

Guidelines for Conducting Workshops

Accessibility Guidelines for Workshop Presenters¹

People with obvious and not-so-obvious disabilities may need accommodation in order to participate fully. In addition to accommodating the accessibility needs of participants who request them, workshop presenters are encouraged to follow these basic Accessibility Guidelines:

- Prepare a few large-print copies of all handouts.
- Write clearly and use large letters on newsprint. Use black or brown markers for maximum visibility (red and green are difficult for some to see).
- Make a printed copy of information you plan to post on newsprint, to give to anyone who requests it.
- Face the group when you are speaking and encourage others to do the same. Be aware of facial hair or hand gestures that may prevent or interfere with lip reading.
- In a large space or with a large group of people, use a microphone for presentations and for questions and answers. If a particular activity will likely make it difficult for speakers to face those who are listening (e.g., a fishbowl, forced choice, or role play activity), use a microphone you can pass from speaker to speaker.
- In a brainstorm activity, repeat clearly any word or phrase generated by the group in addition to writing it on newsprint.
- If the group will listen to significant amounts of material read aloud, be ready to provide printed copies to any hearing-impaired participants so they can read along.
- During small group work, position each group far enough from other groups to minimize noise interference.
- Keep aisles and doorways clear at all times during a workshop so people with mobility impairments or immediate needs can exit the room easily.
- Offer a variety of seating options—for example, straight chairs, soft chairs, chairs with arms, and chairs without arms—so participants can find seating that best suits their needs.

¹ These participation guidelines are adapted, with permission, from the UUA's Tapestry of Faith's guidelines for integrating all participants in workshops.

- When re-arranging furniture for small groups or other purposes, ensure clear pathways between groups.
- Enlist participants' vigilance in removing bags, books, coffee cups, and other obstacles from pathways.
- Use the phrase "Rise in spirit and/or body" rather than "Please stand."
- Use "people first" language that puts the person first, rather than the disability—for example, "person who uses a wheelchair" rather than "a wheelchair user"; "a child with dyslexia" rather than "a dyslexic child;" and "people with disabilities" rather than "the disabled."
- Do not tell or require individuals to read aloud; similarly, do not go around the room asking each person in turn to read aloud. Request volunteers or read the material yourself. When possible, before the workshop ask for volunteers who are willing to read, and give each volunteer a copy of the material they will read.
- Ask participants in advance about any food allergies. Add to your group covenant an agreement to avoid bringing problem foods or to always offer an alternate snack.
- Ask participants in advance about any allergies to scents or perfumes. If participants have allergies or sensitivities, invite members of the group to refrain from wearing perfumes and add this agreement to your covenant.