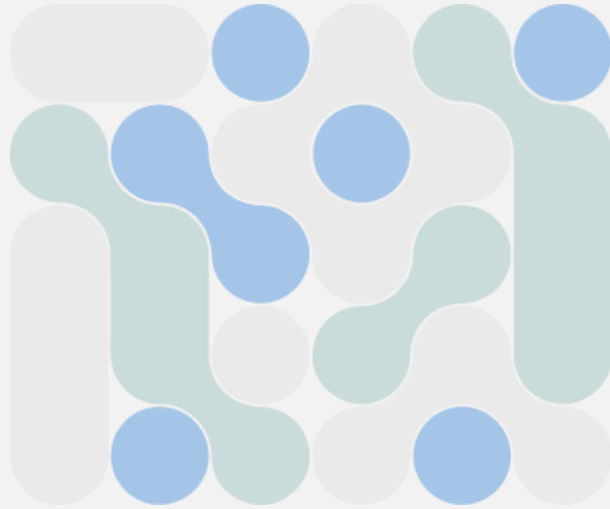


EDICa



EDICa Newsletter- Sep-Oct

EDI Caucus: Supporting UK research and innovation with evidence-based reviews of equality, diversity & inclusion practices.

For the static PDF version of the newsletter, please click here

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Newsletter/2024-10>

The newsletter will always be written in plain English, however if you would like a version summarised in British Sign Language, let us know.

In This Issue

- **Calls for Participants**
- **Workstream updates**
- **EDICa Seminars**
- **Spotlight on the field**
- **Spotlight on accessibility**
- **Get involved**
- **Our Funders**

Calls for participants

EDICa call for interviews discussing the impact Covid-19 had on careers

Last autumn, EDICa conducted a comprehensive survey of people working in the UK's research & innovation sector looking at how Covid-19 impacted people. To support this quantitative data, we're now conducting interviews to provide a more nuanced picture of how Covid-19 and the lockdowns impacted people in different ways. We want to hear the positives and the negatives.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
after Covid-19:
Designing enabling workspaces**

We're conducting online interviews aimed
at informing the creation of more-
inclusive, better-enabling workspaces.

EDICa

To learn more, click here
<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/CovidStudy>

We encourage you to disseminate our call for interview participants widely. These interviews will take place online via Zoom. For more information and to sign up, click here:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/CovidStudy>

Virtual Reality co-design workshops on enabling workspaces- call for participants

This November, the EDICa research team will be conducting co-design workshops with our partners [Animmersion](#) that will help develop Virtual Reality (VR) environments of enabling workspaces. The in-person workshops will be at different locations in central Edinburgh, and we will arrange online workshops for those unable to attend in person.

The workshops will help the design team understand how the developed VR environments can inform best-practice when it comes to establishing enabling workspaces. The co-designed VR environments will be immersive spaces that will enable users to think about how working environments can be fully inclusive spaces, and will be used for future training.

If you would like to take part in the workshops, please let us know your availability. We will then respond with a Participant Information Sheet describing the project in further detail, and a request for your consent to take part in the research.

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/VR-Workshops>

We would like to hear from people who have been affected adversely by badly designed workspaces, and people who feel they would benefit from VR training on enabling workspaces.

You can apply for both online and in-person workshops if you would like to.

You can also register your interest to take part in the research by contacting us directly at edicaucus@hw.ac.uk

Closing dates: Applications for ONLINE workshop #1 will close at midnight on **Tuesday 12th November**. Applications for the IN-PERSON workshops will close at midnight on **Friday 22nd November**.



The poster features a light blue background. At the top left is a circular icon of a person in a lab coat holding a VR headset. At the top right is a circular icon of a house with a computer monitor and a person. The main text reads "Virtual Reality co-design workshops" in bold black font, followed by "Sign up here" and the URL "https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/VR-Workshops". Below the text is a QR code. At the bottom left is a photo of a woman wearing a VR headset. At the bottom right is a photo of a man wearing a VR headset. The EDICa logo is at the bottom center, with "with" and the Animmersion logo to its right.

Interview participants needed: studying narrative CVs

One of EDICa's Flexible Fund projects, led by Dr Fasoli at the University of Surrey, is seeking participants.

Study Title: Understanding barriers and facilitators in grant preparations

We are conducting a study aimed at understanding the personal and institutional challenges that researchers from underrepresented backgrounds encounter when preparing a grant application. We are also interested in identifying ways in which researchers feel supported in writing their grant applications. The study is part of a project titled '*Breaking Barriers in Research Funding Applications: Evaluating Narrative CVs and Co-Designing Solutions for Application Processes*' led by Dr Fabio Fasoli (University of Surrey) and funded by the EDICa Flexible Fund.

What: The study will involve a 60-minute online interview

Who: We are looking for individuals who:

- a) are active researchers working in the UK,
- b) have applied, are applying, or are aiming to apply for research funding,
- c) identify as part of an underrepresented group (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc).

When and Where: Please contact Dr Fasoli (f.fasoli@surrey.ac.uk) or Jess Riley (jr01057@surrey.ac.uk) to receive more information about the study and arrange the day and time for the interview.

Incentive: In exchange for your participation, you will receive a **£15 Amazon voucher**.

Additional information about the project can be found [here](#)

The study has received a favourable opinion from the University of Surrey Ethics Committee [0064].



Surveying Early Career Academics and Covid's impact on them

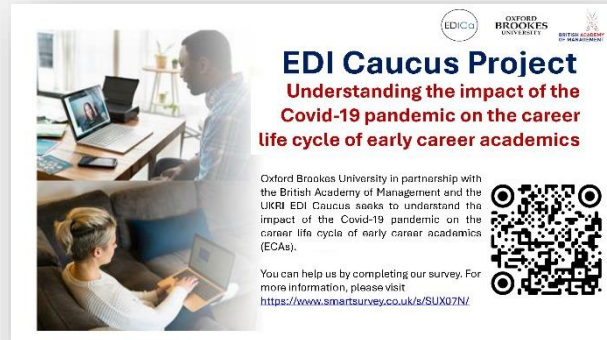
One of EDICa's Flexible Fund projects, led by Dr Beldina Owalla

Oxford Brookes University, in partnership with the British Academy of Management and EDI Caucus, seeks to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the career life cycle of early career academics (ECAs).

This survey is part of a study aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the experiences and career development of ECAs. In examining the experiences of ECAs during and since the pandemic, the research will engage with questions of workload, mental well-being, job-security, and management support.

These insights will be useful in helping us understand the impact of the pandemic on ECAs and to develop recommendations on best practices to support ECAs career progression, as well create a more inclusive research and innovation environment.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SUX07N/>



New EDICa website

One of the main outputs for the EDICa project is a professional website hosting a library of resources. This library is called ERICa – Equity in Research & Innovation Careers. This will be an evolving and growing resource of evidence-based research and guidance for equality, diversity and inclusion. You can also find upcoming events we're hosting and past newsletters. [Check out a new blog](#) from EDICa's first widening participation intern; Beth Wedgwood joined EDICa last autumn as an intern, and has gone on to continue working with EDICa team members as a research assistant on different mini projects.

www.edicaucus.ac.uk



Workstream Updates

The Career- Life Cycle

Dr Chiara Cocco, Prof Kate Sang, and Beth Wedgwood [presented their findings on neurodiversity and menstrual health in a seminar](#) in honour of World Menopause Day. The seminar, which took place on Zoom on 15 October, can now be watched on our [YouTube channel](#) or [found on our website](#). Alternatively you could read the [transcript, available on our website](#). Dr Cocco said: "One takeaway message from here is that there is really not one size that fits all in terms of how someone might manage menstrual health at work. And in the case of neurodivergent people, their experiences are often neglected in the existing literature and in current studies and in the policies that employers put together. So there is a real need to try and bring together policies around neurodiversities with other policies on menstrual health to ensure that we take into account the different experiences."

Below are quotations pulled from the 16 neurodivergent people we interviewed about how they manage their menstrual health at work.

"As a neurodivergent person, when you go through perimenopause, your symptoms, your neurodivergent attributes and struggles heighten. Perimenopause hormonal stage impacts what the body is already dealing with."

Another said **"I'm autistic, so I'm very familiar with masking. And that does help me to function in society, because certainly with teaching, that is a mask I enjoy wearing. It is where I can sort of put on the professional face."** Unfortunately this person, who really enjoyed her work at a university, because of the interaction between her autism and the struggle she faced throughout perimenopause, didn't feel supported and it led her to not progress in her career.

Our report offers some practical recommendations for managers to improve workplace support for neurodivergent women. To view and download the report, click here:



EDICa

New Report

Improving the workplace support for neurodivergent women managing their menstrual health

 Free open access

Read it now!
go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/NeurodiverseMH

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/NeurodiverseMH>

Following the success of our study into menstrual health and neurodiversity, and the success of our seminar on Deaf Researchers' Experience, we are now focusing on gathering the experiences from deaf and hard of hearing people on managing their menstrual health at work. EDICa's Deputy PI, Prof Jemina Napier, is a hearing person fluent in British Sign Language (BSL), International Sign (IS), and Australian Sign Language (Auslan), and has spent years conducting research with the deaf community. She will be conducting interviews to add further nuance to our research on menstrual health. If you want to contribute, email Prof Napier at J.Napier@hw.ac.uk.

Is your organisation wanting to do more to support employees with regards to menstrual health? Get in touch with us to explore ways we can support you. edicaucus@hw.ac.uk

Attention CDTs, DTPs, CTPs and all other multi-institutional doctoral programmes

UKRI research councils fund thousands of PhD students through the use of CDTs (Centres for Doctoral Training), DTPs (Doctoral Training Partnerships), and CTPs (Collaborative Training Partnerships). These programmes are usually multi-institutional. EDICa's partner, the CDT SuMMeR (Sustainable Management of Marine Resources) is funded by NERC and led by the University of Plymouth, but also has PhD students at The Marine Biological Association, the Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Bangor University, Heriot-Watt University, and the University of Exeter.

How do we affect change in how menstrual health is supported in these multi-institutional programmes? Equality, diversity and inclusion is increasingly becoming a consideration in the application to form a CDT with UKRI funding. [Here you can read EPSRC's expectations regarding EDI](#). Regarding gender diversity they say "Underrepresentation of women in the engineering and physical sciences remains one of our greatest EDI challenges, with gender diversity in our



EDICa

Workshop on Supporting Menstrual Health in doctoral training programmes
12 February 2025
13:00-15:00 on Zoom
Register here:
<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/CDT-Workshop>

Supervisors, PIs, CDT or DTP managers, PGRs: come and brainstorm ways that CDTs & DTPs can support menstrual health in the workplace.



Funded by  The British Academy  UK Research and Innovation

* Centre for Doctoral Training, Doctoral Training Partnership

large grant portfolio an area of particular concern." EDICa has found evidence that menstrual health is one strand of supporting gender diversity.

But with PhD students belonging to a myriad of institutions, what solutions can be practically implemented to effect change regarding menstrual health in these multi-institutional doctoral training programmes? **Join us for a roundtable discussion on 12 February 2025, 13:00-15:00 on Zoom. Click here to <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/CDT-Workshop>** . This invitation is for supervisors, principal investigators, managers of programmes, and postgraduate researchers.

The Research Process

As part of our study focused on embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within the research process, EDICa is set to undertake research on initiatives such as narrative CVs and mentoring. These initiatives are designed to engage researchers from diverse career stages and professional and personal backgrounds.

Mentoring Study: This study focuses on the experiences of doctoral and early career researchers regarding the mentoring they receive. It aims to assess the effectiveness of different mentoring formats in meeting its intended objectives, such as integrating into academic workplaces and culture, enhancing career development, advancing ongoing projects, and supporting personal well-being. By gathering in-depth accounts and feedback, the study seeks to identify best practices and potential areas for improvement in mentoring strategies within academic and research institutions. This will contribute to a deeper understanding of the mentoring process and its impact on the professional trajectories of emerging scholars.

Narrative CVs Study: This study will initially be a pilot conducted in collaboration with Heriot-Watt University's narrative CV workshops. The pilot study will target: 1) individuals who have participated in narrative CV training workshops since June 2023, aiming to gather insights into researchers' and innovators' experiences with writing and reviewing narrative CVs through surveys and optional follow-up interviews; 2) participants of the upcoming narrative CV workshop in February 2025, aiming to collect their feedback on the effectiveness of the workshops via video diary methods. Once the pilot is complete and preliminary findings are established, the methods, procedures, and analyses may be adjusted to collect data from other universities offering narrative CV training. The goal is to evaluate the role of narrative CVs in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the funding process and to assess how effectively the training supports participants in designing and peer-reviewing narrative CVs

The Organisation of Work

As part of our study looking into Covid-19's impact on the UK's research and innovation career, EDICa has announced a call for interview participants to discuss how to make the workplace more enabling and accessible. Click here to learn more:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/CovidStudy>

EDICa is also kicking off its process to co-design virtual reality demonstrations of what an enabling workplace looks like in the UK's research & innovation sector. **We want to hear from people who have been affected adversely by badly designed workspaces, and also from people who feel they would benefit from VR training on enabling workspaces.** For more information and to register, click here: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/VR-Workshops>

EDICa continued with more visits to places where research happens in the UK. On 31st October, one group visited the National Museums of Scotland's Collections Centre, this time viewing the buildings housing the science and technology collections. There were parts of computers which had once occupied entire rooms, a 1950s ray gun looking like a prop from a James Bond film, pieces of pig iron used in developing ironworks, a flare from a recently decommissioned North Sea oil platform, Victorian lighthouse lamps containing glassware no factory can make anymore, and rows upon rows of bicycles from across the decades. At the same time, Dr Will Strong and Tim Pallot from EDICa's partner, Autonomy, visited the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) campus. This campus of buildings contains a number of research spaces, including the Central Laser Facility, the ISIS Neutron and Muon Source, the Diamond Light Source, and the RAL Space (which has been involved in more than 210 spacecraft).

EDICa researchers are gathering data - including photos, sound recordings, and experiences - which will inform our research and virtual reality scenes for enabling workplaces.

Click on the photos to view in larger format in a slideshow



1 - The first computer built in Scotland, intended to train computer science students at the University of Glasgow.

2 - Sturdy racking contains thousands of items not in the main museums' displays.



3 - Was this a curator's own personal stash of games or part of the museum's collection? Sometimes it can be hard to tell. Curator tools must be marked as such so they don't accidentally become part of the exhibit.

4 - The collection of more than 100 typewriters were being catalogued, photographed, and placed into proper storage.



5 - Model of asbestos fire retardant clothing. Found in a cardboard box on a cupboard, it was then handled by experts and put in a sealed box to be placed on display.



6 - RAL laboratory

7 - Laboratory space



8 - ISIS Neutron and Muon Source Centre

EDICa Seminars

Upcoming Seminar: Covid-19's Impact on Research & Innovation Careers- the good, the bad and the ugly

There's no doubt that Covid-19 impacted peoples' careers in research & innovation, but what kind of impact did it have on inequalities in the sector? EDICa conducted a comprehensive UK-wide survey in autumn of 2023, receiving 600 responses from across the sector. Some people's careers were boosted during this time, or they finally had the disability adjustments they'd been asking for. Some people dropped out of their discipline, unable to return back into the competitive research track. And unfortunately, our survey results also showed that some people were victims of harassment and bullying.

Join us on **20 November on Zoom from 14:00-15:30** to hear what our survey results show and what mitigations the sector should be making.



The discussion will feature Dr Siddhartha Saxena and Dr Jos Collins - both EDICa postdoctoral research associates; and Prof James Richards, workstream lead for the enabling workplaces study. Prof Kate Sang, EDICa PI, will be chairing.

Register here to attend: <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/Covid> Let us know ASAP if you need BSL interpretation.

A recording of the seminar will be published on our YouTube channel.

Seminar Recording: Deaf Researchers' Experience of Working in the Research Sector

On 25 September, EDICa hosted its postponed seminar on Deaf Researchers' Experience. You can watch the recording on our YouTube channel or [website](#). There are two recordings - [one shows the BSL throughout](#), [the other](#) unfortunately doesn't show Prof Jemina Napier's signing while she went through the introductory slides. This is because Zoom is designed to show the speaker, which meant only the interpreter's tile is visible beside the [slides](#).

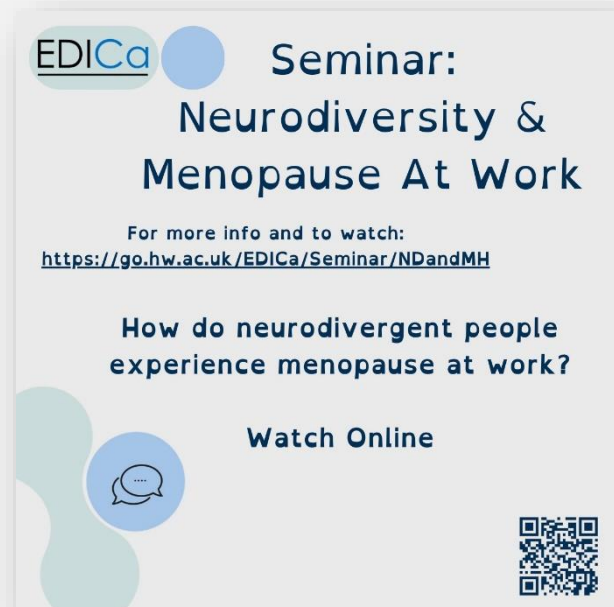
The panel discussion took place in British Sign Language. Prof Jemina Napier, EDICa's Deputy PI and the EDI Lead, chaired, with Dr Emma Ferguson-Coleman, Ixone Sáenz Paraíso, Dr Luigi Lerose and Dr Mette Sommer Lindsay.



Seminar: Menopause and Neurodiversity At Work

On 15 October, in honour of World Menopause Day which was on the 18th, EDICa researchers Dr Chiara Cocco, Prof Kate Sang, and Beth Wedgwood shared the findings of our study on the interplay of neurodiversity on menstrual health - focusing on menopause for this seminar.

Watch the recording, available on our [YouTube Channel](#) and on our website. <https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Seminar/NDandMH>



Spotlight on the field

LGBTQIA+ STEM Day 2024- evening Zoom talk

Join fellow STEM professionals at PRISM Exeter's Speakers Series for LGBTQIA+ STEM Day 2024 at Exeter Library or **on Zoom**

from 6:30pm on Thursday 14th

November. Dr. Orly Razgour will share insights from the world of bat conservation, and Joe Pady will discuss advancements in data storage. Engage with LGBTQ+ individuals and allies through talks, Q&A, and networking. Come along and explore exciting research and connect with a supportive community as we celebrate inclusivity and professional growth in STEM.

Register for tickets here:

<https://bit.ly/prism-nov>

PRISM Exeter Speakers **Thurs 14th Nov (18:30 - 21:00)**
Exeter Library & online

Platforming LGBTQ+ voices from across science, tech, engineering, maths and medicine.

Dr Orly Razgour (they/she)
Associate Professor, University of Exeter
"Using genomics to inform bat conservation under global change"

Joe Pady (he/him)
Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Exeter
"Moore's law and the future of data storage"

Tickets: <https://bit.ly/prism-nov>

Business & IP Centre Devon University of Exeter

Age diversity: "Why older talent should be a consideration for today's inclusive leader"

Dr Daniel Jolles and Dr Grace Lordan of the London School of Economics, wrote a blog touching on age diversity in the workplace: **Why older talent should be a consideration for today's inclusive leader**. They note that EDI strategies are "primarily focused on gender and race, and ignore generational-diversity altogether". The authors go through three persistent myths about older talent. "Myth 1: Younger talent does the job better. ... Myth 2: Older generations should 'step aside'. ... Myth 3: More generations, more tension." Read their myth-busting article here: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2023/02/02/why-older-talent-should-be-a-consideration-for-todays-inclusive-leader/>

You can listen to Dr Jolles in audio form in this podcast ([click here to view and listen](#))

speaking further about **"How can we have better conversations about age?"**

Randomisation in peer review of academic publishing

Adrian Barnett, Professor of Statistics at Queensland University of Technology, published a blog in September titled, "**Randomisation can resolve the uncertainty at the heart of peer review**".

Barnett is looking at peer review in academic publishing, and commenting on the uncertainty which dominates many reviews. "Any decision uncertainty is not captured in a peer reviewer's recommendation, as they must select a single recommendation such as 'Accept' or 'Reject'." Barnett and colleagues conducted a study looking at the certainty reviewers had of their decision, and only 23% of reviewers were certain of their decision. "Researchers' careers are already in the lap of the peer review gods, so why not make that explicit? Randomisation is a statistical bleach that kills unconscious biases, so it would increase fairness." A bold statement. Follow this link to read the full article and comment on it if you want to argue back.

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2024/09/23/randomisation-can-resolve-the-uncertainty-at-the-heart-of-peer-review/>

Seminar on diversifying leadership- 7 Nov 13:00-14:30

The National Centre for Research Culture is hosting their next session in their Conversation Series on **Thursday, 7th November from 13:00-14:30**. Alys Kay from University of Liverpool is presenting on **Diversifying Leadership: A Persona-Based Conversation to Share Inclusive Research Culture**. [Registration Form - NCRC Conversation Series \(warwick.ac.uk\)](#)

"This interactive session will explore how diverse leadership practices can enhance research culture and team dynamics. Using real-world personas developed from the Thrive project's qualitative research, participants will reflect on common leadership challenges in research environments and explore practical strategies for creating more inclusive and collaborative leadership structures.

"The session introduces four personas representing diverse leadership experiences from different roles within research teams, including professional services leads, postdoctoral researchers, research technicians, and principal investigators. Through facilitated discussions, participants will evaluate how closely these personas reflect their own leadership challenges and offer insights into how these challenges can be addressed to foster greater inclusivity."

Targeted interventions

EDICa is sharing examples of targeted interventions for especially under-represented groups, when evidence has shown that other kinds of initiatives have failed to make a difference.

Bristol futures research development fellowship - The submission deadline was on 28 October, so this opportunity is now closed. Bristol offered two fellowship opportunities, each hosted by one of their five schools, aimed at early career researchers of Black or Black Mixed heritage. To be eligible, they stated "you'll need to belong to one of the following ethnicity categories – Black African, Black Caribbean, Any Other Black background, Mixed Heritage– White and Black Caribbean, Mixed Heritage– White and Black African, Other mixed heritage background (to include Black African, Black Caribbean or Black Other)." The position offered flexibility in terms of whether the position was full-time or fewer hours. The funding covered full salary costs and research and travel expenses for 4 years. Fellows would have a fellowship sponsor and access to Bristol's mentorship scheme, "alongside access to a range of leadership and development programmes".

[Click here to learn more](#)

The White Rose Equity in Leadership Programme

The White Rose Consortium is a grouping of three Yorkshire universities: Leeds, York, and Sheffield. "The White Rose Equity in Leadership Programme is a pioneering cross-institutional initiative aimed at fostering diversity in higher education leadership. It offers targeted leadership development for staff from global majority backgrounds, including those in academia and professional services who identify as Black, Asian, or other Minority Ethnicities. The programme adopts an equity-based approach to accelerate career progression for global majority talent, with the ultimate goal of diversifying leadership within higher education."

[Click here to learn more.](#)

Spotlight on accessibility

Supporting scientists who are deaf or hard of hearing

In our seminar, we learned more about the experience of deaf people who use sign language for communication and the challenges they face. This article, published in *Nature Microbiology* by John J Dennehy, touches more on people who are hard of hearing but don't necessarily have sign language skills.

"It is important to recognize that researchers who are deaf or hard of hearing have differing abilities to advocate for themselves. For most of my life, I was reluctant to ask for accommodations, for fear of being a nuisance or to imply that I was incapable. I feared that admitting a handicap would make me less competitive for jobs or funding. Additionally, many people, especially those that suffer hearing loss as they age, will deny they have a hearing loss, even if they can benefit from accommodations. It is helpful to offer accommodations proactively, assuming that those who need it may not be willing, or able, to request it."

Dennehy makes some practical recommendations for everyone to help communicate with deaf or hard of hearing people: maintain eye contact and face the audience, keep camera on to facilitate lip-reading and facial cues when speaking in online meetings, rephrase rather than repeat misunderstood sentences, and focus on clarity rather than volume, including potentially moving to a quiet place to speak. Read the full article [here](#).

Dennehy, J.J. Supporting scientists who are deaf or hard of hearing. *Nat Microbiol* 7, 1103 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41564-022-01156-2>

Get Involved

Sign up to receive our newsletter, calls for participation and Flexible Fund:

<https://go.hw.ac.uk/EDICa/Subscription>

Follow us on Twitter [@EDI_Caucus](#), [LinkedIn](#), [BlueSky](#) [TikTok](#), and on [Instagram](#).

To unsubscribe from our newsletter, please email EDICaucus@hw.ac.uk

EDI Caucus, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

The logo for EDI Caucus, featuring the letters 'EDI' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by 'Ca' in a blue, sans-serif font. A thick black horizontal line is positioned below the text.

Funders of the EDI Caucus

