

## Accessibility Resource Sheet

### Tools, Devices, and Techniques for Accessible Workspaces

Creating an accessible workspace is essential for accommodating diverse needs. Below is a resource guide that outlines various tools and techniques to enhance accessibility. Feel free to edit and adapt this content for your website and handouts.

#### Chair

What chairs do you have in your waiting space?

- Having a variety of chairs with arms (helps some people to get up).
- Chairs with no arms (not everyone fits comfortably with arms)
- Higher (taller) chair: some people have bad backs or hips or can't get up from lower seats.

#### Adjustable desk

- You may have someone who uses a wheelchair or is of shorter stature and needs a lower desk. Someone may be 7 feet tall and needs a higher desk.
- Adjustable desks offer the flexibility to sit or stand. Someone might be pregnant or have an injury or pain where they need to stand and sit alternating.

#### Light

- Lighting: The dimmer switch on the main light source allows better light control.
- A lamp should be on the desk so that individuals can control the amount of light they use.
- Overhead lighting, computer screens, and the amount of sunlight change the visual.
- Being able to adjust is important and different for everyone.

#### Noise

- Having ear defenders, noise-cancelling headphones, or earplugs can benefit many.
- Noisy environments can overwhelm some people.
- Noise can make it more difficult to focus or concentrate.
- Having the option to be less distracted can improve productivity.
- Offering a quiet space for people to take a break can recharge and motivate them to be more productive.
- Having a headset or microphone for the phone/Zoom meetings. This allows for handsfree and can improve productivity.
- Some people have difficulty holding items or have pain, especially for long periods. Such as dexterity, arthritis, and neuropathy. Sore wrist. Elbow, shoulder, neck, etc.

### **Pens**

- What kind of pens do you use? Do you have a click pen that you push down with your thumb or finger, or is it a pen where the lid pulls off? A pen that you need to pull the lid off is less accessible because not everybody has the dexterity in their hands to pull the cap off. Some people do not have the use of both hands. Plus, when you pull the cap off, there's a higher chance that the pen will roll and possibly fall to the ground. Not everybody can easily bend down and pick it up. You could put an elastic band around the pen to stop it from rolling if you already have pens that have lids that can be removed. The elastic also acts as a grip and can make it easier to pick it up.
- Having a jar with a variety of pens, including a thick grip pen, can meet most of the needs of more people

### **Swivel seats**

- A swivel seat works on chairs with no arms and allows a person to turn easily in the chair.
- This is helpful for some who have lower mobility, may be pregnant, or have leg, hip, back, or neck pain where turning is more challenging.
- This cushion also works well in a car, getting in and out. If the car seat is not completely flat, (as many are not), put a towel underneath the cushion on the car seat to make it flat for the swivel.

### **Handy bar**

- Handy bar: this small device helps people who need help standing from a seated position.
- This handy bar creates safety for both the person you are assisting and the person assisting.
- It keeps the person needing help from falling forward if you pull too hard or too fast. Sometimes squeezing too hard could hurt.
- This bar helps also you from injuring yourself while trying to help lift or pull them up.
- Have power bars for desks attached to the desk or a wall behind the desk for easy plug-in and reach. Some people cannot bend down easily or reach low outlets

### **Blinking lights**

- Don't have blinking lights on at Christmas. Blinking lights can be a trigger for people with epilepsy, autism, certain eye conditions, sensory processing disorders, and other conditions.

### **Washrooms**

- Having a grab bar in washroom stalls can help people get up easier who are pregnant, or have foot, knee, hip, or back pain. The bar can stabilize if someone is not feeling well or is dizzy.
- Not all businesses have accessible washrooms. If your space does not have an accessible bathroom, something helpful is learning where the closest one is. Ex Starbucks 4 doors down has one. This will save someone from going into multiple places to find one.
- In washrooms, hand dryers can be extremely loud for people with sensory processing

disorder, autism, or people who have headaches or migraines, and the noise makes it more difficult for those who are hard of hearing. Have an alternative, such as a paper towel or cloth option, to dry hands.

- Colour contrast and placement of washroom signs. Ex. A light grey sign on the dark door. Use white or yellow signs on grey or dark doors. Place the sign around 4.5 feet from the ground and have Braille on it so people with low to no vision can identify which washroom they are entering.
- Make all signage in large print with good colour contrast.

### **Debit/credit machines**

- Debit/credit machines—having a terminal with physical buttons to push allows everyone to operate the machine independently.
- If you have a digital terminal, ask your provider to give you a tactile overlay. Most providers have this overlay only; it is not provided as a default.

### **Signature**

- If ever you require a signature, having a signature guide is helpful for anyone with low vision or who is blind. A signature guide is the same size as a credit card; only a 1 cm x 3 cm rectangle is cut out of the centre so the person can sign their name in the open space. If you do not have a signature guide, it is helpful if you fold directly on the line and open the paper, which gives people with low vision a tactile awareness of where to sign.

### **Appointments and meetings**

- When scheduling appointments by phone, ask if any accommodations are needed before or during the meeting. For example, if someone says they have chemical sensitivities and you know that you've just painted, cleaned the carpets, or polished the floors, then you know to schedule the meeting for the following week. Maybe someone is allergic to dogs, and someone has a service dog; then you know to use a different area away from the dog, if possible, for that individual, or you can give them a heads up and offer a remote meeting.
- When sending out virtual invitations to meet. Ask if there are any accommodations before the meeting, webinar, or zoom. Someone with low vision may want to preview slides and material ahead of time. Someone may need subtitles.
- If you use slides in your PowerPoint, be mindful of text size and colour contrast; you never know who will be attending.
- In virtual settings, give a short visual description. This is for anyone who has low vision or who may just be on audio and no video. It could look something like I have long brown hair in a ponytail. I'm wearing red glasses and a blue shirt.
- In all hashtags #, capitalize the first letter of a word. Ex, MakingADifference, not #makingadifference screen readers can't read hashtags without capitals.



- On all photos, add a photo description or alt text so people who are blind know what image you have; otherwise, screen readers say image. You can use AI for this if you are unsure.

### **Job postings**

- In job postings, make it clear you welcome diversity and are open to working with diverse abilities. People may use alternative ways to accomplish a task, so being open and having good communication skills. Adding that disclosing non-apparent disabilities allows for a more supportive atmosphere.
- Make sure the website is accessible and screen reader friendly. Be mindful of the style of lettering, font size, and colour contrast that you use.

### **Round doorknobs**

- Round doorknobs are harder to grip and turn for some people. A flat handle to push down is easier, one can use an elbow to open the door. There are grips available to go over round doorknobs to make them easier to grip for opening.

### **Colour contrast**

- Colour contrast on steps. Ex a yellow line on the edge of each step or at the top of the stairs and on the bottom step. Texture change is also helpful if colour is not an option. Ex carpet at the top and bottom steps (make sure it is fastened down to prevent tripping).
- Having large print, braille, and QR codes for menus, services, or products offered and prices is inclusive.

### **Other**

- When offering a glass of water or beverage, inquire if a glass or mug is preferred (not everyone can hold a glass). Elastic bands act as a grip and make it easier to hold a glass, especially if there is condensation.
- Long-handled shoehorn. For any business where a client/customer needs to take shoes off, ex. Realtor, spa (pedicure), shoe store, clothing store, etc.
- If a business is a clothing store, having a dressing stick, zipper pulls, button hook, long handle shoehorn, and sock helper creates more accessibility. These items are also useful in medical offices such as chiropractors, doctors, physiotherapists, etc.
- If you are a car dealership, taxi, Uber, or transport individual, having a swivel seat, handy bar, and handy grab (dressing stick to pull the seatbelt strap) creates more accessibility and independence.

### **Customized Solutions**

Every business has unique needs. For specific recommendations tailored to your services, please contact us for a customized list to enhance accessibility and accommodations in your space.