

# Federation's Disability Inclusion Planning Toolkit

## Communication Discussion Guide

Opening up involvement and participation for all.

This discussion guide is designed to spark conversation about how you communicate with members, stakeholders and the public. We will explore the content of what is communicated, and the way inclusivity is expressed. As with all disability inclusion work, the voices of those with disabilities are essential to this process.

Additional information about advancing disability inclusion can be found on [Federation's Community Resource website](#). Please contact Lisa Handelman at 301-230-7278 or at [lisa.handelman@shalomdc.org](mailto:lisa.handelman@shalomdc.org) for questions or to share additional resources.

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### Toolkit Legend

**W** "Welcoming" questions and comments refer to changes that may involve modification in attitude, but do not necessarily require additional funding.

**A** "Accommodating" questions and comments focus on specific accommodations that may require minimal additional resources, long-term planning and/or significant funding. Some costs are ongoing while others involve initial structural changes followed by less expensive maintenance.

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### Policies and Awareness

**W** **How explicitly do you communicate your desire to include individuals with disabilities?** What policies do you have in place or can you create to facilitate inclusion? For example, do you have a process to ask families what is needed or an established procedure for individuals to request accommodations? Do you have a process for responding to requests for modification and assistance? Have you outlined guidelines to assure inclusion on event planning forms and other internal documents?

**A** **What accommodations do you offer that support communication?** For example, do you have large print, braille or audio format for printed material and are you set up to use assistive telecommunication equipment. Do you offer ASL interpreters, have an audio loop, use speech to text technology, such as real-time captioning and routinely close caption all your videos?

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### Signage

**W** **Do you have clear signage so that everyone knows how to navigate your building and can locate accessibility assistance?**

**A** **Does signage meet ADA requirements?** For example, do signs include bold, high contrast, raised characters and braille text?

## Website

- W** **On your website, how do you promote the steps you are taking to become more inclusive of individuals with disabilities, including mental health disabilities?** Do the photographs and the stories you share, the events you advertise, and the language you use in mission statement, “about us” and other sections reflect that individuals with disabilities are welcomed and included?
  - A** **Is your website fully accessible?** This can include making sure all online videos and audio files include captioning, adding textual descriptions or what is called “alternative text” to charts, graphs, images, and maps so that they are discernible by assistive technology and adding audio description for materials presented visually.
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## Distributed Materials

- W** **Do your printed materials communicate your desire to be inclusive?** Are there welcoming statements on flyers, are there maps and visual guides provided to help individuals find their way around the building, and do the photos around your building include individuals with disabilities side-by-side with peers without visible disabilities?
  - A** **Do you have multiple ways to share materials?** Are handouts provided in an electronic version during meetings and presentations for individuals who need or want to use technology to access and manipulate the materials, can individuals receive transcripts for purely audio files that don't have a visual component and is there a way to sign up for an event without using a computer?
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## Staff Training and Awareness

- W** **Has the leadership's commitment to include individuals with disabilities been clearly articulated?** Does your leadership consistently and frequently tell people they are welcome, respected and appreciated in your institution?
  - W** **Has staff and volunteers received training to support individuals with disabilities including hidden disabilities and mental health conditions?** Does staff and volunteers know how to welcome service animals, can they accurately inform members and guests of the accessible features within the building, and does staff know how to alert people with disabilities of an emergency and how to assist them in leaving the building or sheltering?
  - A** **Do you have a staff member who can guide your inclusion journey?** How do you stay current with proposed and new regulations/legislation and best practices that affects advancing inclusion? Is there a trained person designated to respond to questions about accessibility and support for individuals with disabilities, does your staff know how to locate interpreters and obtain materials in accessible formats?
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## Budget

- W** **Do you have a strategic budgetary plan with a clear timeline so that you can make changes to materials, signage and your website?** Does this budget include ways to fund additional staff training and alternative communication including ASL interpreters?
- A** **Are accommodations that support communication covered by your budget so that they can be provided in a seamless manner that does not required individuals to pay for these accommodations?**

*Use Federation's online Self-Assessment Activities to build your Customized Resource Package*  
**[shalomdc.org/inclusionassessment](http://shalomdc.org/inclusionassessment)**