An A to Z Road Map for Designing and Implementing Accessible Faith Events

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A. Establish a policy that all events will be accessible and design your event with accessibility in mind; include persons with disabilities in planning.

B. Prayerfully consider and communicate the theology behind making the event inclusive and work to consciously avoid ableism.

C. Designate a person to be the accessibility coordinator. (Event Accessibility Coordinator Job Description)

D. Develop or modify an accessibility checklist to use throughout the process. (1b,d,e,k,l, *handout #2:* Event Accessibility Checklist)

E. Select a site with accessible meeting spaces and lodging - complete an on-site accessibility review before contracting.

F. Publicize the event via accessible media and accessible website.

G. Provide ample accessibility information in the registration packet. Include questions about participant needs for accommodations and accessibility on the registration form. Ask participants about ways they can assist with inclusion and accommodations as well.

H. Communicate with participants who request accommodations to clarify needs.

I. Request that all participants avoid use of fragrances and scented products and work with the venue on environmental accessibility. Ban strobe lighting and flash photography to avoid triggering seizures and migraines

J. Locate sources for interpreters, assisted listening systems, captioners, Braille transcription, accessible transportation, and rental wheelchairs/ scooters.

K. Make sure caterers are willing to meet dietary needs and communicate food ingredients; ask for and check references.

L. Develop emergency procedures relevant to local and facility risk factors as well as participant needs.

M. Plan inclusive activities that can be accessed in a variety of ways; use universal design for learning and adult learning concepts. Ensure that off-site field trips are accessible and provide accessible transportation.

N. Communicate with presenters and worship leaders on making their materials, presentations, and worship services accessible. Communicate with conference site staff on needed accomodations.

O. Review materials for inclusive, theologically appropriate person-first language before posting, printing, or distributing.)

P. Provide schedule, handouts, and program information in advance in format requested, e.g. electronic, large print, Braille.

Q. Recruit and train volunteers to help greet, orient, do audio description, carry trays, take notes, and operate lifts and assisted listening devices, etc.

R. Set up registration, meeting, exhibit, and meal spaces for full accessibility. Find temporary ways to remove barriers present

S. Designate and publicize the availability of a noise-free room for people needing a sensory or cognitive break. Have couches so people can stretch out.

T. Post clear signage outdoors and indoors, directing participants to find parking, accessible entrances, shuttles, meeting/ dining rooms, exhibits, and restrooms.

U. Welcome participants by having greeters at/outside the entrance door(s), and orienting people as needed to the space and event, including areas to meet needs of service animals. (1a) Have someone available to welcome/ orient ASL interpreters and other providers at their scheduled times.

V. During the opening session announce general accommodations and accessibility plans as well as whom to contact with needs and requests.

W. Implement person-specific accommodations based on requests.

X. Monitor plan effectiveness, check in with participants, and address new and ongoing needs during the event.

Y. Evaluate event accessibility via feedback and post-event survey results from attendees, presenters, and accessibility monitors/ coordinators. (Post-Event Accessibility Survey)

Z. Compile recommendations for the next event while the experience is still fresh.

References and Resources

1. Meeting Accessibility – Comprehensive Guides

    a. Accessible Meetings Conferences and Events Guide -- ADA Hospitality and Mid-Atlantic ADA Center (website with many web-pages and dropdown menus) http://www.adahospitality.org/accessible-meetings-events-conferences-guide/book

    b. Planning Accessible Meetings and Events: A Toolkit – American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights (PDF) http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/mental_physical_disability/Accessible_Meetings_Toolkit.authcheckdam.pdf

    c. A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities – ADA National Network (webpage or PDF) http://adainfo.us/temporaryevents

    d. People First: How to Plan Events that Everyone Can Attend – NY State Dept. of Health (webpage or PDF) http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/0956

    e. Removing Barriers: Planning Meetings that Are Accessible to All Participants – North Carolina Office on Disability and Health (PDF) http://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/other-resources/NCODH_RemovingBarriersPlanningMeetings.pdf

    f. Creating Accessible Events -- Lynn Swedberg/ United Methodist Women (PowerPoint or Word doc. – find it at the end of the document under Addressing the Practicalities)

    g. Equal Access Guide for Meetings and Conferences -- National Council of Churches, Committee on Disabilities (PDF)

    h. Accessible Information Exchange: Meeting on a Level Playing Field –U.S. Dept. of Justice (webpage) http://www.ada.gov/business/accessiblemtg.htm

    i. Nine Steps to Accessible Conferences – Barbara Burton/ Zeh Lezeh (webpage) https://zehlezeh.wordpress.com/2015/01/21/nine-steps-to-accessible-conferences

    j. 8 Tips to Make your Event Accessible for All - Cara Liebowitz (webpage) http://blog.themobilityresource.com/blog/post/how-to-make-your-event-accessible

k. Event Planning for Universal Accessibility and Full Inclusion – Rocky Mountain Conference, United Methodist Church, Disability Visions – Ability Matters Committee (PDF) http://www.rmcumc.org/files/content/missions/disability/event+planning+for+universal+accessibility+and+full+inclusion++disability+visions-ability+matters+final.pdf

l. Conference Accessibility Checklist – World Institute on Disability https://worldinstituteondisabilityblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/wid-conference-accessibility-checklist.pdf

2. Attitudinal Accessibility

Theological Statements re: Accessibility

a. A Church of All and for All- An Interim Statement -- World Council of Churches. (web page or PDF). https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/ix-other-study-processes/a-church-of-all-and-for-all-an-interim-statement

b. Summer Institute on Theology and Disability Recorded presentations (variety of formats) http://faithanddisability.org/projects/summer-institute/summer-institute-2015

Avoiding Ableism

c. Everyday Ableism and How we Can Avoid It – Cara Liebowitz (webpage) http://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/everyday-ableism-and-how-we-can-avoid-it/

d. How Not to Plan Disability Conferences – Lydia Brown (webpage) http://www.autistichoya.com/2015/07/how-not-to-plan-disability-conferences.html

e. How to Fight Ableism as a Nondisabled Person (webpage) http://www.wikihow.com/Fight-Ableism-as-a-Nondisabled-Person

3. Physical Accessibility

a. Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal – New England ADA Center (Word, PDF, or Plain Text) http://adachecklist.org/checklist.html

b. Accessibility Audits – DisAbility Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church (links to documents) https://umcdmc.org/resources/accessibility-and-united-methodist-churches/accessibility-audit/

    c. ADA Checklist for New Lodging Facilities – US Dept. of Justice (webpage) http://www.ada.gov/hsurvey.htm

    d. Making Your Guest Rooms ADA Compliant – Kathleen Pohlid/ Hotel Business Review (webpage) http://hotelexecutive.com/business_review/2394/making-your-guest-rooms-ada-compliant

4. Web Accessibility

    a. Website Accessibility – DisAbility Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church (look under accessibility/technology) https://umcdmc.org

    b. WAVE web accessibility evaluation tool – WebAIM (webpage) http://wave.webaim.org

5. Environmental Accessibility

    a. Fragrance Free Environment – United States Access Board (webpage) http://www.access-board.gov/the-board/policies/fragrance-free-environment

    b. Fragrance Free Zone – Invisible Disabilities Association http://invisibledisabilities.org/educate/chemicalsensitivities/fragrancefreezone

    c. Invisible Disabilities – Fragrance Free Air, Food Allergy – The VOICE of the United Methodist Disability Connection (webpage/newsletter) http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs110/1104745249463/archive/1120141612202.html

6. Communication Accessibility

    a. Information, Guidance, and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act -- ADA National Network (webpage) http://www.adaresources.org

    b. Hiring an Interpreter – Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (webpage) http://rid.org/about-interpreting/hiring-an-interpreter/

    c. Online Sourcebook – NCRA (web-based directory of CART captioners) http://www.ncrasourcebook.com/

    d. Braille transcription Resource List – National Federation of the Blind (webpage) https://nfb.org/braille-transcription-resource-list

7. Dietary Accessibility

a. Event Planning and Food Allergy Awareness – American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (webpage) http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/allergy-library/event-planning-food-allergy.aspx

b. Tips on Serving Clients with Special Diet Requests – Special Events (webpage) http://specialevents.com/catering/tips-serving-clients-special-diet-requests

8. Emergency Preparedness

   a. An ADA Guide for Local Governments: Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities – Americans with Disabilities Act (webpage or PDF) http://www.ada.gov/emergencyprepguide.htm

   b. Church Emergency Plans – Naomi Mitchum http://www.naomimitchum.com/emergency-planning/emergency-planning-special-needs

   c. Fire Safety for Wheelchair Users -- Maurice Smith/ Karman (webpage) http://www.karmanhealthcare.com/blog/2014/03/12/fire-safety-for-wheelchair-users

9. Inclusive Instruction

   a. Inclusive Teaching Methods – Michigan State University, Office of Faculty & Organizational Development (webpage with links) http://fod.msu.edu/oir/inclusive-teaching-methods

   b. The Inclusive Learning and Teaching Handbook – University of Sheffield (PDF) https://www.shef.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.18989!/file/The-inclusive-learning-and-teaching-handbook.pdf

10. Presentation Accessibility

   a. PowerPoint Accessibility – WebAIM (webpage) http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint

   b. How to Make Presentations Accessible to All – Web Accessibility Initiative (webpage) http://www.w3.org/WAI/training/accessible

   c. Presenter Guidelines: Accessibility & Inclusion – Association of University Centers on Disabilities (webpage) http://www.aucd.org/conference/template/page.cfm?id=50129

d. Accessibility Guidelines for Presentations – Society for Disability Studies https://disstudies.org/index.php/sds-annual-conference/accessibility-guidelines-for-presentations/

e. Preparing your Presentation, During the Presentation – Composing Access (webpage and captioned videos) http://composingaccess.net

f. Readability Calculator – Online-Utility.org (webpage) http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

g. Simply Put: A Guide for Creating Easy-to-Understand Materials – Centers for Disease Control (PDF) http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/simply_put.pdf

h. What is Plain Language? -- Plain Language Association International (webpage) http://plainlanguagenetwork.org/plain-language/what-is-plain-language

i. See-Through Barriers: Making Conferences and Events Accessible to People Who are Blind – Marie Laporte-Stark/ Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (webpage) http://www.blindcanadians.ca/publications/cbm/8/see-through-barriers-making-conferences-and-events-accessible-people-who-are-blin

j. How to Make Bulletin Boards Accessible to Blind Students – Liz Wisecarver/ Institute on Blindness, Louisiana Tech University (webpage) http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=dd357b98ae66a7c0f8dd4b169&id=ab4a658ee8&e=9e68c24b1c

k. Tip Sheets and Posterettes – ACCESS-ed (webpage and PDF) http://access-ed.r2d2.uwm.edu/Tools_Resources/Tips_Posterettes

11. Inclusive Language

a. People First Articles – Kathie Snow/ Disability is Natural (webpage with links to several PDFs) https://www.disabilityisnatural.com/people-first-language.html

b. Disability Style Guide – National Center on Disability and Journalism (webpage with downloadable PDF file) http://ncdj.org/style-guide

12. Volunteer Training – Disability Etiquette

a. Disability Etiquette – United Spinal Association (PDF booklet) https://www.unitedspinal.org/pdf/DisabilityEtiquette.pdf

b. Communication and Etiquette with Persons with Disabilities – DisAbility Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church (look under Resources/Communication Etiquette) https://umcdmc.org

c. Hospitality & Disability: Hotel Customer Service – ADA National Network (webpage with PowerPoint, Word, PDF, and text links) http://www.adahospitality.org/content/Hotels-Training

Volunteer Training – Audio Description

d. Audio Description for the Blind – Accessibility and Usability at Penn State (webpage, video links) http://accessibility.psu.edu/video/audiodescription

e. Guidelines for Audio Describing Meetings and Presentations -- Elizabeth Kahn/ National Association of the Deaf (PDF) https://www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh207.pdf

f. Audio Description: The Visual Made Verbal – Great Lakes ADA Center (archived webinar) http://dev.accessibilityonline.org/archives

g. Video Description Guide: "How to Know What to Say" – Rick Boggs/ The Accessible Planet (YouTube video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZlNVajYx9s

13. Quiet Rooms, Mental Health Needs

a. The Quiet Room – Susan Bernstein (PDF) http://composingaccess.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Bernstein-The-Quiet-Room.pdf

b. Conference Challenges for People with Psychiatric Disabilities – Katy Rose Guest Pryal - https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1377-conference-challenges-for-people-with-psychiatric-disabilities

14. Working with Sign Language Interpreters and Other Providers

c. ADA Requirements: Effective Communication – US Dept. of Justice (webpage or PDF) http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm

d. Guide to Using Sign Language Interpreters – DC Office of Disability Rights (webpage or audio) http://odr.dc.gov/page/guide-using-sign-language-interpreters

e. Guide for Using Sign Language Interpreters – Linguistic Society of America (PDF) http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/LSA%20Guidelines%20for%20Using%20Sign%20Language%20Interpreters.pdf