

Misophonia & Virtual Meetings

• A Guide for Presenters & Teachers •

Misophonia is a neurological, multi-sensory disability [as far as we know] that causes certain people to have extreme reactions such as severe panic and anger to everyday stimuli such as specific noises and motions. Misophonia is a real disorder that is diagnosed and studied by psychologists, audiologists, and neurologists. You can easily make your virtual meeting accessible to more people with a little bit of information and adaption. Not all of these are problems for all people with misophonia. Ask, listen, adapt.

Common Activators [“Triggers”]

Any eating noises

Chewing
Smacking
Crunching
Slurping
Gum chewing/popping
Hard candy in mouth
Fingernail biting

Mouth-centric sounds

Sniffing
Sneezing
Coughing
Throat Clearing
Heavy Breathing
Nose Whistle
Whistling

Repetitive sounds

Typing
Mouse clicking
Tapping fingers on desk
Pen clicking
Coin or key jingling
Clock ticking
Squeaky objects
Water dripping

Paper & plastic sounds

Crinkling wrappers
Crumpling paper
Shuffling paper notes
Crinkling plastic
[such as a water bottle]

Speaking sounds

Smacky talking [dry or wet mouth]
Teeth-sucking/snitching noise
Filler words [“um/like”]
Lips
Some letters [“p” or “s” sounds]

Other Sounds

Finger snapping
Knuckle cracking
Chafing noises
Loud Footsteps
Distant speech
Animal sounds
[barking, licking]

Visual Activators

Eating or chewing, even without sound
Foot shaking, finger tapping, etc.
Nail-biting or chewing
Hair twirling or chewing
Finger rubbing or nail picking
Animated hand motions
Nervous motions [hand wringing, nose rubbing]

...and possibly other things not listed here.

Meeting Checklist

- Are you familiar with what misophonia is, in case it is brought up?
- Have any of your attendees told you that they have misophonia? Have you asked them what you can do to accommodate them? Have you asked them to provide you with their misophonia activators [“triggers”]?
- Are you aware of common misophonic triggers to avoid [above], even if nobody has said they have it?
- Do you have a list of specific activators from your misophonic attendee[s] to avoid?
- Will you announce that attendees are encouraged to private message you if there are any issues during the meeting, that you are receptive to their input, and will do your best to accommodate?
- Do you know where the mute button is on your computer or microphone? Are you going to use it whenever you are making sounds other than speaking? Is your microphone too close and will pick up mouth noises?
- Do you know how to turn your camera off and on again in your presentation platform?
- Do you know how to send and receive private messages in your meeting platform?
- Will you disallow eating and chewing gum for participants? Will you abstain from the other common activators listed in this guide or provided to you by a misophone who is in the session?
- If you have a glass of water or coffee, is it off-screen?
- Are your keyboard and mouse quiet or, if not, can you mute yourself while using them?
- Have you set up closed captioning transcription either with an AI-assisted function or with a live transcriber present? Will you send the transcription or meeting notes to people who have asked for them?

•• Listen without judgement. Ask. Acknowledge. Accommodate as best as you can. ••