Inclusion Checklist [i]

Date of Evaluation: _____

Evaluators: _____

_____

Introduction

Our Unitarian Universalist principles call us to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every one of us. These values require that our congregation allow full participation for people with disabilities. Ours is a theology of wholeness and justice. Accessibility is about social justice—civil rights. A fully welcoming environment is most evident in the attitudes and actions of the congregation - from *all* members including the lay and professional leadership. The barriers to an individual's participation will vary by a person's specific disability, and specific accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, as well as general accommodations for the benefits of all who might attend a service. (http://www.uua.org/documents/equualaccess/accessibility_guidelines.pdf)

This is one of two check lists. This **Inclusion checklist** concerns policies, programs, services. The other checklist is the **Accessibility checklist** concerns the physical access to the building, in the building and the grounds.

Accessibility means the removal/minimizing of physical (built), communication, policy and attitudinal barriers.
Inclusion is a comprehensive term, and relates to inclusive leadership, worship and theology, ministry programs, fellowship, pastoral care.
Communication includes access and navigation of the congregational website for people with visual (e.g. easy access to the text using text aloud software program), people with learning disabilities, hearing impairments, (e.g., captions under You-Tube) and cognitive impairments (e.g., simple text, use of icons and pictures). Communication also means accessible signs outside and inside the building, and the consistent use of neutral, uniform terminology to minimize stigma.

While completing these checklists, one will have to keep in mind that people with different disabilities experience different barriers. Policies and Programs should encompass particular issues for everyone. For instance, does Pastoral care provide community-based resources with members with? Mental health issues? Are emergency procedures inclusive? Do all emergency exits in the building accessible for individuals with mobility impairments? If not, are there signs indicating the location of the accessible exits?

Conducting the checklist needs assessment can be different for each congregation: some people may want to conduct a needs assessment with a small group, other people may want to conduct a needs assessment with the assistance of the local center for independent living, and other congregations may want to conduct a needs assessment using taskforces. It is strongly recommended that the process includes paid staff members of the congregation and lay persons will have expertise in a particular area (e.g. in the area of the acoustics). This will raise awareness about accessibility

issues, it will empower the leadership in their decision-making and participation in this process. Member participation early in the process will empower leaders and decision-makers to secure support, approval, and funding for an inclusive action plan.

Ratings	Nowhere 1	In a few places 2	In some places 3	In most places 4	Every where 5	NA	Comments/ proposed action plan

Feel free to attach sheets to explain any item number in more depth.

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
Leadership		
1. Has our congregation's leadership made a commitment to be intentional in our welcome and inclusion of persons with disabilities by embarking on the activities of the certification program?		
2. Has the congregation allocated funds for repair of or announcement of accessibility related expenses as applicable?		
3. Has our congregation developed a Disability Task Force to strategize and plan with the congregation's various areas of ministry? Are there people with disabilities on this task force?		
4. Has our congregation received periodic disability awareness training, such as that defined in this certification program, or other disability training program?		
5. Are our Minister(s), staff and congregational leaders urged to attend and to use the awareness gained in disability awareness trainings?		
6. Do we invite persons with disabilities to help us assess our building and ministries for barriers to participation? Do we take seriously these perspectives and engage these persons in setting the plans and priorities for removing barriers?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
7. Is our congregation committed to a ministry <u>with</u> persons with disabilities, rather than ministry <u>to</u> persons with disabilities? This can be assessed by speaking to people with disabilities and asking them how they feel the ministry of the congregation, by the existence of inclusive policies and by being attentive during congregational activities.		
8. Does our congregation encourage persons with disabilities to share their gifts and skills through the various ministries of our congregation and support their involvement in them? For Example: a. Minister(s)? b. Worship Associates? c. Greeters and ushers? d. Choir members, soloists, musicians? e. Religious Education teachers of children and adults? f. Members and chairs of congregational committees and task forces? g. Members of outreach activities? h. Congregation officers? i. Staff and pastoral positions? j. Other: _____		
9. Do our personnel policies allow for employment and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities?		
Worship and Theology	**Rating 1 - 5**	**Comments / Solutions / Plans**
10. Is our lived theology inside and outside of worship consistent with treating people with disabilities as people with inherent worth and dignity as specified in the UUA Principles?		
11. Does the congregation view addressing on disability issues as spiritual work? As social justice work? As both?		
12. Does preaching and teaching portray persons with disabilities and their contributions in a positive manner?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
13. Is imagery taught and preached with sensitivity to those who are living with disabilities and their family members? For example, metaphors and language used should encourage positive words and perspectives.		
14. At least once a year does our congregation observe a Disability Inclusion Sunday focused on lifting up disability-related issues and our intention to be a congregation where persons with disabilities and their families find true inclusion and participation?		
15. Is the staff responsible for worship services sensitive to adapting shared rituals to persons with various disabilities?		
16. How does our congregation make decisions about worship life? Are individuals with disabilities included in decision making as to what will be best for their situation?		
17. Are greeters/ushers instructed regarding how to interact with and anticipate the needs of individuals with a variety of disabilities?		
18. Are ushers trained in emergency procedures and do they know how to assist people with disabilities in case of evacuation?		
19. Is our congregation, including the ministers, pastoral care givers, and staff committed to welcoming persons with disabilities (including those with cognitive disabilities, and mental health issues) in becoming congregation members?		
Ministry Programs	**Rating 1 - 5**	**Comments / Solutions / Plans**
20. When planning congregational activities, is every effort made to consider how to make the activity inclusive of people with disabilities and to be responsive to requests for accommodations?		
21. Do we station greeters at main entrances to help people in-and-out of cars or para-transportation and in-and-out of buildings back to their transportation, as needed?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
22. If a member of our congregation has a disability, are we ready to be of assistance in locating needed government and community resources?		
23. Do we refrain from expecting family members to take the lead in ministering to their family member with a disability?		
24. If a person with a disability cannot participate in activities with others, is particular care also taken to finding other inclusive ways to involve these individuals in the life of our congregation?		
25. Do members serve as congregation companions/peer tutors to assist individuals with disabilities who need and request one-on-one assistance? Particularly helpful would be someone who is trusted and respected by the person with a disability.		
26. Do we recognize that there is an impact – that varies from family to family - on parents and siblings of persons with disabilities? Do we inquire as to the supports that would be helpful and offer practical and pastoral support?		
27. Are there educational resources on our various congregational bookshelves about disability awareness?		
28. Do we share our enthusiasm about our commitment to inclusion of persons with disabilities on our website? And does the website provide visitors with specific information about accessibility that might enhance or diminish their participation?		
29. Do our congregation's emergency procedures include various scenarios to meet the needs of persons with disabilities which an emergency situation might require? Are we ready to help members of our congregation with practical service in case of a personal or community-wide disaster?		
30. Do we attempt to discover where persons with disabilities live in our community and extend an invitation to them to attend our congregation?		
31. Does our congregation welcome ministry by people with disabilities? Are people with disabilities encouraged to minister to people with and without disabilities?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
Religious Education		
32. Is there an inclusive policy in place for children with disabilities to strengthen their inclusion in the RE programs, social activities and camps?		
33. Is the RE director educated about how to provide RE that is inclusive of children with disabilities? (See the *Involve Training Materials and Activities: A Guide for Teacher Training* developed by Sally Patton for use with this program.)		
34. Has the RE director integrated disability and children with a disability into the program?		
35. Is training/consultation offered to our religious education teachers to assist them with issues they encounter in teaching children with disabilities?		
Fellowship	**Rating 1 - 5**	**Comments / Solutions / Plans**
36. Do we make an effort to get to know each person with or without a disability and to involve them in the social network of our congregation? This involves welcoming them into the spiritual community of the congregation, approaching people who spoke during joys and sorrows during social hour to lend an ear, and seeing whether any accommodations are necessary so that they can participate and be included.		
37. Do we communicate our willingness to assist persons with disabilities with transportation needs to congregational services and activities, and facilitate those arrangements if appropriate? If this isn't possible, do we make our services available on-line or by some other accessible means?		
38. At congregation meals, do we make sure that people with disabilities are able to participate? Are there people available to assist people with disabilities who may need assistance?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
39. Do we understand that guide/helper/service dogs must accompany their owner everywhere they go (including eating areas)? Do we have/know how to give directions to a grassy place where service animals can relieve themselves?		
40. Do we maintain regular contact with our "members at home" to keep them connected with our community of faith and to minister to their spiritual needs?		
Pastoral Care	**Rating 1 - 5**	**Comments / Solutions / Plans**
41. Has the minister and pastoral care staff received education on how to provide pastoral care to people with disabilities, mental health issues and addictions?		
42. Are people with disabilities, including people with mental health conditions visited when they are in the hospital or unable to attend congregation functions for whatever kind of illness, including mental health?		
43. Are there volunteers or an organized group of people to help congregation members when they are sick or in a hospital – for example: to care for or arrange care for a pet, bring mail in and needs from home?		
44. Are the spiritual needs of people with disabilities attended to?		
45. Are there home visits when necessary?		
46. Are there support groups for people with disabilities, mental health problems and people with addiction problems either sponsored by the congregation or available for referral?		
47. Are there support groups for the families of people with disabilities?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
48. How does our congregation deal with the complex issues of disabilities and discomfort some people may have been a person with disabilities in leadership, or participate in Congregational life? For example, if a situation should come up where there is congregational discomfort when person with a disability takes an active role, how do the ministers and board plan to address the problem?		
49. Have staff and lay people received training in disability etiquette?		
50. Is the congregation a space that does not tolerate jokes at the expense of people with disabilities?		
51. Are people with disabilities who are interested included on the congregation's pastoral care team in a similar way to other members? Do they provide pastoral care to people with and without disabilities?		
Accessible / Inclusive Communication	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
52. How does the congregation provide, or will provide on request, the following in alternative formats (large print, Braille, CD/MP3, electronic materials, etc.)? a. Order of Service (including announcements) b. Hymnals c. Unison and responsive readings d. Sermons e. Educational materials / handouts		
53. If our congregations uses projection in worship (for order of service, lyrics, congregational responses, etc.) do we provide printed orders of service and hymnals on request?		
54. Does the congregation have a plan for making our congregation accessible for people who use ASL as their primary language – and are we aware of Deaf culture and the Deaf community?		
55. Are the sound system and microphones always used during worship and other large gatherings?		
56. Do we provide reminders about the importance of using the mic?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
57. Do we know how to respond to people who assert that they "don't need to use the mic"?		
58. If films or film clips are used in worship or RE, do they have closed captions?		
59. Does the staff know how to communicate with a caller who is using a relay operator to ask questions and directions?		
60. Does publicity for congregational programs and meetings include a notice of accessibility? Do we offer reasonable accommodations for communication and other access – with prior notice and inform people who to contact to arrange for accommodations? Some examples of how to do this are available online at: www.uua.org/documents/idbm/accessibility/touchstones.pdf		
61. Do we make an attempt to use "people first" language when referring to people with disabilities? Do we provide training in the use of "people first" language and in respecting how people wish to be referred to with regards to disability?		
62. Do members of the congregation avoid using "hurtful language" when referring to others – like "nuts", "The Mentally Ill" – the "R" word, etc…		
Social Justice	**Rating 1 - 5**	**Comments / Solutions / Plans**
63. Do our congregation members and leaders see disability as a social justice issue?		
64. Are we knowledgeable about the many opportunity and other barriers people living with disabilities face?		
65. Are we knowledgeable about the disproportionate impact of broad social justice issues on people with disabilities (poverty, unemployment, incarceration, voter suppression, reproductive justice, school-to-prison pipeline, etc.)?		
66. Are we knowledgeable about the intersection of oppressions?		

Inclusion Specification	Rating 1 - 5	Comments / Solutions / Plans
67. Are witness events sponsored by our congregation accessible and inclusive? When our congregation publicizes witness events organized by others, do we advocate with the sponsors for the event to be accessible and inclusive?		
68. Does our congregation include "people with disabilities" when listing marginalized communities?		
69. Does the congregation work with any organizations in the community run by people who live with disabilities or a type of disability?		
70. Does our congregation include anti-ableism in our anti-oppression training and programming?		
71. Does our congregation commemorate special days that are set aside for disability? For example, the Disability Day of Mourning, the anniversary of the ADA, Mental Health month, Autism Awareness day, and others.		
72. Do we participate in local disability pride events and walks such as Disability Pride, Mad Pride, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) walk?		
73. Are local disability organizations considered for social justice partnership relationships? For split-the-plate?		
74. How does our congregation engage in social justice work inside and outside the congregation around disability related issues? List the social justice issues which impact people with disabilities most – specific to disability and overall – in our community.		
75. Does our congregation include the viewpoints of and impact on people with disabilities in our work on broad social justice issues (such as reproductive justice, mass incarceration, voter suppression, school discipline, environmental justice, gun control, poverty immigration and more)?		

[i] Sources for Inclusion Check list include:

- *Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility and Inclusion*, Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association, http://images.rca.org/docs/discipleship/Disability-CongregationalAudit.pdf
- *Disability Awareness Accessibility Survey,* Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, http://www.da-edomi.org/con-survey.html
- *Accessibility Information for Unitarian Universalist Churches,* by Charlotte Hawkins Shepard, PhD, and the Rev. Dr. Devorah Greenstein, 2010. www.uua.org/documents/idbm/accessibility/manual.pdf