



My Life, My Health

Welcoming Workshops: Building Inclusivity into Workshops and Trainings

Rachel H. Tanenhaus, MPH
Program Coordinator
Healthy Aging and Disability Unit
Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Agenda

- Who's included?
- Why do I need to know about these things?
- Facilities and physical access
- Logistics
- Recruitment
- Communication
- Environment
- Service animals
- Etiquette
- Making inclusivity part of how you do your job
- Resources
- Questions?

Who's included?

- People with and without disabilities
- Some steps towards accessibility make things easier for everyone
- People with functional impairments, particularly seniors and people with recent changes in functioning, don't always identify as "having a disability"

Who's included?

- You may be new to a person's disability, but they aren't. To them, it's just part of their daily life, and not necessarily a big deal
- A person's chronic condition may or may not be related to their disability

Why do I need to know about these things?

- People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by chronic conditions
- People with disabilities are living longer, and everyone who lives long enough will acquire a disability
- Equal access is the law
- Making sure that everyone who needs these programs can access them helps expand your reach AND it's the right thing to do!

Facilities and physical access

- Conduct a site visit ahead of time
- Use an accessibility checklist
- Can non-drivers, including people with mobility aides, get to the site?
- If you are providing transportation, make accessible options available
- “But it’s only one step!” – the devil is in the details!
- Make sure that emergency evacuation plans take everyone into account
- Look at signage and ease of navigation

Facilities and physical access

Priorities for facility access:

1. Parking, approach, entry
2. Workshop/training space
3. Restrooms
4. Water fountains, pay phones, other features

Logistics

- Plan for a Session 0/pre-session, during which you can meet with your participants as a group sometime before the workshop begins, when offering a Chronic Disease Self Management Program (CDSMP) participant workshop
- Be aware of constraints around paratransit (such as The Ride) – participants with disabilities may not have a say in when they arrive or leave
- Offer assistance with filling out forms, but do not start class late as a result

Logistics

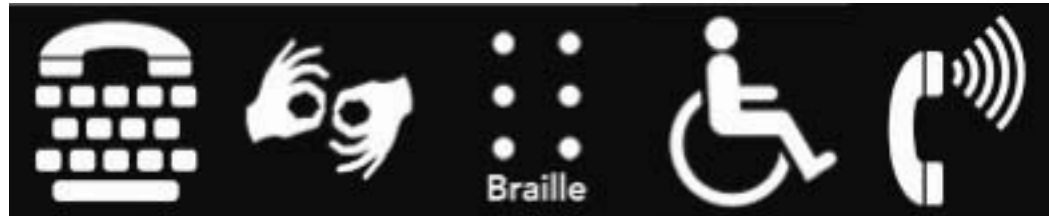
- Avoid early morning events
- Take scheduled breaks
- Give clear directions to rest rooms and water fountains, avoiding pointing or saying “over there”

Recruitment

- Promote workshops to disability-related organizations
- Make flyers and promotional materials available in accessible formats, and include an accessibility statement
- Make sure registration and informational sessions are accessible, and that potential participants have multiple ways to get more information (phone, TTY, e-mail, web, etc.)

Recruitment

"If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or are a person with a disability who requires accommodation, please contact [**Name** of organization or individual responsible for making arrangements] at [**Telephone Number**], [**Fax Number**], [**Email Address**] or [**TTY Number**] by [**Date**]."



Communication

- Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions is available on audio CD from Bull Publishing – have several copies on hand
- Verbalize all agendas, posters and brainstorming sessions
- Leader Manuals and Master Trainer Manuals can be obtained from Stanford in accessible electronic formats

Communication

- Prepare recruitment/registration staff to take TTY and relay calls
- Know where to get interpreters, CART reporters and assistive listening devices
- If interpreters are requested, you will need at least two interpreters for any event over half an hour long

Communication

- Make sure the room has good lighting
- Don't stand in front of interpreters or CART screens
- If someone is using an assisted listening device, speak into the microphone every time, and repeat participant comments into the microphone
- Speak clearly at a normal speed and volume, and try not to block your face

Environment

- If you are providing refreshments, know what the ingredients are
- Avoid wearing perfume, cologne or heavily scented products, and encourage participants to do likewise
- Try to avoid holding workshops in rooms with poor ventilation, especially if the room has been cleaned with harsh chemicals

Environment

- If you will be taking pictures, avoid the use of flash photography – if you must use the flash, warn people first!
- Arrange furniture so that there is plenty of room for a person using a mobility aide to navigate, and leave a few empty spaces at tables to make room for people using wheelchairs or scooters

Service animals

- Make sure that receptionists and other front line staff know that service animals are welcome at the workshop site
- Not all service dogs are the same size or breed, and not all disabilities are visible
- Do not distract, pet, feed, or interact with a service animal

Service animals

- If a participant says they are allergic to animals, offer them the seat furthest from the person with a service animal
- Check for trash cans near possible relief areas outside the facility entrance

Etiquette

- Do not single people out publicly because of their disability
- Do not make assumptions about a person's preferred format or mode of communication – ask them!
- Do not ask personal questions without being invited to do so
- Keep an open mind and have fun!

Making inclusivity part of how you do your job

- Inclusivity is not a special way of doing things – incorporate it into your usual processes
- Communications access shouldn't be a surprise cost – make it part of your budget every time
- Look for tax breaks or corporate sponsorships

Making inclusivity part of how you do your job

Every participant sees themselves as just another person who signed up for the workshop. Every leader trainee sees themselves as just another qualified person who wants to help out and be part of the program. This is true whether or not they have a disability, and they will expect to be treated like everyone else because they are like everyone else!

Resources

- Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: Guidelines to Accommodate All Participants - http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/com_health/healthy_aging/accessible_events.pdf
- Massachusetts Facility Assessment Tool - http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/com_health/health_disability/mfat_intro.pdf
- Checklist for Existing Facilities, version 2.1 – <http://www.ada.gov/racheck.pdf>
- Tax Incentives for Businesses - <http://www.ada.gov/taxincent.htm>
- Accessible Print Materials: Formatting Guidelines to Accommodate All Audiences - http://www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/dph/com_health/healthy_aging/accessible_print_materials.pdf

Questions?

Rachel Tanenhaus

Program Coordinator

Healthy Aging and Disability Unit (HADU)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

250 Washington Street, 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 624-5957 (v)

(617) 624-5075 (f)

(617) 624-5992 (tty)

Rachel.Tanenhaus@state.ma.us