



Panel Discussion Tips

Successful panel discussions allow the audience to learn from a group of experts by listening to—and more importantly participating in—engaging conversations. Conversely, ineffective panels serve as boring and repetitive lectures that fail to facilitate learning.

Please consider the tips below to assist you in structuring and presenting a panel discussion that is both captivating and informative.

FOR PANELISTS

- Plan ahead to reduce redundancy and ensure that all content is adequately covered. *If possible, set up a conference call to become acquainted with your fellow panelists before the session.*
- Structure your presentation to include an interactive component every 15-20 minutes to keep the audience engaged.
- Use storytelling to help your audience emotionally connect with the presentation.
- Consider utilizing software tools such as Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere, and Kahoot! to poll the audience and create interactive visuals, such as live word clouds. These software tools are also a great way to engage the virtual audience during hybrid presentations. If you intend on using a software tool during your presentation, please make AACN Staff aware prior to the event so there is ample time to test the software.
- Slides are optional. Rather, focus on engaging the audience through interactive activities.
- When disagreements arise, proceed diplomatically, and make sure that your exchange enriches the conversation, rather than detracts from it.



FOR FACILITATORS

- Get to know your panelists ahead of time to become familiar with their backgrounds, better understand their areas of expertise, and learn about any informative and/or interesting examples they may have to share from their own experience.
- Maintain control of the session to prevent panelists from speaking over one another or repeating the same information.
- Encourage debate within the panel but be sure to keep the conversation in line with both the session's content and the audience's interest.
- Meet with audience members before the panel starts to crowdsource content and questions.