



2023 S-STEM SCHOLARS MEETING

Washington, D.C.

September 14-16



Tips for Authentic and Inclusive Engagement

It can be intimidating to go out of your comfort zone and start a conversation with someone new. We hope that the Scholars Meeting will be an opportunity for you to create lasting connections with students from other S-STEM programs, across the U.S. Here are some tips to help you navigate engaging with people outside of your program in an inclusive way. If you have questions or encounter any issues during the meeting, please don't hesitate to reach out to AAAS staff by [email](#) or through the [Whova app](#).

Please refer to [AAAS Code of Conduct](#) for additional guidance for professional behavior and conduct.

- Don't be afraid to say hi! This is true for everyone you meet at the Scholars meeting. Many attendees have never been to a conference before or traveled to another city; you probably have a lot of things in common.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive space for all. Include your pronouns when introducing yourself, if you feel comfortable doing so, and allow others to self-identify.
- When attending meeting events or going off-site for lunch, invite new connections to join you, especially if you notice someone attending on their own.
- Use the Whova app to connect! Many scholars are sharing their interests and coordinating meet ups, don't be afraid to join in.
- Build and maintain trust and confidentiality. Share stories and disclose information to your comfort level and encourage others to do the same.
- Actively acknowledge your biases and privilege that may be reflected in how you engage with others, and strive to address them, as necessary.
- Be respectful of others' comfort level regarding COVID-19 and interacting with large groups. View [AAAS Health and Safety Guidelines](#) for additional information.
- Be mindful when engaging in conversations. Always speak directly to other attendees, not their companion or interpreter, and ensure you have their attention before you begin or leave. When possible, seek to place yourself at eye level with others for the duration of your interaction.

- Be considerate of physical contact with other attendees. Seek consent before touching someone or entering their personal space, this includes equipment used by people with disabilities.
- Try to remain open and flexible if someone asks you to change how you are communicating with them. Strive to be as clear as possible and rephrase your sentences as needed, and don't hesitate to ask for clarification.
- If someone has a service animal, please do **not** pet or distract that animal unless you have been given permission.
- If someone needs help, it is appropriate to offer your help, but please respect if someone says that they don't need it. Be sure to ask first how you can help.
- Give grace to yourself and others. Terminology and good practices are always evolving, but you can usually defer to people-first language and an individual's personal preferences. If you feel you need to apologize, move on quickly and avoid making it about yourself.

References and Additional Resources

oSTEM, [Pronouns and Why They Matter](#)

University of Pittsburgh Office for EDI, [Disability Etiquette Guide](#)