms in STEM](#). *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 20(3), es8. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.21-01-0017>.

Sins Invalid. (2019). *Skin, tooth, and bone: The basis of movement is our people* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA.



# C-CoMP Guiding Principles for Collaboration

## Supplement