



ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

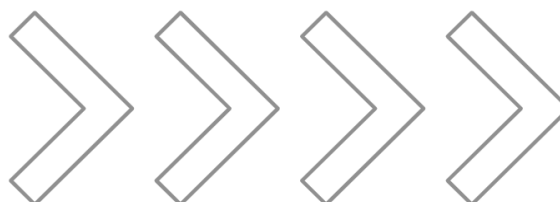


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What does ACCESSIBILITY mean to your organization?

»» **What does it mean to be accessible?**

Accessibility is often thought of in terms of physical access; however, there are many additional considerations to explore when working on increasing accessibility within your organization and your events.

Physical accessibility is a great place to start - as discussed in Andrew Gurza's talk for ConneQT (see Resource Portal), physically disabled individuals are often excluded from 2SLGBTQ+ spaces and events. To begin creating a more inclusive and accessible organization, start by taking stock of your existing structures and considering your target audience. What does accessibility look like within your organization at present - and what could it look like in the future?

While the Guide is divided into several sections, you may notice that a lot of the ideas and recommendations found in one section may be applicable elsewhere. To condense the Guide, many of these strategies and ideas may not be repeated in other sections but could definitely increase accessibility for additional individuals and groups. This Guide is meant to be read in its entirety. It is important to reflect on the pervasive nature of ableism and the interconnected nature of accessibility in working to create the most accessible and inclusive programming and events possible!

»» **Existing Structures**

There is a long history of 2SLGBTQ+ organizations creating inaccessible programming and events that cater to non-disabled individuals, leading to exclusion and erasure. A great first step towards addressing ableism in your organization is doing an audit of your past events and current policies and practices.

Does your organization have an accessibility policy or a checklist for planning events? Does the structure of your organization allow for disabled board/committee members and volunteers to participate fully? Are there disabled 2SLGBTQ+ individuals on your board and in positions of power?

»» **Communication**

Communication is key to creating more accessible organizations, programming, and events. Consider what information is available on your website and/or social media. Consider what accessibility information is included in advertising (event writeups, registration forms, ticket links, etc.).

Key Questions:

1. How can individuals contact your organization? Are there different methods of contact available? Ensure you have both written (email) and phone options.
2. Do prospective attendees have a way to communicate their accessibility needs for specific events to the organizers in advance? Are they *invited* to share this? Are they required to do all the labour of communicating their needs or do you include a list of potential accommodations (in addition to space to add additional information or requests)?
3. Do you include information regarding accessibility along with a contact method in your advertising, and a space to share accessibility needs on registration forms/ticket purchase links?
4. Is all necessary information communicated in written form (as opposed to relying on an image or graphic to relay key information)?

»» **Target Audience**

Consider your organization's mandate and mission. Who do you serve? What intersections can you identify when you think about your target audience and local community? Consider the following individuals, each may require unique accessibility considerations:

- Disabled community members
- Deaf and hard of hearing community members
- Blind community members
- Chronically ill community members
- Autistic and neurodivergent community members
- Epileptic community members
- Community members with service animals
- Community members with severe allergies
- Community members living in assisted living facilities or shelters
- Underwaged community members
- Youth

- Youth in care
- Parents/guardians
- Older Adults
- Community members with active addictions
- Community members in recovery / living sober
- Community members with religious trauma
- Community members without personal vehicles or reliable transportation
- Community members for whom English is a second or additional language

»» **A Note About Language**

This guide primarily uses identity-first language, in response to the excellent work of activists including [Cara Liebowitz](#), [Jevon Okundaye](#), and others, as well as the [Autistic Self-Advocacy Network](#). There is some flexibility throughout in due to the nature of evolving terminology, the lack of singular identity terms, and the continued debate surrounding identity-first and person-first language (in which individual and community preferences vary). It is important to note the variation of language customs and community preferences across geographic locations worldwide and across languages. This Guide is inherently Anglocentric and is informed by predominantly Western conversations about disability and language. Listen to disabled individuals and recognize them as experts on their own lives and experiences, respect self-advocacy, and acknowledge that individuals may have differing preferences.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Physical accessibility is an incredibly important consideration for any organization. Disabled 2SLGBTQ+ community members deserve to engage fully in queer and trans community spaces and events, without unnecessary barriers. Consider the following:

1. Are the spaces we use physically accessible? Are there ramps and elevators?
2. If an event includes engaging in a physical activity, are there accessible options or alternatives for the activity? *Example:* Some pools have the equipment and/or design to allow wheelchair users to enter the pool safely. If one local pool is accessible and the other is not – consider hosting your swimming event at the accessible space.
3. Are there procedures in place for disabled individuals who may have a Personal Assistant with them? (See Financial Accessibility, page 16.)

»» **Tips for Physically Accessible Event Planning**

1. **Spaces:** Prioritize spaces that are physically accessible. This includes having:
 - a. Ramps (if necessary) for entry
 - b. Elevators (if the event is not on the ground floor)
 - c. Physically accessible restrooms
 - d. Designated accessible parking
2. **Seating:**
 - a. Always ensure you always have accessible seating available.
 - b. Consider whether spaces or events with seating have appropriate spaces for wheelchair and powerchair users. Avoid venues with fixed seating.
 - c. Consider the weight rating and design of your seating options. Many low-cost seating options have a very low weight rating and can be uncomfortable and unsafe for disabled and/or Fat community members. Seating options without backs can also be inaccessible for some individuals.
3. **Tables:** Ensure that any items or activities that require tables are placed so that wheelchair and powerchair users can reach the items. When possible, have an attendant available at the table to help serve food or distribute items. If you're planning an event with high-top tables (such as a mixer), ensure you have some lower tables available as well.
4. **Transportation:** Plan and advertise your events with lots of advance notice. In locations that have accessible ride/bus services, they are often in high demand

and have insufficient service. If an individual needs to book accessible transportation, they will require ample time to book this in advance of the event.

4. **Parking:** Ensure your venue has accessible parking options. If they don't exist, ask the venue if you can DIY them! Determine where attendees can park their mobility scooter if they drive it to the event but do not require it for the entirety of the event. If you're working with an external space - ask whether mobility scooters can be parking inside to avoid damage or theft.
5. **Room Prep/Décor:** Remove unnecessary obstacles and tape down any cords that could be hazardous to individuals using mobility aids or white canes. Have a photo booth background or interactive display planned? Ensure it extends low enough for seated individuals to engage too!
6. **Outdoor events:**
 - a. *Seating:* For outdoor events, avoid the assumption that everyone can sit safely and comfortably on the ground (picnic or beach style). Further, when choosing seating options, while folding camp chairs and picnic tables are common, they can be inaccessible. If you're working with your local city to book picnic tables - ask about accessible options. Camp chairs can be uncomfortable and unsafe for fat individuals and folx with physical disabilities. Consider adding folding bench seating or other seating options.
 - b. *Washroom Facilities:* Consider what washroom facilities are available nearby. Are there accessible washrooms? If you're ordering port-a-potties for your event, ensure you include at least one accessible port-a-potty.
 - c. *Walking/Rolling Surfaces:* If you're hosting an outdoor event, consider how participants will get to the location. Is it accessible using public transportation? Car? Walking or rolling? For events in green spaces, it is important to note the ground type and make this known to your participants in advance - a paved path is more accessible to individuals using mobility aids than a trek through grass or gravel. Example: A queer picnic in the park may require travel from a vehicle to the picnic site - let attendees know if the path to the site is grass, dirt, gravel, or pavement so they can plan to arrive safely. If your event is taking place during Winter months, consider if the route is regularly shoveled and if salt/sand will be put down.
 - d. *Shade:* While this consideration is not necessarily connected to physical accessibility alone, it is important to consider! For outdoor events in the Summer months, shade is necessary for participant health and safety. Consider choosing locations that have natural shade and providing additional shade tents or umbrellas, based on the activity.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ACCESSIBILITY

»» Why it Matters + What it Looks Like

In working to develop greater accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) individuals in 2SLGBTQ+ spaces, I have been told by other organizers that there are no local 2SLGBTQ+ DHH participants to benefit from the proposed accessibility measures. This assumption is both untrue and harmful. DHH accessibility is often overlooked because DHH individuals aren't known to organizers as they have not participated in past, inaccessible events. Never assume that there aren't DHH individuals eager to participate in your programming and events.

The main way to increase accessibility for DHH community members is to hire ASL interpreters. In New Brunswick, there is one association that handles bookings across the province: [New Brunswick Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Inc.](#)

As of 2023, the average hourly rate for one interpreter is 85.00, and all events over 45 minutes require 2 interpreters. Therefore, you will want to budget at least \$170/hr for most events. If there are no interpreters available in your area, you can choose to bring an interpreter from another part of the province, based on availability. Travel costs include \$85.00/hr for travel time as well as mileage.

»» Working with ASL Interpreters

There are some amazing ASL Interpreters working in New Brunswick. Make sure to book them with lots of notice, thank them as you would thank other speakers and performers at events, and ensure they have a designated space at the same level as the performance or speaking event. Example: If the main attraction at your event takes place on a stage, arrange for the Interpreters to be on that stage, so that DHH attendees can engage with the entire event.

Here are some tips for working with ASL Interpreters:

1. **Text Copies:** When possible, provide copies of speaking notes, speeches, or scripts in advance. If the event includes music, provide song titles and an anticipated schedule so interpreters can familiarize themselves with the songs ahead of time - lyrics are often hard to make out in the moment!

2. **Provide Names/Pronouns:** When possible, provide your interpreters with the names and pronouns of any speakers or performers in advance so they can use the individual's correct pronouns and name spelling.
3. **Prep Your Performers:** Let your speakers and performers know that ASL interpreters will be on stage with them. This will avoid situations where a performer or their handler tells your interpreter to leave the stage without understanding their important role. Further, if performers are doing dance or theatre routines, they'll know to block that section of the stage off.
4. **Prep Your Speakers:** Let speakers know that there will be ASL interpretation. Remind them to speak slowly and clearly and to pause (naturally) whenever possible, so the interpreters can keep up.
5. **Provide Water:** Have water readily accessible near your interpreters.
6. **Provide a Seat:** For most events, you will have 2 interpreters. They will switch on/off regularly so each gets a well-deserved break. Have a seat nearby for the interpreter who is not actively interpreting. This helps ensure they have a designated space to rest and are not visually interfering with the active interpretation.
7. **Online Events:** For online events using Webinar mode on Zoom, ensure your event is set to Gallery View. This will ensure the active Interpreters always remain visible and do not switch position (visually) with the active speaker. When you're running online events with ASL, consider putting some information in the chat so that individuals accessing the event on the mobile Zoom app know there is an interpreter, and they need to swipe to access Gallery View.
8. **Events Running Late:** If your event is running longer than expected, check in with your interpreters. They may have somewhere else to be and they are often not checking the time while actively interpreting. Further, interpretation is hard work and they may need a break.

»» **Tips for DHH Accessible Event Planning**

1. **ASL:** Book ASL interpretation for all main speaking and performance events. If your budget is limited, consider offering ASL by request - make this clear in your advertising and ensure your advertising is out well in advance so individuals have time to request interpretation and you have time to book it! Consider building ASL into any grant applications or funding applications you submit.
2. **Reserved Space/Seating:** Always ensure you have seating available for DHH attendees that ensures a clear and direct view of the ASL Interpreter.

3. **Subtitles:** If you're planning to show a film or other media, consider choosing a title that has subtitles. Be sure to view the subtitles in advance - some styles of subtitles are extremely difficult to read and do little to increase accessibility.
4. **Online Events - Captioning:** In addition to ASL interpretation, consider adding live closed captions to your online events. You can arrange for live captions to be provided by paid, third party companies. If this is not possible, consider assigning volunteers to switch on/off and provide live transcription through the manual captions option. Zoom has recently introduced an automatic closed caption option. While it is not as good as live captions, ensure the host account for the event has enabled closed captions for all meetings and webinars. Provide a note in the chat to let DHH participants know closed captions are enabled and provide directions as to how to turn them on.
5. **Avoid Music/Unnecessary Noise:** Background music can interfere with hearing aids - avoid playing background music during events that require focus or conversation, such as a social or a workshop. Also be aware of avoiding other unnecessary noise during such events, which can cause painful interference.
6. **Amplified Sound:** For in person events, use amplified sound when possible for Hard of Hearing attendees (even if your speaker thinks they project well). Instruct speakers about how to use the microphone and adjust the microphone accordingly.
7. **Nametags:** Consider providing nametags (with pronouns) at in-person events. This is helpful for ASL Interpreters and DHH attendees.
8. **Basic ASL:** Consider having your board and public-facing volunteers learn basic ASL signs such as Welcome, Thank You, Yes, No, Water, Emergency, etc.
9. **Written Signage:** Have clear, simple, and plentiful signage around your event. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Signage directing to a specific room in a venue, if applicable.
 - b. Signage that marks specific seating areas for DHH individuals.
 - c. Signage at the door that details any entry fees and/or requirements (masks, etc.)
 - d. Signage that lists options and prices if you're selling merch, snacks, drinks, or other items. Make sure you have a version of this signage close by the cash that an attendee could reference when engaging with staff or volunteers.

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED ACCESSIBILITY

There are a number of ways you can work to increase accessibility for Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI) attendees in your programming and events.

»» **Preparing the Space**

1. Avoid spaces with a ledge/lip or step in the entranceway or between rooms.
2. Ensure there are no physical obstacles or loose cords that could be a hazard.
3. Provide a location description to BVI participants in advance so they may familiarize themselves with the venue, how to get to the appropriate room(s), and where emergency exits are located.
4. If your event includes the provision of sleeping accommodations, offer a guided tour of the room provided to identify essentials and amenities (such as the location and workings of the thermostat). Ask the participant if they have specific requests with regard to their room, such as placement in proximity to the elevator.
5. If there are items to be picked up (schedules, items for activities), a drink station, or a buffet, consider having a volunteer available to describe the choices and/or serve individuals as desired.
6. Prepare clear, high contrast signage in a sans serif font (size 18pt or greater).
7. Have reserved seating available near the speaker and/or performance. Ensure it is clearly marked.
8. Consider offering the participant a designated area with a clean dish of water for service animals.
9. Avoid fog machines and bubble machines at events, as they may cause confusion or potential barriers for service animals, such as guide dogs.

»» **Preparing Materials**

1. When preparing any marketing/advertising information, graphics, and imagery, ensure all information contained in the images and/or posters is also available in the event caption or description online. Prepare Alt Text for all images and graphics.
2. Ensure you have plain text, electronic copies of all handouts and documents that will be used or referenced during the event. Provide these to BVI participants in advance to allow time for review.
3. If there will be handouts or other materials used at the event, prepare additional large-print copies in a sans serif font (minimum 18pt).

4. If you have speakers at your event, advise them to prepare and deliver clear descriptions of any images used or referenced in their presentations. For any visual materials (posters, powerpoints, etc.) at the event not included in a presentation, prepare a clear description and designate someone to read it aloud during the event.
5. If there is a video or visual performance component to the event that does not fall under the above categorization, consider designating an individual that can personally describe visuals during video or performance.
6. Remember that all last-minute materials that have not been provided in advance should be read aloud at the event.

»» **Preparing Volunteers and Speaker/Performers**

1. Begin the event (in the case of a meeting, workshop, or social) with introductions.
2. Ask all speakers to identify themselves before speaking.
3. BVI participants may wish to access a note-taker, reader, or scribe. Have individuals prepared to take on these roles as requested. Ensure their availability is made known to participants.
4. Designate one or more volunteers to provide additional support as needed, such as providing a room tour, acting as a food/beverage buddy to help serve and/or carry an individual's plate, and an evacuation guide in case of emergency.
5. Provide advance notice to speakers so they may prepare descriptions for any visual content.

»» **Blind Accessibility Online**

1. Begin with introductions (either all participants or the speakers, depending on context).
2. Ensure all speakers identify themselves before they begin speaking.
3. Ensure all speakers include descriptions for visual content and relevant written content is provided to attendees in advance (see Preparing Materials above).
4. Have a designated individual ready to read all chat text or Q&A text aloud.
5. Make a clear announcement at the beginning of the event as to how participants can convey if they want to engage verbally - avoid relying (solely) on emoticons to signal a desire to speak. Have a designated individual with host controls watching for the agreed upon signal from BVI attendees. Unmute and mute the participant accordingly in case they do not have knowledge of the keyboard shortcuts.

NEURODIVERSE ACCESSIBILITY

The term neurodivergent is an incredibly broad identifier that seeks to include a wide range of individuals and communities. While it is beyond the scope of this Guide to categorize or cover all of the possible, wide-ranging accessibility considerations for folks who are neurodivergent, there are a variety of helpful (and often intersectional) actions you can take to create safer, more affirming and accessible 2SLGBTQ+ events and spaces. Be sure to offer a variety of low-sensory events in addition to low-sensory spaces at high stimulation events.

»» Preparing for In-Person Events

1. Ensure you have a separate, low sensory space available.
2. Use natural and non-florescent lighting where possible.
3. Avoid strobe lights and flashing lights. Advise in advance of flash photography.
4. Provide seating (even at dances and parties).
5. Have clear signage throughout the space.
6. Avoid whistles, sirens, sudden noises, and other noisemakers.
7. Provide clear signage in any areas that interaction is required, to facilitate non-verbal interaction (such as a list of food/item options available).
8. If food and beverages are offered at the event, consider providing the menu in advance and providing a variety of options (including varied textures).
9. Communicate details about the space in advance. Consider creating a Sensory Guide (example: [Smithsonian Folklife Festival Sensory Guide PDF](#)).

»» Creating a Low Sensory Space

1. Ensure the space is removed from the main event, is relatively quiet, and has a door to separate it from outside noise.
2. Clearly mark the space and note that unnecessary interruptions are discouraged.
3. Consider having a quiet, active listener in the space that is ready to engage when prompted.
4. Avoid all florescent lighting and supplement with adjustable, less harsh lighting options.
5. Encourage a scent-free environment and avoid scented products.
6. Avoid having background music or televisions in the space.
7. Have a window (with curtains) if possible.
8. Use tennis balls or chair pads on the bottom of chair legs if the movement of chairs causes noise.

9. Advise staff and/or volunteers to give a verbal warning and waiting period before turning on lights or making changes to the room for any reason.
10. Opt for quiet snacks.
11. Stock the room with a variety of sensory items (see below).
12. Have air conditioning in summer months.

»» **Items to Have Available**

1. Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, paper towel
2. Cold water and snacks
3. Varied seating (including floor cushions/bean bags if possible)
4. Noise cancelling ear plugs and/or headphones
5. Sensory tools /Stim toys: Pop toys, stress balls, fidget toys of different textures, stretchy items, putty/slime, etc.
6. Alternative lighting: Bubble tubes, lava lamps, adjustable non-florescent lamps
7. Sensory regulating items: soft blankets, weighted blankets, items of varied textures (water beads, air clay, texture strips, etc.), heating pads and cooling items, etc.
8. Sensory-friendly activities: Colouring books with varied colouring tools, paper and writing instruments, simple building toys, puzzles, knitting/crochet supplies, clay, etc.

»» **Preparing the Online Space**

1. Provide captions (see Deaf and Hard of Hearing Accessibility, page 9).
2. Consider recording the event (with consent) and making it available online after the event has ended. Communicate this plan accordingly.
3. Provide a verbal and visual overview/roadmap of the event and the order of speakers and/or activities at the beginning of the event.
4. Consider encouraging spectator attendees to turn their cameras off if they are not actively speaking or presenting to avoid unnecessary distraction. Alternatively, announce that attendees are welcome to leave their camera off.
5. Avoid requiring video or audio engagement and avoid callouts (putting an attendee on the spot to respond or engage).
6. Ensure attendees have an option to communicate non-verbally through chat or other means.
7. Build in breaks – and stick to them even if some attendees or speakers note they don't need a break.
8. Ask speakers to avoid visual presentations with an excess of written content and encourage them to speak slowly and pause between thoughts.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR CHRONICALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS

Chronic illness and disability are often entwined. In using the term chronic illness in this section of the Guide, it is not to impose a distinction or separation between health conditions and disability. There are numerous considerations when creating safer, more accessible spaces and events for chronically ill 2SLGBTQ+ individuals.

»» COVID-19 + Collective Community Safety

1. Acknowledge that the pandemic is not over and that failing to implement precautions to prioritize community safety and protect chronically ill community members puts lives at risk. Clearly advertise all COVID-19 plans and precautions well in advance of your event.
2. Provide lots of hand sanitizer and disinfect all surfaces / supplies between uses.
3. Hold outdoor events (encourage masking – provide N95 and KN95 masks).
4. Require masks for indoor events (provide N95 and KN95 masks).
5. Use medical-grade H13 HEPA purifiers at all indoor events. If you do not have the funds to access HEPA purifiers, consider DIY [Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes](#).
6. For events with food and beverages:
 - a. Avoid potlucks and provide ample serving utensils for buffets.
 - b. Opt for single serving snacks and drinks.
 - c. Provide eco-friendly straws for minimal mask removal during events.
 - d. Provide compostable take-away containers and a separate space for individuals who are not comfortable eating with an unmasked group.

»» Virtual Options + Recording

Offer virtual and online engagement options for individuals who cannot safely or comfortably attend in person events. Offer a selection of programming over Zoom and livestream key events using Zoom, Facebook Live, Crowdcast, Twitch or other options. Make sure to record events for individuals who cannot participate in the live event or may not have the capacity to attend a full live event.

»» Allergies + Dietary Restrictions

1. Create scent-free spaces and events.
 - a. Clearly advertise expectations when planning a scent-free event.

- b. Curate the space accordingly - remove any air fresheners, candles, and flowers, choose unscented cleaning products and hand sanitizers, and offer scent-free soap in the washrooms.
2. Provide menus including ingredients lists and allergen lists in advance.
3. Ensure you provide safe alternatives for individuals with allergies and dietary restrictions.
4. To create more accessible spaces for individuals with chemical sensitivities and electrical sensitivities, check out the guidelines provided by [Seriously Sensitive to Pollution](#).

FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY

Financial accessibility is a necessary consideration when planning accessible and inclusive community events. Consider not only the cost of your program or event, but the additional costs that may be required of prospective attendees, such as transportation, parking, child-care, personal assistant wages, and items for sale at your event.

»» Questions to Ask

1. Does your organization (org) offer a variety of free and/or Pay What You Will (PWYW) programming or events
2. Are the free and/or PWYW events varied in terms of target audience/age?
3. Does your org have the capacity to offer or facilitate ridesharing for those without transportation?
4. Does your org have a policy or procedure in place for individuals with Personal Assistants/Attendants?
5. Are participants/attendees required to use mobile devices to participate fully? Do you have alternatives or devices to lend those without devices?

»» Tips for Creating Financially Accessible Events

1. Make sure pricing is clearly communicated in all event promotion.
2. Use the term "Pay What You *Will*" in lieu of "Pay What You *Can*"
3. If an event is by donation, provide a "suggested" donation amount for individuals who may not know what is expected or may feel pressured to donate beyond their means.
4. Consider implementing Sliding Scale pricing for ticketed events - or setting aside a number of free tickets available to those who express need (build this option into registration/purchase in a non-stigmatizing way).
5. Offer the option to specify upon registering for an event or purchasing a ticket that the attendee requires an additional ticket for their personal Assistant or Attendant. Do not charge extra for individuals that require this.
6. When possible, schedule events in line with public transportation schedules.
7. Consider offering public transportation tickets (where applicable) to attendees.
8. Consider offering childcare onsite for longer events.
9. If you have limited funding but hope to offer free or discounted tickets for an event, consider adding the option to sponsor an additional ticket or donate when checking out (for those with the financial means to do so).
10. Avoid *requiring* costumes for themed events to avoid financial pressure.

ACCESSIBILITY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

What does accessibility look like across the lifespan in 2SLGBTQ+ communities and spaces? What does this look like in your organization? Ageism is pervasive within 2SLGBTQ+ spaces and events. If your organization is not age-specific (such as a youth or seniors organization) consider the following ways to combat ageism and increase accessibility for all ages.

»» **Tips for Creating Accessible Events for Youth**

1. Ask youth what activities they would be interested in!
2. Choose event times that will be convenient for both youth and their parents/guardians.
3. Design events and programming specifically for youth. Consider separate events for children and teens to increase engagement among attendees.
4. Ensure you have an ample number of outgoing volunteers to help make youth feel comfortable and facilitate collective activities.
5. Consider requesting volunteers working with youth to submit a Vulnerable Sector Check – discuss with your board to determine the best decision for your organization (recognizing that Vulnerable Sector Checks require engaging with the institution of policing and sole reliance on these checks overlooks the flawed and oppressive nature of the criminal justice system).
6. Ensure no volunteers, board members, and/or staff are ever alone and one on one with children or youth.

»» **Tips for Creating Accessible Events for Seniors**

1. Consider weekend, late afternoon, and early evening events. While some seniors are ready to party all night, numerous seniors involved in ElderPride have expressed that many large events start too late for them.
2. Ask participants about the temperature in the venue and adjust accordingly. Consider providing hot and cold drinks to increase comfort.
3. Consider a minimum age limit (18+, 40+, etc). Many “all ages” events are geared towards youth and don’t appeal to seniors (and can be loud).
4. Consider offering ridesharing.
5. Consider running sober events for older adults.
6. Provide clear information regarding accessibility, how to find and enter the venue, and what the event will consist of.

TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

To increase accessibility, it is important to consider the role of trauma-informed care in all aspects of an organization's work. Below, you'll find some key tips for weaving trauma-informed care into your organization's programming and events.

»» **Key Considerations**

1. Provide opportunities for your board, volunteers, and/or staff to access training and education about trauma-informed care. Endeavour to operate your organization through a trauma-informed lens.
2. Prepare *Sensitive Content Warnings* for any sensitive or potentially triggering content and ensure they are clearly communicated. If the event is taking place in person, consider providing the warning well in advance (on the schedule, if possible) so individuals can plan to leave the room in a less obvious manner.
3. If there will be recording, photography, or media presence at the event, communicate this clearly in advance, and upon entry. Consider offering options for individuals who do not wish to be photographed, filmed, or approached (such as a separate space or a clear visual indicator for those comfortable).
4. Avoid sudden noises, sirens (such as bullhorn sirens), whistles, and fireworks.
5. Provide clear expectations to speakers, performers, volunteers, and attendees to refrain from uninvited physical touch.
6. Provide optional pronoun pins and ensure speakers, performers, and volunteers have received education regarding gender neutral pronouns and language. If you are holding an event with external staff, such as servers, provide resources in advance and communicate the expectation that gendered terms and honorifics will not be used.
7. Provide reserved seating near exits.

»» **Tips for Speaking Events / Workshops / Presentations**

1. Request speakers to alert the organizers of potential triggers or sensitive material well in advance.
2. Prepare Sensitive Content Warnings for any sensitive or potentially triggering content and ensure they are clearly communicated. If the event is taking place in person, consider providing the warning well in advance (on the schedule, if possible) so individuals can plan to leave the room in a less obvious manner.
3. Have a trained, trauma-informed counsellor and/or active listener onsite and make their location known to attendees. For online events, have a separate

meeting link and space available during the event. If this is not possible, consider transitioning to a facilitated decompression space following the official end of the event - always ensure you stop recording before making this transition.

4. Consider providing a list of resources at the end of the event that are relevant to any sensitive and/or triggering content discussed.
5. Ensure you have a designated facilitator and/or moderator to manage any unforeseen content or conflicts and to interrupt and redirect from triggering or harmful rhetoric (from audience members, protestors, etc.).
6. For online events, consider using Zoom Webinar or requiring a password for your meeting to discourage Zoom-bombing or other harmful interruptions.

»» **Tips for Large Events**

1. Avoid police presence (security, parade escort) where possible and if this is not possible, request undercover/unmarked vehicles with no lights or sirens and plain clothes officers. Communicate these details with attendees in advance so they know what to expect. If possible, consider private or volunteer security as an alternative to policing.
2. Have a trauma-informed counsellor and medic onsite and make their location known to attendees. Have a clear, trauma-informed plan in place to provide support and/or resources to individuals in crisis.
3. Ensure exits are clearly marked and design your event space so exits are easily accessible if an attendee needs to leave quickly.

SAFETY + HARM REDUCTION

Ensure your volunteers are aware of the Volunteer Emergency Aid Act, which protects New Brunswickers from civil liability: “A person who in good faith voluntarily and without reasonable expectation of compensation or reward provides aid, advice or emergency medical services to the victim of an accident or a medical emergency at the immediate scene of the accident or emergency is not liable for damages that result from the person’s negligence in acting or failing to act, unless it is established that the damages were caused by the gross negligence of the person” (Government of New Brunswick, 2016).

Harm reduction is deeply entwined with trauma-informed care. Below find a few tips for harm reduction at large events.

1. Have a clearly marked Medical Tent at all large events, staffed by trained volunteers or St. John Ambulance volunteers with harm reduction training. St. John Ambulance volunteers can be requested online in exchange for a donation. Submit a request here: <https://www.sja.ca/en/form/event-coverage>
2. At larger events consider having volunteers designated as psychedelic support sitters in case the need arises.
3. Have Naloxone kits on hand in a clearly marked First Aid tent and ensure you have volunteers on site trained with Naloxone and opioid harm reduction. Consider obtaining training for your volunteers on Opioid Harm Reduction through the Red Cross. Free training options range from 30 - 60 minutes and you will receive a free naloxone kit upon completion.
4. Have first aid kits, naloxone, seats in the shade, ice packs, electrolyte replacement drinks, water, and trained volunteers onsite.

Have trained peer support individuals available onsite and consider a post-event decompression space with a trained active listener and/or counsellors available after events as appropriate. Consider providing your volunteers with training in mental health and crisis support. See resources below.

RESOURCES:

Opioid Harm Reduction Training from Canadian Red Cross (Free)

<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/course-descriptions/opioid-harm-reduction>

Psychological First Aid Training from Canadian Red Cross (\$20+/online)

<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/course-descriptions/psychological-first-aid>

Mental Health First Aid (Paid) <https://www.mhfa.ca/>

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (Paid) <https://livingworks.net/>

Suicide Intervention Training (Free) <https://www.crmhaa.ca/workshops-education>

Psychedelic Support and Harm Reduction Guides from Zendo Project
<https://zendoproject.org/education/>

ACCESSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms have become an integral part of any outreach or promotion strategy for organizations. Many organizations have a presence on numerous social media platforms; however, it is important to remember that different platforms have different requirements when it comes to accessibility.

First, it is important to diversify your outreach and promotion strategies to increase accessibility. Don't rely solely on Facebook and Instagram to share information with your communities. We always recommend having a clear website calendar with all event information in addition to social media posts and Facebook events.

Text

- Avoid writing anything in all capitals - words in ALL CAPS are confusing to screen reading programs and make your content unintelligible.
- Place spaces or periods in between the letters in abbreviations - and avoid abbreviations when possible.
- If you're using hashtags, use Pascal Case (capitalizing each word individually), This helps denote where one word stops and another begins. #PascalCase vs #pascalcase

Alt Text

Alt text is a necessary addition to any visual marketing or promotional images. Alt text looks different on different platforms. Familiarize yourself with how to write strong alt text and how to ensure it's included in all of your posts!

Images

In addition to ensuring alt text is available for all images, consider the design of any visual marketing. Avoid including a large amount of information in your image - keep it simple! Ensure all information included in the image is also available in the post text. Make sure any text in the image is clear and legible and the colours used have sufficient contrast (4:5:1 is the minimum - check your contrast here:

<https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/>)

Video

For videos with any audio content, captions are a must! Captions are necessary for deaf and hard of hearing viewers. They are also a great help for folx whose first

language is not English as well as those with disabilities related to information processing.

There are two distinct types of captions - closed and open. Closed captions are often contained within a .srt file which can be downloaded for increased accessibility. Closed captions are preferable in terms of accessibility; however, open captions are better than no captions at all. The following social media platforms have built-in technology to auto-generate captions: Facebook, Instagram (Reels/Stories), TikTok (mobile only), Twitter, and Youtube. Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube allow the option of uploading a .srt file.

Websites

Many of the same considerations for Text, Alt Text, and Images apply to web design and components of a web page. Check out the free Website Accessibility Checker from Accessible Web: <https://accessibleweb.com/website-accessibility-checker/>

Emojis

Emojis are often used to add emphasis and visual flare to posts on social media; however, they can be highly distracting to individuals using screen readers. Emojis (unlike emoticons) contain alt text, which is read by the screen reader every time an emoji is encountered. Consider that every time a screen reader encounters an emoji, the screen reader states the emoji alt text; therefore a simple post headline with emojis on either side, becomes hard to understand. For example, an emoji often found in appreciation and thank you posts: 🙌 reads as "hands-clasped-in-celebration-with-medium-dark-skin-tone."

Tips

- Limit the use of emojis to create more accessible posts. Limit your posts to 2-3 emojis (if you consider them necessary and choose your placement carefully).
- Avoid using emojis as bullet points or punctuated between words or letters
- The best place for an emoji is at the end of a sentence or ideally, the end of a post.
- Avoid using emojis to relay any information - ensure everything you want to communicate is included in your text.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TRAINING

Red Cross Canada Free Courses (Free and Paid options)

<https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/>

Mental Health First Aid (Paid) <https://www.mhfa.ca/>

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (Paid) <https://livingworks.net/>

Suicide Intervention Training (Free) <https://www.crmhaa.ca/workshops-education>

Psychedelic Support and Harm Reduction Guides from Zendo Project

<https://zendoproject.org/education/>

RESOURCES

Harm Reduction Partners Resource List (Interior Health BC) - Great list of web resources

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/information-for/community-partners/harm-reduction>

New Brunswick Coalition of Persons with Disabilities <https://www.nbcpd.org/>

Accessibility Services Canada - New Brunswick

<https://accessibilitycanada.ca/legislation/new-brunswick/>

Naloxone Access:

- Pharmacies Across New Brunswick
- Ensemble (Moncton) <https://ensemblegm.ca/services/>
- AIDS NB (Fredericton + Elsewhere) <https://www.aidsnb.com/>
- Avenue B (Saint John) <https://avenueb.ca/services/>

TOOLS

Accessibility Checker for Websites <https://www.accessibilitychecker.org/>

Contrast Checker for Websites <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Accessibility Checklist for Web Design

<https://www.arcstone.com/blog/non-profit-website-accessibility-checklist>

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Checklist <https://www.a11yproject.com/checklist/>