



# How-to Make Your Event More Inclusive

## What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means welcoming everyone in ways that respect and celebrate diversity, and ensuring that differences don't become barriers to full engagement and participation.

## Inclusion principles

- Inclusion ensures that people are not marginalized and excluded because of their differences
- Inclusion happens in full partnership with all the individuals or groups to be included
- Inclusion empowers all participants and allows them to participate on their own terms
- Inclusion flows from “universally designed” plans and structures that work for all, knowing that artificial barriers are created when plans are designed to only work for some
- Inclusion requires forethought, dialogue, planning and flexibility to adjust for the unexpected
- Moving from integration (having people with differences present) to inclusion requires adaptations, accommodations or supports to eliminate barriers and level the playing field for all
- Inclusion, unlike charity, unlocks a more powerful dialogue among equals. It raises our human understanding and connection in ways that enrich all participants

## Planning

- The best people to provide advice on barriers to inclusion are people who have experienced exclusion. Engage people with disabilities in your planning group from the start and ensure they have supports to participate fully in the planning process.
- Have a conversation about potential barriers and what an inclusive event would look like for everyone participating.
- Consider the full spectrum of disabilities: how will your event accommodate physical, mobility, sensory, intellectual, neurological and/or mental health challenges.
- Include any accommodations needs in the event budget.
- Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person. Event hosts are responsible for accommodating such additional supports required for participation.
- Some people may need extra space for scooters and wheelchairs, a private space for personal care, or somewhere to escape from sensory overload. Consider this need for space in your location planning.
- Many people with disabilities live in poverty, which presents further barriers. Ensure that costs, Web access and transportation challenges aren't barriers to participation.
- Consider additional safety or logistical needs to ensure everyone is safe and comfortable.
- Design communications materials to reach your entire audience. Consider planning discussions, invitations and event promotion, on-site directions and performance or event messaging.
- Be flexible, balancing diverse needs and opposing interests.