

DISABILITY INCLUSION ROADMAP



Discussion Guide: Communication

Opening Up Involvement & 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.

Roadmap Legend

- W** “Welcoming” questions and comments refer to changes that may involve modifying attitudes and minimal resources.
- A** “Accommodating” questions and comments focus on specific accommodations that may require strategic planning and additional funding. Some costs are ongoing while others involve initial structural changes followed by maintenance.

For more Disability Inclusion resources, visit shalomdc.org/disabilityinclusion.

POLICIES & 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?

SIGNAGE & COMMUNICATION

- 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?
- W** Communication starts by asking people what they need. Consider adding signs indicating accessible entrances/exits and accessible restrooms. Bold decals can be used to mark glass doors, so no one runs into them. Explore alternative communication methods for individuals with communication needs or hearing impairments (MD Relay, text, email, phone with TTD to call in about inclement weather).
- A** Does signage meet American Disability Act (ADA) requirements? For example, do signs include bold, high contrast, raised characters, and braille text? Are your interior signs mounted with a centerline 60 inches from the floor with raised characters and braille text?



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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 the mission statement, “about us,” and other sections reflect that individuals with disabilities are welcome and included?
- A** Is your website fully accessible? This can include making sure all online videos and audio files include captioning and/or “alternative text” (textual descriptions) to charts, graphs, images, and maps so that they are discernible by assistive technology as well as adding audio description for materials presented visually.

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? Do the photos around your building include individuals with disabilities side-by-side with peers without visible disabilities?
- W** 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 do not have a visual component? Is there a way to sign up for an event without using a computer?

STAFF TRAINING & AWARENESS

- A** 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** Do staff and volunteers receive training to support individuals with disabilities, including hidden disabilities and mental health conditions? Do staff and volunteers know how to welcome service animals, accurately inform members and guests of the accessible features within the building, alert people with disabilities of an emergency, and 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 affect 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?

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?

For questions or to share additional resources, please email inclusion@shalomdc.org.