


Partners
for Inclusive Communities

Proactive Strategies
for Building a Disability-Inclusive Workplace

Melanie Thornton
Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach

 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS OF HEALTH SCIENCES

1

Download Handout

exploreaccess.org/handouts




Partners
for Inclusive Communities

2

About Partners

- Off-campus outreach program
- Part of COEHP
- Located in Little Rock
- Provide training and technical assistance related to Disability, Access and Inclusion



Partners
for Inclusive Communities

3

Southwest  Center | **Arkansas
Affiliate**


- 1.800.949.4232
- swdbtac@ilru.org
- southwestada.org



4



5

1 Challenge bias by changing the ways Disability is viewed and represented.



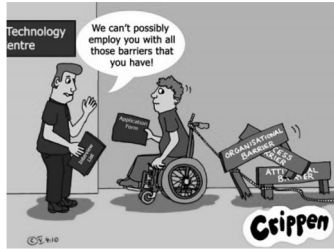
6

How Society Sees Disability

- Pity
- Needy
- Expensive
- Inspirational
- Doubt
- Compliance issue



7



Relocating the Problem of Disability



8

Disability isn't the problem. What's a problem is convincing others that it's not a problem.



Lais Kari, a proofreader who is blind



9

2 Increase visibility and opportunities for connection.



10

Increasing Disability Visibility

- Host, support or promote programming and presentations by Disability activists.
- Infuse Disability Studies scholarship across academic disciplines
- Explore ways to celebrate Disability Pride Month or the ADA Anniversary



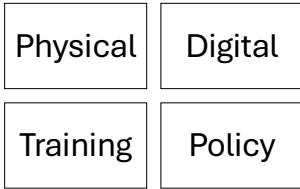
11

3 Remove barriers to access.



12

Learn About Creating Accessible Environments



13

Where To Begin

- Emails
- Meetings
 - In-person
 - Virtual
- Workstations
- Break area
- Telework policies and practices
- Departmental Web Page
 - [Ally Accessibility Checker](#)



14

Conduct an Accessibility Audit of Your Department

- [ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities](#)
- [Digital Access Maturity Model](#)
- [National Organization on Disability: Employment Tracker](#)
- [Explore Access: Accessible Online Learning](#)



15

Report Accessibility Barriers

OEOC: **Barriers to Access Form**

Barriers to Access

A barrier is an obstacle or anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in in all aspects of society because of their disability. If you or someone you know is experiencing a barrier, let us help.

[Barriers to Access Overview](#)



16

Provide Opportunities for Connection

- Share information about the Disability Employment Resource Group (ERG)
 - [HR: Disability Employment Resource Group](#)
- ERGs offer employees an opportunity to network, address common issues and concerns, and receive support.
 - [EARN: Fostering Disability-Inclusive Workplaces Through Employee Resource Groups \(PDF\)](#)



17

4 Provide opportunities to request accommodations.



18

Inform New and Existing Employees of Process for Requesting Accommodations

- Make the invitation to request accommodations a part of the new employee onboarding.
- Send occasional reminders about your commitment to access and how to request accommodations.
- Share the accessibility.uark.edu website with your team.



19

Responding to Individual Requests

1. Recognize an accommodation request.
2. Remain open and open-minded. Don't shut down the conversation.
3. Respect confidentiality and privacy.
4. Recognize that most people know what works best for them.
5. Consult with others if needed.
6. When it is possible to resolve the barrier easily, just do it.



20

What is an Accommodation Request?

- A request for an accommodation doesn't have to include the words "disability" and "accommodation". It may look more like this:
 - I don't want to take leave so often but with my back pain, I'm finding it difficult to sit at my desk for long periods of time.
 - With my hearing loss, the noise coming from the conference room next door makes it hard for me to hear on the phone.



21

Accommodation Requests on Training Registration

Please select any disability related accommodations that will make this workshop accessible for you.

- ASL Interpreter
- Typewell
- CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation)
- Assistive Listening Device
- Captioned Videos
- Large Print handouts
- Accessible Digital handouts
- Other _____



22

Accessibility Statements on Events

Requesting Disability-Related Accommodations:

_____ values the inclusion of people with disabilities in our programs and activities. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate barriers to your full participation in this event, please contact (name, sponsoring organization) at (phone and email).



23

Brochures and Printed Materials

This document is available in alternative formats upon request by contacting (name, campus department) at (phone number and email). An electronic version is available online: (Website address here).



24

5 Ensure recruiting and hiring practices are accessible and inclusive.



25

Accessible Practices

- Hiring and Recruiting Policies
- Job descriptions and announcements
- Accessible application process
- Outreach
- Accessible location for interviews
- Accessible interviews



26

Resources

Explore Access:
Workplace Access Resources



27

Contact Me

Melanie Thornton

Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach

Partners for Inclusive Communities

University of Arkansas

Email: mthornt@uark.edu