



Accessibility Beyond Physical Access

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Today's Instructor: Jillian Nelson

- + Community Resource & Policy Advocate for AuSM
- + Governor's Council on Disability
- + Member of the State Rehabilitation Council
- + Autistic
- + Avid Ticket Holder and Event Goer!



Objectives

- + Why Accessibility Matters
- + Benefits of Inclusive Communities & Sensory Friendly Spaces
- + Tools for Your Events

Small things that make a big difference that don't break the budget



Inclusive Community

Accessibility

Physical

Sensory

Cognitive

Acceptance

Everyone is Different

All Are Welcome

Equity Requires Engagement

Why Accessibility Matters

- + It's the Law (this is the wrong motivation...)
- + Inclusion shouldn't be limited to basic needs
- + Social Justice (human and civil rights)
- + Accessibility increases your customer base
- + Anyone can benefit from it



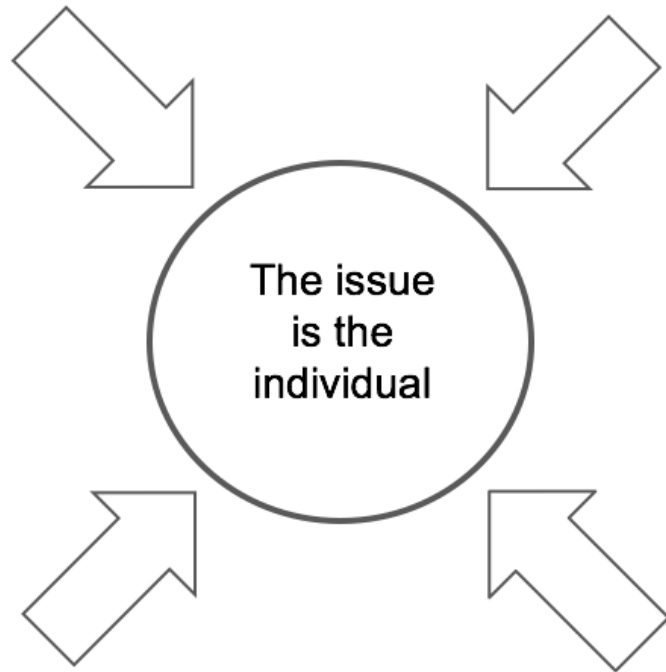
What does the ADA say

- + The ADA is the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- + It highlights the basic expectations for accessibility- typically related to physical access for mobility disabilities and Blind and hard of hearing communities.
 - ASL Interpreters
 - Accessible space and bathrooms (ramps and handrails)
 - handicap parking.

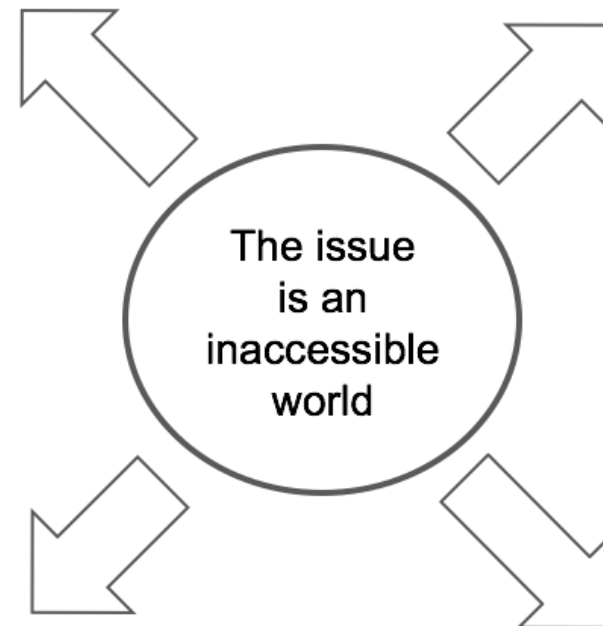
Understanding Disability

- + Disability Includes physical, cognitive, learning, developmental, sensory, and emotional-behavioral disabilities.
- + Also may include major health conditions such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis, cancer, HIV, etc.
- + CDC: 1 in 4 persons in the US has a disability
- + Many of these disabilities may not be visible.
- + Disability is the only group with “open enrollment”

Understanding Disability



Medical Model



Social Model

ADA Resources

- + Mn Access Alliance www.mnaccess.org
- + Metro Regional Arts Council www.mrac.org
- + Accessible Temporary Events (Great Plains ADA Center)
<https://www.gpadacenter.org/sites/default/files/2017-08/AccessibleTemporaryEvents.pdf>

**What about accessibility
beyond ramps, bathrooms
and parking though?**





Benefits of Inclusive Communities & Sensory Friendly Spaces



Minnesota's First Autism Resource®

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Benefits of inclusive communities

- + Crisis reduction
- + Sense of Belonging
- + Culture of Acceptance
- + Greater Engagement



“We can’t let the fact that we can’t do everything be the excuse for not doing anything.”

John Waldo (Attorney / Disability Rights Advocate)



AuSM's Sensory Friendly Event Partners



Pride



Irish Fair



Rock the Garden



Guthrie



Disability on the Hill



MN Orchestra



The Wild



Small things that make a big difference but do not break the budget



PHYSICAL
SPACE



KITS &
TOOLS



SPECIAL
TIMES



SOCIAL
NARRATIVES



STAFF
TRAINING



CHANGE
THE SPACE



Physical Space

- + This is a quiet space that people can use to take a break
- + Location
- + Noise options
- + Sensory Tools
- + Support Staff





Kits & Tools

- + Tools on site that participants can take with them to use throughout the event.
- + Think about what challenges your event may have.
- + Also great promo!





Special Times


- + Earlier start times
- + Earlier access times
- + Special dates










Social Narratives




- + This is a specific way of writing that prepares the reader for the expectations of the event or space.
- + May highlight where they should go
- + Can explain sensory challenges
- + Can explain expected behavior
- + Can explain potential challenges.



 Asking Politely Communication Symbols
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When I want something, sometimes I forget to ask nicely.


I say things like, "give me that" and reach out for what I want.

 
It is rude to act like that. People will not want to help me if I don't ask nicely. I need to ask politely so people will answer me.

  
I can ask nicely like, "Excuse me, can you please give me that." Then I wait for them to answer before I reach for something.

 
When I am polite, people will want to help me and I will be happy.



Staff and Volunteer Training

- + Accessibility planning isn't effective unless the people on the ground know about it.
- + Should be led by the community





Change the Space

- + Lower lights
- + Lower Volume
- + Different expectations of program
- + Sensory tools available



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Outreach and Awareness (if you build it they will come)

- + Make it intentional
- + Note accessibility in all messaging / materials / PR
- + Include disability access symbols
- + Reach out to list-servs and community contacts
- + Engage the disability community in planning

ONSITE:

- + Central information location for accessibility
- + Signage / Visibility

- + First Impressions set the tone! The Customer Service Lens
- + ASK how you can help (and listen)
- + Offer info and options (but don't make the decision)
- + Remember not all disabilities are visible to you
- + Communication ≠ Cognition

Thank You!

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Established in 1971, the Autism Society of Minnesota is committed to education, advocacy and support designed to enhance the lives of those affected by autism from birth through retirement.

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