

Ways to Participate Beyond the Streets

There are many reasons why disabled people may be unable to attend organized events, even with the most expansive accommodation plans in place. Exposure anxiety, agoraphobia, chemical and/or scent sensitivities, sensory sensitivities, bathroom schedules, lack of transportation, being a disabled caregiver, and histories of inaccessibility and the trauma that it holds are just a few reasons why people either choose or are forced to not attend. Most urgently, the threat of COVID-19 and other disabling events since 2020, like police violence, create valid reluctance and inability to attend. Disabled leaders provide us with a rich history of ideas on how to participate and lead the revolution from our sickbeds and confinements of home, hospitals, care facilities, and institutions. Contemporary disabled activists continue to radically pave the way in regards to innovative ways to participate.

Organizers must meet the conflicting access needs of disabled people by offering multiple ways to participate, banishing the ableist notion that “pounding the pavement” is the most valuable form of activism and dismantling hierarchies of participation. We all must constantly remind and affirm that existing is a crucial part of activism and that “doing” is not a prerequisite to be in community.

We wish to reiterate several of these ideas and offer a few more of our own. Below are some roles that disabled people may want to take on in lieu of attending a live event.

Please remember that having alternative roles is not an excuse for your event to be inaccessible. Please remember that disabled does not mean access to more time; if anything, the disabled experience of time is often limited due to planning and attending to medical needs and appointments, being unable to do anything during flare ups, and barriers to completing tasks. Please consider that many events can be digital and prioritize virtual events as to include more disabled people.

Roles that *some* disabled folks might want to take on in lieu of attending a live event:

- Amplify the event (if appropriate/safe)

- Be an emergency contact

- Be in charge of ordering, organizing, labeling, and packing supplies for Street Medic teams

Collect, upload, and organize archive documentation including photos, videos, transcripts, and tangible archives like posters and zines

Cook pre/post-protest meals or prepare medicines/tinctures

Create art, write copy, or proofread posts for social media

Create posters for people to use at events. We especially love using the [#BlackDisabledLivesMatter graphics](#) by disabled artist-activist Jen White Johnson.

Create social stories or social experience narratives (guides with text and photos to help people preview an event or experience) to help people know what to expect during an event. These serve as resources that offer visual and written descriptions of event processes and help with previewing. We'd love to expand this guide to include a social story for different activism-related activities, so please be in touch if you'd like to create one!

Create the event playlist

Fundraise. Even setting up a ko-fi.com request button on your Instagram stories and then requesting small amounts from followers to eliminate steps on their end goes a long way!

Offer space for resting/care/spirituality

Organize letter writing campaigns, especially for kin and comrades in prison to update them on an event, action, or effort

Plan events/protests (even if they can't be at them)

Plan Twitter storms and other social media actions

Provide access support (see more on this in the "Before the Event" section)

Provide audio descriptions

Provide audits of plans

Provide childcare

Provide IT support

Research and create signage that shows all ingredients in food and drinks provided at an event

Send messages asking your favorite news sources to make their content accessible

Speak at events/protests (even if they can't be at them). For more, see the hybrid event model section.

Translate documents

Write and distribute scripts for phone calls, important conversations, etc.

Write content warnings

Write plain language guides to policy, legislation, or plans

Write scripts, run-of-show plans, and AV cues for events

Write summaries of theory, articles, books, documentaries, etc.

Write transcriptions, alt text, image descriptions, and add closed captions to media taken by street journalists in real-time or post-event

Have more ideas?

Feel free to let us know (add: Email; phone; feedback form)!