

Introduction

The revolution must be accessible. As we continue revolutionary actions, access should be the norm. The future we are building needs to ensure all of us are at the table. Access should not be a “special” accommodation someone has to go out of their way to ask for.

A large portion of the folks we want fighting by our side are disabled people. If disabled people must ask for accommodations, then they're an afterthought; they are not being centred. How is your event and movement staying true to its mission if it's not centering those most marginalised within it? For example, 1 in 4 adults in the U.K. have a disability. It is essential for inclusive activism to centre and follow the lead of all disabled activists.

Resist the pull of capitalist urgency. Disabled people prove time and again that moving at the rate of the most impacted ensures that nobody gets left behind. Slowing down ensures that we resist pushing ourselves past our limits, allows us to view and solve problems from new angles, and helps create sustainable movements. Disabled people have been organizing for forever and we know what it's like to constantly negotiate barriers. We have so much wisdom to offer and most of us are waiting to be asked for insight.

While making activism accessible, remember that not all disabilities are visible. Disabled people are likely already attending your events. How can you accommodate people with hidden disabilities and make everyone feel comfortable asking for and using accommodations?

While planning any event, you will likely identify many components that are inaccessible. Please do not hide these barriers. Communicate barriers honestly and clearly by providing as much information as possible. Remember that disabled people can choose for themselves whether or not they'd like to try navigating these barriers or if they're non-negotiable barriers. Many guides and books exist that outline how to make events accessible and we did our best to link some of them in this guide.

Please consult as many resources as possible and also understand that nothing can replace the insight gained from consulting disabled people in the planning stage. Ideally, pay a group of disabled people to help with planning, as there is not a singular experience of disability. Having a disability does not mean that a disabled person is an expert or even knowledgeable about accessibility or accommodations, but they are certainly an expert on their personal experience, which is invaluable feedback. Disabled accessibility coordinators or consultants

are equipped to advise on a wide array of disability experiences and how to accommodate them.

Our practice of accessibility and foundation of Disability Justice is deeply indebted to all the Black, brown, queer and trans leaders we have come across. We are grateful to the elders, mentors, and leaders who came before us and credit them with the framework that our work is built upon.

Ways to Participate Beyond the Streets

There are many reasons why disabled people may be unable to attend organised 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 confines of home, hospitals, care facilities, and institutions. Contemporary disabled activists continue to radically pave the way in regards to innovative ways to participate.

Organisers 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 prioritise virtual events to include more disabled people.

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

1. Amplify the event (if appropriate/safe)
2. Be an emergency contact
3. Be in charge of ordering, organising, labelling, and packing supplies for Street Medic teams

4. Collect, upload, and organise archive documentation including photos, videos, transcripts, and tangible archives like posters and zines
5. Cook pre/post-protest meals or prepare medicines/tinctures
6. Create art, write copy, or proofread posts for social media
7. Create posters for people to use at events. We especially love using the [#BlackDisabledLivesMatter graphics](#) by disabled artist-activist Jen White Johnson.
8. 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!
9. Create the event playlist
10. 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!
11. Offer space for resting/care/spirituality
12. Organise letter writing campaigns, especially for kin and comrades in prison to update them on an event, action, or effort
13. Plan events/protests (even if they can't be at them)
14. Plan Twitter storms and other social media actions
15. Provide access support (see more on this in the "Before the Event" section)
16. Provide audio descriptions
17. Provide audits of plans
18. Provide childcare
19. Provide IT support
20. Research and create signage that shows all ingredients in food and drinks provided at an event
21. Send messages asking your favorite news sources to make their content accessible
22. Speak at events/protests (even if they can't be at them). For more, see the hybrid event model section.
23. Translate documents
24. Write and distribute scripts for phone calls, important conversations, etc.
25. Write content warnings
26. Write plain language guides to policy, legislation, or plans
27. Write scripts, run-of-show plans, and AV cues for events
28. Write summaries of theory, articles, books, documentaries, etc.
29. 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)!

Before the Event

As people committed to accessibility know, inclusion takes time and care. If you're new to offering accessibility or planning through the lens of disability inclusion, welcome! We recommend doing serious capacity analysis before committing to offering accommodations, as a half-hearted or lax approach to accessibility can be hurtful and potentially dangerous. As a strategy, groups may choose to commit to adding one or two accommodations at every event, as to build a practice of accessibility and as to allow room for analysis, tweaking, and implementing feedback. If possible, we recommend having an entire team dedicated to accessibility for effectiveness and sustainability purposes. Of course, there should be disability leadership within this team.

Remember that accessibility is a practice of trust and providing consistent accommodations over time will grow disabled participation. Disabled people are tired and often spiritually/physically/emotionally hurt by being treated as testers or afterthoughts, so again, gain the trust of disabled people through consistency, quality, and openness to feedback.

Resources

[Writing Good Accessibility Information by Ellen Murray](#): “A guide to making your work, campaigning, and communities accessible for disabled people.” Not only does this guide offer advice on writing access statements for promotional materials, it also offers easily digestible information on the following: getting to an event; seating; quiet spaces; facilities; Access for d/Deaf, hard of hearing and sound sensitive people; access for blind, visually impaired and light-sensitive people; access for Autistic, mentally ill and otherwise neurodivergent people; food and drink; and signage and wayfinding.

From the awesome #AccessIsLove team, “There is so much more people can do when it comes to accessibility. These are just a handful of basic suggestions we offer as a place to start. Access should be a collective responsibility, instead of the sole responsibility of it being placed on just one or two individuals. It is all of our responsibility to think about and help create accessible spaces and community. This is not about everything being 100% accessible to everyone, but rather centering access as a core part of the way that we want to live in the world together--as a core part of our liberation.”

EDIT/Update

[Accessible Activism Lending Library](#): We propose that communities are primed to create lending libraries of accommodational items in order to make events and event spaces more accessible. This brief document provides a list of suggested supplies, ideas on how to collect the supplies, and a few ideas on how to effectively run a lending library.

A Note On Preventing Burnout and Creating Movement Longevity

Many resources exist on how to overcome burnout after activists and organisers reach a point of shut-down or exhaustion. We posit that more strategies must be in place to prevent burnout from occurring in the first place. While this is a sector that needs more collective focus, we offer a few resources in the section at the end of this document and suggest the following:

1. Set reasonable expectations and learn how to create long-term visioning and planning.
2. Hold space for creating boundaries and celebrate when members of your community exert boundaries.
3. Create systems of accountability.
4. Start from scratch when necessary, but understand that blueprints for organising exist in abundance.
5. [Learn how to apologise](#) and embrace generative conflict.
6. Do not hoard information, power, leadership, or keys to success. Create accessible information sharing that a group can access and prioritise record keeping and note taking so that new members can fill-in, catch up, and seek out the information and resources they need. For example, groups should know how to safely access passwords and groups should prioritise creating role descriptions with resource lists and how-to guides.
7. Value lateral leadership models instead of hierarchical leadership models.
8. Learn how to identify signs of what burnout looks like for you and come up with a plan on how you'll accommodate and address it. Burnout can look or feel like the following: anger, anxiety, brain fog, difficulty communicating, disappointment, fatigue, going nonverbal, guilt, illness, insomnia, irritability, isolation, lack of motivation, numbness, pessimism, physical pain, sadness, shame, symptom flareup, visible signs of flareup like hives. We realise that this [Ways to start: Creating Access from #AccessIsLove](#) list may look and feel very similar to your "normal" when it comes to living with chronic illness and/or disability.
9. Create opportunities for community-building that are fun, rejuvenating, and restorative. We must advocate towards COVID-safe social opportunities that are highly socially distanced or virtual so that disabled people don't feel further isolation by missing out on social events. Prioritising bonding activities

that happen in-person during a dangerous respiratory pandemic is, unfortunately, ableist.

10. Protect and honour taking breaks. If someone announces a break, celebrate their assertion and honour their wellness by respecting their boundaries.

Before the Event - for Event Planners & Organisers.

Major Components of Planning an Accessible Event.

1. Timeliness
 - a) Spontaneous actions are often unsafe and especially inaccessible for disabled people.
 - b) Consider that disabled people have to arrange some or all of the following.
 - i) Transportation: Many disabled people don't have access to or are unable to provide personal transportation, much of public transportation is inaccessible due to conflicting access needs and infrastructure inadequacies, and rideshares often discriminate against disabled people. Not only that, but many disabled people must plan routes and research parking, paths of travel, and infrastructure barriers. It takes a good deal of time to plan, schedule, and secure reliable and safe transportation.
 - ii) Energy allocation: A hidden part of disability is that many of us must rest heavily before and after events in order to attend. This is often scheduled and another reason why we are often unable to spontaneously participate, or participate with short notice.
 - iii) Care work: Disabled people are caregivers and disabled people receive care from caregivers. This is a commitment and need that requires a financial investment. Disabled people need time to find people to cover their own care work, whether it's being given or received.
 - iv) Medical planning: Many disabled people can't rely on services that offer non-disabled people ease such as fast food, so consider that disabled people spend more time planning and preparing food. Many disabled people often have to plan medical care around events they'd like to attend and many people often schedule "maintenance" medical appointments after attending events to help them recover.
 - v) With this in mind, it's best to offer as much head's up as possible before an event so that disabled people and their care teams can effectively plan. If possible, we recommend offering two weeks advance notice at minimum.
 - vi) Not all events and actions offer the luxury of time. Still include disabled people in invitations to and planning of spontaneous and urgent events/actions.
 - vii) Most importantly, offering ample time between the announcement of an event and the event itself gives people room to request accommodations and for access teams to enact those accommodations. Accessibility offered at the

last-minute is certainly doable, but quite often stressful and may make for a tough experience.

2. Location

- a) Many resources exist that help organisers analyse a space for accessibility. We strongly recommend that full location evaluations be done before choosing a location for an event.

3. Infrastructure

- a) Rent and place ramps.
- b) Ensure that elevators work and if they don't, relocate.
- c) When renting platforms and stages, rent ramps to go with them. Always have a ramp available, even if nobody requests it.
- d) Create more accessible parking spaces and safe drop-off spaces by using water-dissolvable chalk paint, traffic cones, and printable signs. Be sure to have people designated to this area to help facilitate rogue parking.
- e) Place way-finding signage.
- f) Designate accessible seating that is not blocked or trapped by standing people. Choose chairs that can accommodate weight and size. Space chairs with ample room to travel between rows and stretch legs out.
- g) If the event is taking place somewhere with difficult terrain such as tall grass, sand, cobblestone, brick, broken concrete, or other uneven surfaces, consider creating a rogue accessible pathway using plywood or similar.
- h) If the event is taking place during inclement weather, place large umbrellas, tents, heaters, or fans and the like. As a reminder, inclement weather is not the prerequisite for providing these accommodations! Many disabilities render people sensitive to temperature and exposure, so always having shade and heating/cooling available is a standard accommodation.
- i) Rent wheelchair accessible portable toilets and place them properly.
 - Position portable toilets on flat surfaces with easy entry, i.e. do not place them against a curb so that people have to step up to get inside.
 - Position portable toilets in a place that has a large, clear, barrier free space in front of it so that wheelchair users can enter and exit with ease.
- j) Post signs on the accessible portable toilets that let people know their use should be prioritised for disabled people.
- k) Sound amplification
 - a) Rent and place speakers throughout the event space. Test them to make sure there is no painful feedback, fuzz, or reverberation.
 - b) Rent and place mics that are adjustable so that people can use them hands-free.
- l) Designate spaces
 - a) Smoking spaces far away from people

- b) Scent-free spaces if a fully scent-free environment is not possible
- c) Quiet spaces
- d) Medical spaces
- e) Cool-off/heat-up spaces
- f) Optional nursing spaces
- g) Meaningful engagement spaces for people who may be unable to fully participate, like viewing spaces for people unable to march
- h) Accessible seating

3.. Collaborations

- a) Include disabled people as speakers, leaders, and prominent decision makers. Remember #DisabilityTooWhite and strive to platform disabled people that aren't white and straight, as that is who currently takes up the most space in the disability community.
- b) Ensure that any nondisabled speakers evaluate and edit their performances or speeches to be inclusive of and sensitive to disability.

4. Materials

- a) If there are print materials, consider offering them in large print, braille, audio, and digital.

5. Communications

- a) Eliminate [ableist language](#)
- b) If your group, organisation, or event has an inclusion statement, be sure to include disability. Remember that simply listing disability doesn't actively dismantle ableism and there must be action paired with recognition.
- c) If the event has promotional materials, consider depicting disability on it. We love visual representations of our diverse disability experiences that aren't paternalistic or tokenizing. Work with disabled people to make sure you get representation right! Again, remember to avoid depicting #DisabilityTooWhite!
- d) Write access information for promotional materials. Again, we recommend [this guide](#).
- e) Write access guides for events to be distributed via as many communication pathways as possible.
- f) Offer image descriptions for all images/graphics.
- g) Create accessible press, social media, and other promotional material. Just because something is published digitally does not mean that it's accessible. Here's an inexhaustive list of things to research and implement to produce accessible media.
- h) Video access: Accurate caption, audio descriptions, video descriptions

- i) Website access: Create websites that meet WCAG standards or better. Do not use plug-ins that claim to increase accessibility because they often cause more problems than solutions. Alt text, test screen reader compatibility, check contrast, use legible fonts, etc.
- j) PDF/Document access: Make it keyboard navigable, make it searchable, alt text, test screen reader compatibility, check contrast, use legible fonts, etc.
- k) Twitter access: Alt text, describe GIFs, post accessible videos that have audio descriptions and captioning or provide your own as a thread, #CamelCaseHashtags
- l) Instagram: Alt text, image descriptions, video closed captions, add captions to stories using the text feature or Apps, don't use GIFs that flash more than three frames per second, avoid using jarring or disorienting filters, #CamelCaseHashtags
- m) Create and share a photography policy.
 - i) Consider publishing a photography policy, designating an area for photos and videos, and announcing the photography policy beforehand.
 - ii) Many disabled people are uncomfortable being photographed or videographed because they fear being tokenized or surveilled. Disabled people may fear that their state support could be taken away if they are photographed or filmed during an action. With this knowledge, decide on whether or not photography is allowed and by whom and make sure people attending the event know the policy.
 - iii) Consider that abuse of disabled people at the hands of police should be filmed for evidence and create a safety plan surrounding that possibility. Of course, the first step before documentation should be aid and de-escalation.
 - iv) *Please remember that the state has used photos of actions posted to social media to target activists after events. Please remember that this especially impacts multiply marginalised and posting photos is a huge safety issue.*
 - v) Release Access Info: Write an Access Note or Access Guide and distribute it widely before an event. Access info should include as much information as possible and may outline the following:

6. Route

- a) Parking: Access, Free/Paid (coins/card), path from parking to event
- b) Type of Street: smooth pavement, uneven pavement, loose gravel, brick, inclines, hills, debris, dirt, shaded, exposed, etc.
- c) Are there designated sidewalks? Ramps and curb cuts? Barriers on sidewalks like restaurant seating, cracks, uneven pavement, tree routes, snow, leaves?
- d) Wayfinding: Tactile, visible, easy-to-miss, size, height of signs, language of signs, material of signs (are they hard to see because of reflectiveness, etc)

- e) Public transportation
- f) Provide information on all public transport available, including the distance one must travel between public transportation stops and the event location.
- g) If possible, provide fund reimbursement for transportation and try to make this process as simple as possible by not asking for receipts or offering reimbursement rounded up to the nearest dollar as to avoid clunky change.

7. Bathroom and Water Access Info

- a) Bathroom Information
 - i) Single-person or stalls?
 - ii) Type of stalls?
 - iii) Changing tables available (child and adult)?
 - iv) Trash cans available? Location of trash cans?
 - v) Types of hand drying options available?
 - vi) Are bathrooms gendered?
 - v) Consider making bathrooms non-gendered for events using [Ellen Murray's Gender Neutral Toilet Signage Kit](#).
- b) Water information
 - i) Water available?
 - ii) Types of fountains available? Height of fountains?
 - iii) Cups and plastic straws available?

8. Sensory Info

- a) Type of lighting?
- b) Type of sound?
- c) Fidget toys available?
- d) Quiet space available?

9. What supports are offered?

- a) Will there be interpreters? (ASL and/or other languages)
- b) Communication access real-time translation (CART): aka open captioning, real-time stenography, or real-time captioning.
 - i) Converts speech to text, most often displayed on screens
 - ii) There are many advantages to having CART. It's great for people who missed a part of programming and need to look back at the captioning to catch up. It's great for people who learn best through multimodal forms of information sharing. It offers a historical document that once completed can be referenced later for any number of needs.

- iii) Remember that CART is not a translator feature! If you are presenting in multiple languages, you need that many CART providers in corresponding languages.
- c) Will there be caregivers?
 - i) If possible, release their information and credentials and establish a way for disabled people to communicate with caregivers before the event.
 - ii) Outline exactly what care will be offered (changing, bathroom support, feeding, etc).
- d) Will there be childcare?
 - i) If possible, release the names and photos of caregivers to prepare young people for the event. If possible, preview the types of toys, games, or activities that will be available. A social story or access guide would be helpful for kids.
- e) Will the lodging be accessible?
 - i) If the event is expecting people from out of town, offer information on accessible hotel options and housing. Remember, just because a hotel markets itself as accessible doesn't mean that the space will properly built with ADA requirements. If possible, preview lodging spaces and have photos available for people to look at ahead of making reservations and travelling.
- f) What is the schedule?
 - i) Release the schedule early, post the schedule prominently, and build in ample break and transition time.
 - ii) Remind people that the schedule may change so that we can move at an accessible rate and make sure everyone's needs are met.

10. Safety

- a) What training have the event organisers taken? Deescalation? Naloxone administration? Crisis intervention? CPR? First aid? How can people seek out those services? Will helpers have identification so people know how to spot them when in need?
- b) What is the fire evacuation route, especially for people who use mobility aids? Is there a tornado shelter and does it require navigating stairs? Who will be able to help with physical evacuations? Will pathways be cleared in the event of snow, ice, or wet leaves? If not, will the event be rescheduled or moved to virtual?
- c) We strongly advocate for never calling or involving the police. However, that isn't always possible, especially if they show up on their own accord. Being honest about the possibility of police presence is an essential access practice. Will the police be present? If so, in what capacity and proximity? What will event organisers do before calling the police, during police intervention, and after police intervention?
- d) Can organisers provide both long and short term support should attendees become disabled by police violence?

11. Help people know what to wear, bring, and prepare for:
 - a) Consider the type of event and what people will be doing (standing, sitting, walking)
 - b) Will the event be longer than a few hours? (think: food, diapers, medications)
 - c) Is there a potential for physical danger? (think: tear gas, arrests, other forms of brutality)

12. Plan a route and release the map in promotional materials
 - a) Avoid hills, streets without sidewalks, and places with poor infrastructure like cracks and potholes
 - b) Map: show slopes, show accessible parking spaces, show bathrooms, show curb cuts, draw path of recommended route, show public transportation stops, label types of terrain, label distance between things, clearly label everything using legible and contrasting fonts, write an image description of the map

8. Make disaster preparedness plans
 - a) Plan, map, and announce evacuation routes
 - b) Warn people of potential sensory triggers in the event of a fire or other emergency, like loud sirens and flashing lights
 - c) If the building has stairs, come up with a plan on evacuating people who use mobility aids. If a person who uses a mobility aid attends your event, you may consider asking them if they are open to having a conversation about the aid they may need during an emergency or an evacuation.

13. Make safety plans
 - a) Learn how to treat overdoses and let people know whether or not you can accommodate that.
 - b) Disclose whether or not police will be or may be present at an event (we heavily advocate towards never involving the police, but some police presence may be unavoidable, given particular circumstances), let people know what you'll try to do to deescalate before calling the police, and what behaviors or situations may trigger event organizers to call 911.
 - c) If you have an intimate relationship with attendees, ask them to submit their personal safety plans to event organizers beforehand, if appropriate. This can help event organizers and attendees know what helps them in high-risk or high-stress situations.
 - d) Publish safety plans in Access Notes and be sure to go over safety plans at the start of each event.

14. Provide training
 - a) Train volunteers, peacekeepers, staffers, speakers, servers, caretakers, and anyone formally associated with the event on disability etiquette, accessibility,

hidden disabilities, deescalation, what to do instead of calling the police, and the like.

- b) Train everyone on safety protocols, especially emergency evacuation and disaster preparedness.
- c) Train street medics through a disability and accommodational lens.

15. Offer accommodations that go above and beyond

- a) Proxy program: <https://www.sufferingthesilence.com/marching-with-me>
- b) Build pop-up environments
 - i. Cool down space: ice buckets, hoses, ice packs, fans, etc.
 - ii. Warm up space: heating pads, heating blankets, heaters, etc.
 - iii. Quiet spaces/Clement spaces: comfy spaces, tents, stim toys, etc.
 - iv. Rest and recharge space: cots, mats, pillows, etc.

A Note On Scents and Chemical Sensitivities

Scents and chemicals are a major barrier that many spaces, events, and groups fail to accommodate.

The disabling events of 2020, especially a respiratory virus that leaves people with long-term symptoms and continued climate chaos, will increase disabilities like chronic migraines, allergies, asthma, MCAS, or multiple chemical sensitivities. We can accommodate these disabilities and illnesses by reducing triggering fragrances and chemical exposure that often have a debilitating multi-system response.

It takes a great deal of effort for disabled people to make it to an event or place. Getting sidelined by an unforeseen barrier like scents or chemical exposure can be disheartening and can cause illness that lasts weeks to months, and even years.

Things to consider:

1. Even “all natural” or organic products can be harmful. When we say scent-free we really mean all scents and fragrances! For example, an organic ethically sourced lavender essential oil can still be harmful to people!
2. Personal & Community Practice
 - a) Get in the habit of going scent-free. As your hygiene products run out, replace them with non-scented options as much as possible. This includes, but is not limited to: laundry detergent, hair products like shampoo conditioner hairspray gel, deodorant, hand sanitizer
 - b) Transition the cleaning products and sanitary products at your organisation to be scent-free and less toxic, especially hand soap. Eliminate scented filters, candles, air fresheners, and the like.
 - c) If your organisation has the budget, offer a scent-free product monetary bonus to incentivize people to switch out their products.
 - d) At the very least, try your best not to put on scented products before an event. See especially: smoking and vaping.

e) Communicate

i. Clearly post when a space is cleaned with cleaning supplies on your website. Alert people on social media that you're having a cleaning day in your space.

ii. If you are unable to offer a scent-free space, clearly write in promotional materials "This is not a scent-free event/environment/space."

iii. If you do have a scent-free policy, make sure it's broadcasted regularly, especially as new people follow your social media accounts or join your community.

d) Smoking and Vaping

i. Try your best not to smoke or vape before or during an event. If you smoke or vape before, try your best to change into clean scent-free clothes. What may be a subtle scent to you could be deeply harmful to someone in your community.

ii. If the event is stationary, have organisers announce and designate a smoking section. Do not smoke or vape in a crowd, as this can seriously aggravate a variety of medical conditions. Smoke very far away from the crowd. Please know that your smoke break could cause unseen ripple effects, like sending a fellow activist into a flare up that may last weeks to months.

Hybrid Event Models

When an on-the-streets or in-person event is the best strategy, we recommend adding virtual components to create a hybrid model for those that are unable to attend. This usually requires technology and we recommend testing tech set-ups prior to the event if possible.

1. Engage remote presenters while hosting an in-person event

a) Disabled people should be platformed during events, but lack of accessible infrastructure, expensive and inaccessible transportation, lack of care support, symptom flares, and transmutable viruses like the flu and COVID are just a few barriers to disabled participation. We offer a few ideas on how to still include disabled presenters.

i. Proxy model: With consent, have a designated person read or present a disabled person's speech or commentary. We recommend printing and holding up a large photo of the disabled person unable to be present (with consent, as always) so that there is a visual reminder to the audience. We also suggest providing several verbal reminders to properly attribute the words by saying something like, "Again, I am reading a speech prepared by NAME." If it's safe and with consent, give the audience the person's social media handles or contact so that there can be a social aspect to the work, which is so often missed by disabled people forced into isolation.

ii. Hybrid model: Using tech set-ups, it's possible to livestream a disabled person's speech or commentary. One recent Black Disabled Lives Matter protest had a person give a speech from their home via Zoom. The protest

organisers put a mic to the iPad at the in-person event and everyone could hear the speech. If people wanted to interact, they could move closer to the iPad and communicate directly with the person speaking. An ASL interpreter could stand next to the iPad to translate and a CART provider could also be in proximity to display live captioning on a screen projector.

2. Livestream

- a) If it's safe, offer multiple live-streams of an event. Be sure that the person running the livestream is able to monitor the chat box and take requests from people participating virtually. For example, the livestream host may ask, "Is there anything you would like a close-up of?" or "Would you like a tour of the medic tent or any part of the space in particular?" Provide audio descriptions and live captioning to the livestream as much as possible.
- b) Test audio and provide a quality experience. We know that multiple restraints exist, especially as it relates to technology. We encourage people to understand that sitting at home and watching something with poor audio, jerky or fuzzy visuals, automated captions that are inaccurate, or lapses in internet connectivity can contribute to feelings of missing out due to disability since it's obvious that those who are able to participate in-person are getting an advantage. We can create better access by approaching difficult tasks, like connecting microphones to a livestream platform, with a great deal of love.

3. Offer Summaries

- a) If safe, offer transcripts, notes, replays, phone calls detailing an event, photos, and videos soon after the event so that disabled people can get an understanding of what happened if accommodations were not possible or not present.

4. Pause and Check-In

- a) Build in ample check-ins to your event schedule. Be sure that there is a way for people watching from home to alert organisers to audio or visual issues.
- b) Understand that it's better to pause an event to fix accessibility issues than it is to push forward in order to stay on schedule or maintain appearances.

Centering access at a protest or action is a practice, not a destination. It is likely that you will not meet everyone's access needs for every event. Keep in mind that due to conflicting access needs, it's impossible to ever reach full access. Be humble, take note, and find solutions for the next time. It's also likely that even if you think through every possible access need you can think of, some disabled activists will still not be able to attend. An elevator to a subway will be out-of-order, or they'll be flaring up and unable to get out of bed, or they'll get sick from the scent in a taxi or ride-share, or they're immuno-compromised during a global pandemic. Find ways to continue to centre disabled allies beyond their role in your event and continue to go out of your way to extend invitations to the disability community.

Before the Event: for Attendees, Supports, & Caregivers

This section is meant to help attendees specifically consider the access needs of themselves and others during a protest or action, and is not an exhaustive list of things you should know and prepare before attending, such as legal/safety considerations or protest strategy. Make sure to read the info specific to your event and connect with comrades who have attended similar actions to the one you're attending. Many documents on protest safety and preparation exist. This section aims to provide accessibility-specific information perhaps not found in those common resources.

1. Request accommodations

- a) Hopefully there will be a clear way for you to request accommodations at an event. Remember that it is always within your rights to ask for what you need. We extend solidarity to the pain we experience when we must constantly ask for inclusion and basic rights.
- b) Ask a friend to request accommodations for you. Requesting is emotional work and hopefully a friend can alleviate that weight for you!

2. Have a buddy with you

- a) It's helpful if you can support each other's needs! Maybe one of you can see, and the other can carry water.
- b) Talk to your buddy about how often you'll need breaks and what those breaks might look like.
- c) If you're especially gregarious, post in the event communication spaces that you are happy to be someone's buddy and offer to meet via a phone call, FaceTime, etc. before the event to establish trust.

3. Create a safety plan and share it with people who attend with you.

- a) Establish an emergency contact person. This person should be someone who is not attending the event and who will be reachable via phone during the event and all the way until you make it home safely.
 - i. Safely remind your contact person where you will be and the approximate time they can expect an "I'm safe" text.
 - ii. Consider sharing your emergency contact information with an event coordinator or street medic in the event that you get arrested, hospitalised, or are in need of more support. You will then have an advocacy team that knows your specific access and medical needs.
- b) Know your needs for before, during, and after the action(s)/event.
- c) Know your boundaries.
 - i. How long do you want to be at a location?

- ii. What would cause or cue you to leave early?
- iii. What behaviours make you feel unsafe?
- iv. What might cause anxiety, stress, or a meltdown?

d) Know your triggers

i. Carry a small piece of paper with a list of ways to soothe yourself should you need to be reminded. You can also have this list on your phone, if having a phone is safe. Soothing mechanisms can be breathing exercises, fidget toys, playing a song you like with headphones in, or taking breaks to scroll on your phone (again, if having a phone is safe).

ii. Create a plan for soothing and comfort to happen after the event should you be triggered during the event.

iii. Create a list of things that may cause you pain or a flare up onset.

e) Designate a place to meet should anyone get triggered or separated from the group.

f) Create an exit plan in case of medical emergency, locate the nearest hospital, and have your emergency contact available.

I. Note: You might have different emergency contacts for different things. The person you call when you're injured might be different than the person you call when you're arrested. Know your people, and make sure they know they're your people.

4. Medicine

a) Friendly reminder to take your meds!

b) Write down any medical conditions and medications

i. On the back of your sign, a note in your pocket, on your body. This is helpful if you become unable to communicate verbally and need to point at key information to a street medic, buddy, etc.

c) Bring your medicine in its prescription bottle, even if you think you'll be home in time to take it. This is important in the event that you get arrested and need medicine distributed. It could also be helpful if you get held up longer than you anticipated.

Plan ahead for fatigue and physical stress. Rest, take pain medication or herbal tinctures, or utilize other tools you have for entering high stress environments. Let your caregivers know that you may need extra support after an upcoming event.

What to Bring

Gloves

Goggles/protective eyewear

Hand sanitizer

High-calorie foods

Inhaler

Masks

Mobility devices and mobility aids

Prescription medication in original bottles (even if you think you'll be home before you need to take it)

Tissues

Water in a bottle you don't mind getting lost or destroyed, depending on the type of event.

Wear glasses and bring spares if possible. Don't wear contacts, as it's a danger should you encounter tear gas.

Wear clothes and shoes that are comfortable and moveable and that you wouldn't mind getting damaged or destroyed, depending on the type of event.

Check out the list below for more ideas on what to bring!

Before the Event: for Street Medics

1. Educate yourself on the access needs of participants. While it's impossible to know every possible access need that might arise, some attendees may choose to disclose disabilities or potential needs in advance. For example, you may know in advance that you'll be sight guiding a blind participant, or that several participants using mobility aids are attending your event, and you can review this guide accordingly.
2. Prepare your medic supplies. Below is an inconclusive list of supplies that includes accommodations specific to disability needs. A huge component of accommodations is letting people know what's available. Can you post a list or photo of supplies that will be available on social media before an event? Is it possible to carry a double-sided sign similar to a picture menu that shows what's available? Perhaps you can create a "flag" with fabric that lists all the supplies you have in your backpack and safety pin it over your backpack. People will be more likely to ask for help if the offer is visible.

List of Supplies

Below is a list of supplies crowd-sourced from a group of disabled people. Much of this list will be redundant to typical street medic packs and we offer notes for some benefits of these supplies that may be less obvious. Please note that becoming a street medic takes a serious commitment to specialised training and carrying these supplies does not turn a person into a street medic, but it certainly can be helpful to have these things for yourself and other event attendees.

Properly cleaning and sanitising these items between each use with low-to-non-toxic and scent-free cleaning supplies should be a priority.

Access Vest: A safety vest for each member of the access team that says something like “ACCESS TEAM” or “ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT” or “ACCESS SUPPORT” in large legible letters.

Anti-fog wipes: There are many glasses wipes on the market that significantly reduce fog caused by wearing a mask. Most should be scent-free, but many can cause reactions to people with chemical sensitivities, so be aware of that and ask for consent before opening them in proximity to people. Also store in an airtight container away from commonly used supplies.

EDIT: Anti-chafing supplies: Chafing can be extremely painful and sensorily overwhelming. Having something like scent-free anti-chafing sticks can offer a great deal of relief, especially during actions with lots of movement.

Automatic small fans: Consider buying fans that do not require a person to hold it themselves, if possible, as to accommodate people who may be unable to hold an object while needing heat relief. Fans can also be used to regulate emotions because they provide a nice sensory experience.

Baby wipes: Try to find unscented and hypoallergenic baby wipes. If the wipes have a scent, tell the person about scent/ask for consent before using it if possible.

Battery packs: External phone chargers help people who use their phone as a primary means of communication.

Blankets: While quite cumbersome and not suitable for most street actions, weighted blankets can be extremely soothing during anxiety attacks and autistic meltdowns. Cheap fleece blankets are also soothing and should be washed with unscented laundry detergent between each use, if possible. Of course, emergency rescue blankets have many medical uses, and can also be used to create ad hoc privacy barriers for anyone experiencing a meltdown, anxiety attack, or having an emergency bathroom situation.

Cots: If your team has cots, consider letting trusted activists borrow them for events because laying down or elevating legs are common access needs. Also consider writing the weight that the cot supports in large writing as to encourage fat participants to use the cots without fear.

Disinfectant wipes: Encourage participants to wipe down microphones, megaphones, and other objects that may be used by multiple people between each use. Note that these wipes may aggravate chemical sensitivities, so use them with consent and keep the wipes in an airtight space away from other commonly used supplies.

Ear defenders: Ear defenders offer more sound protection than earplugs and good pairs can be found for as cheap as £15 a pair. Offer these to people who need sensory relief, or people that may benefit from a visual cue to show other people that they're in need of space/time alone, like after getting out of jail. Ear defenders might be especially good for the lending library.

Earplugs: Consider putting pairs in individual baggies if possible for easier distribution and sanitary purposes and so that people might be able to get further use out of them.

Extension cords

Extra shoe laces: You never know!

Foldable chairs: When buying chairs, try to get wide chairs that support a lot of weight to accommodate fat people. If your team has folding chairs, consider letting trusted activists borrow them for events because sitting is a common access need. Also consider writing the weight that the chair supports in large visible writing using a permanent pen as to encourage all participants to use it without fear.

Hand and foot warmers

Headlamps and flashlights

Heaters

Heated blankets and heat pads

Incontinence underpads

Inhalers

Knee pads for street medics: Your access needs matter!

Laminated guide: Again, can you create a "menu" of what's available in your pack?

Pads, tampons

Plastic straws: The only safe straw on the market for disabled people and people receiving medical attention is the plastic straw. To learn more about the ever pressing issue of medical ableism, check out #SuckItAbleism on Twitter. Straws were created with the medical purpose of helping disabled people consume liquids, and long bendy plastic straws are especially useful in a variety of situations.

Portable phone chargers

Saline: Saline is sometimes better than water for rinsing eyes, especially for people with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome.

Sharpies: Offer ways for people to write important information on their bodies. We have yet to come up with a way to offer this to people with chemical

sensitivities that aren't incredibly labour intensive, like sewing information onto clothing.

Sidewalk ramp, portable: This won't be feasible for many actions, but again, perhaps street medic teams can help create, store, and lend larger supplies to community members.

Sign to indicate BSL available: Invest in large, durable signs that indicate where an BSL interpreter is located. Consider attaching it to a large pole so that it's visible from a distance. In the Printable section!

Stencils: Create a braille stencil for important phone numbers using a thin piece of cardboard and a small hole punch. Place this stencil over someone's arm and use clear nail polish to create a raised braille phone number. This suggestion came to us via Twitter and we are curious to hear of efficacy.

Unscented hand sanitizer

Unscented lotion

Unscented sunscreen

Sun protection:

Disposable sunglasses: Consider carrying and distributing roll-up sunglasses similar to what ophthalmologists use, even on non-sunny days, as eye protection can help people feel safe during sensory overwhelm.

Reusable sunglasses

Visors

Warm gear: Extra socks, gloves, hats, scarves, etc.

Water for service animals

Welding gloves for tear gas canisters

Wheelchair and other mobility aids: Many communities have nonprofits dedicated to refurbishing donated mobility aids. Mobility aids can also be found at garage sales and discount donation stores. We suggest having mobility aids that the community can rent for free, as many people can't afford their own mobility aids, have dynamic disabilities that don't always warrant a purchase of mobility aids, but without mobility aids they are unable to participate in specific events, like organised marches. We love the practice of taking a wheelchair to an event with a sign on it that says, "Need a ride?"

Food & Medicine

Cough drops/lozenges/hard candies: Be able to provide the full ingredient list and consider having a few options like sugar-free and gluten-free. Cough drops are great for their most commonly known uses and are also awesome for emotional regulation. Hard candies are great for diabetics and hypoglycemia.

Electrolytes in many forms, especially electrolytes that are sugar-free and artificial dye free. Also consider electrolyte popsicles on hot days.

Water soluble pain medications for people with feeding tubes

Meal replacement shakes for people with feeding tubes, gastroparesis, etc.

Notes on food allergies, gluten intolerance, and other food sensitivities

- Ensure that all medicines are gluten-free. For instance, clear-coated Advil gel capsules are made with gluten and will cause major issues for someone with celiac. Cheap gluten-free meds are available and are clearly labelled as such.
- Ensure that all snacks are actually gluten free.
- Celiac-safe snacks are often more specific than gluten-free snacks. Be sure to have at least one celiac-safe option, even if it's a tasteless "allergen free" bar because it's at least providing safe calories.
- Avoid providing food that contains common allergies:
 - Cow's milk
 - Eggs
 - Gluten
 - Nuts
 - Oranges (avoid providing citrus in general, as it can spray when peeled/consumed and cause airborne reactions)
 - Red Dye 40
 - Soy

Setting Up the Event

1. Physically set up the space
 - a) Clear sidewalks and ramps of disruptive items (e.g. electric scooters left in the middle of a sidewalk)
 - b) Avoid setting up tables/tents blocking curb cuts and ramps
Clearly mark bathrooms, sanitation stations, and medic tents as well as their pathways.
 - c) Put signs about 2 metres off the ground if possible to accommodate a variety of heights.
 - d) Consider using tape, sidewalk chalk, or washable chalk paint to create impermanent way-finding markers on paths to important spaces like bathrooms.

During the Event

During the Event: For Access Teams, Participants, and Everyone!

1. Communicate!

- a) Announce and show what is available in terms of food, drink, medical supplies, and other supports.
- b) Announce and show evacuation routes. Give disabled people the opportunity to tell planners how they would like to be assisted in the event of an emergency.
- c) Give an audio description and physically point to pathways to important locations like bathrooms and medical tents.
- d) Announce where a smoking section is. Ask that anyone wearing fragrances go to a certain area so as to not aggravate people with sensitivities.
- e) Go over safety plans, emergency exits, and evacuation routes. Allow time for disabled people to ask questions and request accommodations after outlining evacuation routes.
- f) Allow people the opportunity to be themselves and move in a way that feels comfortable to them. Encourage sitting, laying, stimming, and stretching.
- g) Scan your environment to look for potential barriers or access needs and how you may be able to help if needed. For example, have the access team maintain clear pathways and unobstructed entrances, bathrooms, and seating areas.
- h) Have the access team ask attendees to move themselves or their belongings to reduce obstruction, self-seclude to smoke, and other accommodations listed throughout this guide.
- i) Trust that disabled folks - and all folks - know what they need better than you do, and listen when they tell you their needs.
- j) Ask for consent before touching someone or offering any other type of access support.
- k) Get creative with solutions. As long as the person you're supporting can communicate their needs (remember, there are many ways to communicate!) and you are physically capable of meeting that need, you can often find a solution even if it's something you haven't done before.
- l) Recognize your limits, acknowledge when you don't know how to help, and find a buddy, access team member, or other organiser to support you when you're beyond your knowledge zone.
- m) Don't assume somebody wants your support, even if they seem to be struggling.

- n) Don't assume you know someone's access needs just by looking at their body, their medical apparatus, or their mobility aid.
- o) Don't leave anyone behind. Don't let a disabled participant get arrested alone without an access support person, if at all possible.

During the Event: Potential Scenarios

Below is a non-exhaustive list of some disability and health-related scenarios you may encounter, created by a group of disabled activists. It's helpful for every participant to have an access-centred mindframe while attending an action. There are infinite disabilities and access needs, and it would be impossible for this guide to prepare you for every single one. We've tried to focus here on potential scenarios in which it may not be obvious how to accommodate the person whom you're trying to support and to correct common frustrations among disabled people who historically do not get their needs met often.

1. Ask First!

EDIT: We need to be clear that this section is not a broad recommendation to ask people to share vulnerable and personal information with you, most especially information related to diagnosis, disclosure of disability, etc.

Disabled people are tired of strangers asking them personal questions. It's traumatic, disturbing, paternalizing, too forward, and often creates uncomfortable power dynamics. To be clear, this section is advice for people who know how to establish [access intimacy](#) (link to awesome, essential blog post by Mia Mingus), for people in care worker roles, and for people who follow the leadership of disabled people.

Always establish consent before offering accommodations, feedback, and the like.

People with connective tissue disorders, such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), are especially sensitive to physical interventions like eye rinsing. Always ask before providing help and let them guide body movements, such as tilting their head back. Remember, these types of disabilities aren't immediately visible, so always ask first.

If you spot behaviour that seems out of place, consider kindly asking, "Do you have accessibility needs?" This may open conversation to let people say whether their behaviour is or is not related to disabilities and to let them share their needs.

2. Communication

A note on accommodating non-speaking people:

- a) Remember not to speak down or speak condescendingly to non-speaking people, in both tone and language used.
- b) Do not assume that non-speaking people are less capable because they're not speaking.
- c) Do not speak over non-speaking folk.
- d) Remember to embrace pausing, taking breaks, and allowing ample time for communication.
- e) When assessing an injury, don't be afraid to ask, "What is normal for you?" to get a baseline.
- f) When giving treatment, ask, "Is there any accommodation you need or anything you need access-wise?"
- g) Disabled people are happy to be asked "Is this impairment or something else?" by legitimate questioners like medics.

3. Autistic Support

Learn how to spot an autistic meltdown and offer support.

- ◆ [Meltdowns -- The 3 Stage Model](#) by Autistic Blog
- ◆ [How to Spot & Support an Autistic Meltdown](#): a break-out guide created from crowdsourced information from autistic activists.

Learning how to support autistic people during high-stress moments can quite literally save their lives. Please make sure at least a few people on your team are comfortable with these guides and reach out to autistic people in your community to learn more about their needs. Remember, autistic people are the best experts on the autistic experience.

4. Blind Participants and Visual Impairment

You may encounter someone who is blind or visually impaired who wants/needs assistance finding their way. This is especially likely in scenarios in which someone experiences temporary vision loss due to tear gas. Always ask for consent before offering assistance.

- a) Wayfinding and Signage
 - i.) Again, it's important to have accessible wayfinding signage.
 - ii. Proper height, braille, large signs, legible fonts, high contrast color combinations like black and yellow, or no-signal blue and white.
- b) Sight Guiding
 - i. [Listen: How to Sight Guide with Dr. Amy Kavanaugh](#)
 - ii. Follow #DontGrabJustAsk on Twitter
 - iii. Introduce yourself. "Hello, my name is [NAME]. Would you like some assistance?"

- iiii. Offer verbal descriptions. Example: “The cars have stopped to let you cross. There is a curb cut with a raised surface on the other side of the street.”
- v. Hold a shoulder, or the crook of someone’s arm to offer physical guidance. You may also need to physically support the person by placing your arm under their arms.

5. D/deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Participants, and Participants with Hearing Loss

In general, hearing aids and assistive listening devices amplify sounds, but do not necessarily make sounds clearer.

Tips for speaking to a person who is hard of hearing, [sourced from Camisha L. Jones](#):

- a) Lightly tap on their shoulder to get their attention, or wave.
- b) Face them with your mouth in clear view for lipreading if possible.
- c) Wear a clear mask to unobstruct as much of your mouth as safely possible.
- d) If a clear mask is unavailable, communicate by typing on a phone or writing on a piece of paper.
- e) Be cognizant of speed. Speak at a slower pace and try to enunciate, but not condescendingly so.
- f) Feel free to check in every once in a while to check that the person is hearing what you’re saying.
- g) Be willing to repeat yourself when requested.
- h) Before raising your voice or shouting, ask if increasing volume would be helpful.
- i) People with hearing aids are at risk because hearing aids can be knocked off. Be aware of this at protests, marches, or events that could include shoving or chaotic movement.
- j) Download speech to text apps on your phone so you can communicate with d/Deaf folks and folks with hearing loss.
- k) It’s good to have an interpreter or someone who knows BSL so d/Deaf people can communicate with you. Do your best to learn a few basic BSL phrases, even if it’s just “yes” “no”?

After the Event

Processing and evaluating an event is crucial for the sustainability of a movement. While we label this as after the event, much of this can be prepped before an event and sent out or distributed as the final step after an event. Attendees can also look to this section to plan out their post-event plan. For example, participants might place a laundry basket for their clothes in a garage or car, if possible, as to make the post event recuperation easier. Remember that everyone has access needs regardless of disability identity and anticipating rest, recuperation, and relaxation should be a part of strategy!

1. Check on your disabled audiences immediately after the event!

- a) Did anyone lose access to mobility devices, medications, glasses, hearing aids?
- b) Is the physical space preventing anyone from mobility? (e.g. damage or blockades to ramps)
- c) Does everyone have access to transportation home/away from the event?

2. In the days following the event: Continue to check on your disabled allies!

- a) Flare-ups of many illnesses/injuries are common after stressful/high energy events. Your disabled comrades are likely attending to chronic pain, illness, and injury.
- b) Find out what they need.
 - i. Food? Touch? Ride to the doctor? Walk their dog?
 - ii. Therapy resources? Processing support? Reassurance? Grounding?

After the Event: for Event Planners & Organisers

- 1. Create after care practises
 - a) Ensure that anyone who may have been triggered by the event has appropriate care before leaving them. Do not leave comrades in distress alone, ever.
 - b) Make space to debrief the emotions of the actions, immediately and also on a continual basis. This should be a practice for all folks, not just disabled people. All spectrums of activism work are traumatising! Take space to talk about not just tactics but how those tactics made you feel. How can we make this work safer and more sustainable? How can we build safety within our organisations? Rest, recuperate, relax. See also suggestions for attendees, supports, & caregivers.

2. Evaluate

- a) Distribute an evaluation to collect feedback from attendees and even people who were unable to attend.
- b) Ask them to evaluate barriers that they were able to overcome and barriers that they were not able to overcome.
- c) Ask them to list what went well and what didn't.
- d) Be sure to offer this evaluation in multiple formats to accommodate different styles and abilities of communication.
- e) Questions to ask collaborators:
 - i) What accommodations were we able to provide? What accommodations were we unable to provide?
 - ii) Did people take advantage of our accommodations?
- f) Offer ways to give anonymous feedback.
- g) Communicate with people who didn't show up or seemed to "drop the ball"
- h) If someone seems to have disappeared, stopped showing up to organising meetings, or didn't show up to your event, don't assume they lost interest or are "bailing" on your organisation. Check in to see if they're okay, what they're interest/ability is to continue organising with you, and find out more about their pacing/access needs.

After the Event: for Attendees, Supports, Caregivers, & Everyone

1. Wash clothes and wash body/hair if possible to reduce transmission of COVID-19.
2. Wash or dispose of masks properly.
3. Repair, replace, or crowd-source from mutual aid groups any supplies that need replaced.
4. Report to event organisers about access barriers so improvements can be made.
5. Rest, heal, take good care (we could write another whole guide just on this one!).