

## PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR BEING MORE INCLUSIVE

Every person we support is an individual, we should not assume that they need our assistance or that we know what supports someone might need. Two people with the same disability may have very different access and support needs. Often the people we support have their own ways of coping with and removing their barrier. It is empowering to ask them for direction in how best to support them. Start by asking these types of questions –

“Do you need any additional supports?” “How can we best support you?” “What others supports might you need?”

Increasing accessibility is about considering others and creating an inclusive environment that can be used by all people. While this can refer to accessing a physical space, it also refers to accessing content, participating in meetings and challenging attitudes etc.

It is still important to remember everybody is an individual. Don't assume people need support. Ask first and ask for guidance in how to support each individual.

Following are some practical examples to help overcome barriers to inclusion:

	Don't do or say	Instead try doing or saying...
<b>Language and communication</b>	<p>Don't use terms that have a negative or disempowering connotation; <i>handicap, victim, cripple, struggles with mental illness</i></p> <p>Don't use stereo types or colloquialisms; <i>Asian, lame, crazy</i></p> <p>Don't define a person by a disability, for example <i>wheelchair-bound</i></p> <p>Don't wait for the person to bring up a challenge or complaint</p> <p>Don't assume you know what a person is going to say</p> <p>Don't assume you understand the meaning of what someone says</p>	<p>Do use terms that are positive and empowering; <i>person living with a disability, on a mental health recovery journey</i></p> <p>Do use plain and accurate language; <i>Vietnamese, foolish, excited</i></p> <p>Do use people first language, for example <i>a person who uses a wheelchair</i></p> <p>Be proactive in communication, ask for feedback, encourage open discussion</p> <p>Practice active listening, listen without disruption, paraphrase, and give opportunity for the other person to correct you if needed</p> <p>Do repeat what was said in your own words to check you have understood correctly</p>
<b>Increasing access for people living with a hearing impairment</b>	<p>Don't meet in a noisy place or a space with constant background noise</p> <p>Don't shout</p> <p>Don't use single words</p> <p>Don't talk only about work-related tasks</p>	<p>Meet in a quiet space</p> <p>Face the person when you are speaking</p> <p>Speak at a normal volume</p> <p>Use complete sentences</p> <p>Engage in social chitchat</p> <p>Have pen &amp; paper handy to help with communication</p>

<p><b>Increasing access for people living with a sight impairment</b></p>	<p>Don't just start talking or say Hi, and launch into conversation</p> <p>Don't hand out required reading in small print</p> <p>Don't pat or engage with a guide dog</p>	<p>Always identify yourself by name when greeting the person</p> <p>Do keep the conversation focused on the individual</p> <p>Print any required reading, such as a meeting agenda, in large text</p> <p>Wherever possible provide written material ahead of time</p>
<p><b>Increasing access for people living with reduced mobility</b></p>	<p>Don't store boxes, collateral etc in corridors, around desks, or in common areas</p> <p>Don't wait until the person arrives and then shuffle people and collateral around</p> <p>Don't use the hot desk that is down the back, around the corner and difficult to find</p> <p>Don't assume that a person always requires wheelchair access</p> <p>Don't use an accessible parking spot or toilet for storage</p> <p>Don't designate a parking spot as accessible unless it has appropriate access</p>	<p>Walk through your space and remove any clutter that could inhibit easy movement</p> <p>Plan and set up the workstation ahead of time e.g. If you have a height adjustable desk, make sure it is available for use</p> <p>Ensure assigned workstations are accessible by a direct route and easy to navigate</p> <p>Do ask what kind of access a person requires and communicate what kind of accessibility your space has e.g. We have accessible desks and workspaces, but we do not have an accessible bathroom</p> <p>Do engage in conversation at a similar height i.e., by sitting down to converse with someone using a wheelchair.</p>