

## 15 TIPS TO CREATE A RADICALLY ACCESSIBLE SPACE

You should start considering access early on in planning your event or in creating your space. Access should not be an after-thought, but an important aspect throughout your planning process.

1. **Make your content and events visually and audibly accessible.** A) Add image descriptions or alt-text on image postings online to provide access to blind and low-vision users, and for screen readers. B) Ensure your videos have captions or subtitles C) provide CART captioning or interpreters (especially for large events). If interpreters or CART captioning is requested, make sure you know (well) ahead of time who to contact! D) If you have images in your presentation, audibly describe them. E) Use the microphone! If you are speaking to a large group of people or are in a space with poor acoustics, use a microphone so that participants can easily hear and participate.
2. **Visit any resources you are recommending.** Are they located in accessible places? Is it easily accessible to get to the space? What will the student/patron/participant experience when they visit these spaces?
3. **Create an access statement for your space.** Example: Please exist in this space in ways that are most comfortable for you. You can stand up, sit down, lay down, stretch, walk around, leave the room, stim, use your electronics as needed. Understand that everyone exists in spaces in different ways, and how someone can best engage and listen might look different than how you do. Bathrooms & drinking fountains are located [insert location & information on gendered/non-gendered bathrooms]. Access copies of the PowerPoint are [insert location]. If you need a quiet space, [describe location]. We will have a set break during this workshop, but can take additional breaks if needed. Anything to add?
4. **Ensure all events are held in accessible spaces** e.g. ensure there are ramps and working elevators (if needed to enter), push buttons to open doors, that there is a variety of seating options and space for wheelchairs, that there is enough space for people using wheelchairs or mobility aids to safely navigate the room, that all tables are at accessible heights, that the space is a low-scent or scent-free space (see #7), that the venue has easily accessible parking options, and there is signage to easily direct people to your event space.
5. **Include the access information for the event on flyers and your event page.** Example: our event will be held in a physically accessible and low-scent space,

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for any additional access needs, accommodations, or further questions, please contact us at [insert email address].

6. **Use and be mindful of DESCRIPTIVE content warnings and have open conversations about the importance of content warnings.** If you are providing a content warning, also provide enough time for participants to decide if they wish to stay in the space and provide instructions on when they should come back if they wish to.
7. **Have low-scent or scent-free events, and if scents are integral to the event list that on the flyer or page.** Fragrance and scented products are an access issue for folks with MCS (multiple chemical sensitivity), allergies, asthma, and migraines. Being exposed to fragrance can cause dizziness, nausea, difficulty breathing, fatigue, migraines, headaches, watery eyes, rashes, sinusitis, memory loss, confusion, muscle and joint aches, coughing and wheezing. Fragrances include: scented lotions, hair products, colognes, perfumes, detergents, soaps, cleaning products, scented sunscreens, scented antiperspirants/deodorants, essential oils etc.
8. **Avoid using any strobing lights or videos that may trigger seizures.** This includes flashing images, text, lights on screen/irl, and quick moving gifs.
9. **Provide Access Copies.** Have large print physical copies of your slideshows, speeches or papers on hand & make your workshop/ classroom information readily available online to share with people outside of institutions/academia as well.
10. **Use font and text that are accessible to read.** On powerpoints use at least 18 point font, for physical handouts make sure you have a few large-print copies with 16+ point font. Sans serif fonts are generally accessible for people with dyslexia to read e.g. Arial **Comic Sans Verdana Tahoma Century Gothic Trebuchet Calibri**. If you are using hashtags make sure you capitalize each word within the hashtag e.g. #DisabilityCulturalCenter rather than #disabilityculturalcenter. This is easier for people using screen readers to read, and overall it is visually easier to read.
11. **Breaks, Pace & Repetition.** Incorporate breaks into your events e.g. if it is an hour long events provide a 10+ minute break. Make sure you are not speaking too quickly, and provide directions for folks to interject to let you know if you need to slow down or repeat any information.
12. **Food and water access are necessary for events.** Provide water, or information on the closest drinking fountain, at your events. If your event is over

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an hour in length, or is during a mealtime (breakfast, lunch, dinner) you should provide snacks or food. Be aware of common food allergies and intolerances, and make sure to clearly label the ingredients on food you are providing—everyone should be able to eat and drink (safely) at your event if they choose to.

13. **Make sure all activities are accessible for participants.** Be mindful of activities that involve physical touching, eye-contact, or physical movement as these may not be accessible to all attendees. If you do plan an activity that is not accessible for everyone, plan an alternative activity, an alternate way to participate beforehand, or provide the option for anyone to sit out. You want your event to be an identical, or similar experience for participants. Additionally, do not single out the disabled person, provide these options to all participants.
14. **Hold each other accountable and call people in/out for ableist language.** If someone in your classroom or event is using ableist language you should either talk to them one-on-one or have a larger discussion about it, depending on the situation.
15. **Creating accessible events shouldn't be understood as a "burden".** Creating accessible spaces and events is something you get to do, and allows for more individuals to attend and enjoy your event! By viewing access as a burden, a to-do list, or a necessary evil—by extension you are placing these beliefs onto the disabled people that may be attending your event.

**(Bonus)! If someone lets you know that an aspect of your event was not accessible, you should thank them, hold space for them discuss their feelings, and then work to create a more accessible space/event/experience moving forward.**