Am I Making Myself Clear?

Accessible Communication
To All Community Members

Session Description

• Diversity is now the norm in the communities we serve in parks and recreation.

• With that diversity comes an increasing need to be sure your communication, from marketing materials to registration and release forms, is clear and understandable to all people.

• Learn how to communicate your message so that all community members are reached, using best practices in accessibility, plain language, and alternative forms of communication.

• Make sure that you are making yourself clear!
What You Will Learn

• Best practices in accessibility in written and electronic communication

• Best practices in the “plain language” movement

• Alternative forms of communication, including new and emerging technologies such as the iPad, smart phones, and other electronic devices

What We Will Do

• Sensitive and respectful communication

• Plain and understandable communication

• Alternative ways to communicate

• Accessible communication on the web

• Is everyone invited? To whom are you communicating?

• Emerging technology to assist in communication
“Language is not only a means of communication, but it shapes the way people perceive and experience the world.”

Sherrill, 1993

Sensitive and Respectful Language

The primary intent of using sensitive language is to refer to all individuals in a manner that will build mutual respect and understanding

Sheldon & Dattilo
Person First Language

- Never use a disability or diagnosis as an adjective (e.g., the autistic child, the blind woman)
- Never use a disability or diagnosis as a noun referring to a condition (e.g., the epileptic, the paraplegic, the disabled)
- Instead, use a disability or diagnosis only when referring to a condition (e.g., a person with an intellectual disability, people with disabilities)

Avoid the use of . . .
- “suffers from”
- “afflicted with”
- “victim of”
- “confined to”
- “retard”
- Confusing and insensitive acronyms (MR, MS, CP, C5)

A person simply "has" a condition or disability, period!
Person First Language

- "Disabled" - not appropriate
- Traffic reporters say "disabled vehicle" - they once said "stalled car"
- Sports reporters say "the disabled list" - they once said "injured reserve"
- Uses of this word mean broken/non-functioning

And then there is the “H-word”!!!!

- "Handicapped" - an archaic term that evokes negative images of pity, fear, and more
- The origin of the word - from an Old English bartering game, in which the loser was left with his "hand in his cap" and was thought to be at a disadvantage
- A legendary origin of the "H-word" refers to a person with a disability begging with his "cap in his hand"
Plain Language

Accessible Communication

Best Practices in Accessible Communication

• Use clear and simple text (plain English) with short sentences, simple punctuation and no jargon.

• Use larger print (at least 12 point), a clear typeface and plenty of spacing.

• Use bullet points or story boxes and fact boxes to make the main points clear.
Best Practices in Accessible Communication

• Use images such as photos, drawings or symbols to support your text

• Aim to make the subject of your material clear at a glance, even to a non-reader.

• Do not rely heavily on abstract symbols unless you know your readers are confident symbol users

• Choose one or two simple, pictorial symbols and put them to the side of the words.

Best Practices in Accessible Communication

Key Points with Written Materials

• Make sure there is good contrast between type and paper. This is especially true if using colored paper. Avoid yellow type.

• Use good quality matt paper. The writing on the other side won’t show through, and there won’t be a glare to make it hard to read.

• Do not run writing over the top of a photo or drawing.
Best Practices in Accessible Communication

Key Points with Written Materials

• Avoid block capitals, italics or underlining. They all make text harder to read. Use sentence case and highlight important points with bolding.
• Use a ragged right edge rather than justified.
• Keep the layout consistent for a regular publication. Try to put similar articles in the same place or page each issue.

Exercise

How would you rewrite the following information using plain language principles?
An example

Lids on Kids

Alternative Forms of Communication

- Large print
- Braille
- Pictorial
- Oral communication provided in print
- Closed captioning
- Language other than English
- Sign Language Interpreters
Technology and Alternative Forms of Communication

- Assistive listening devices
- TDD/TTY
- Mobile Visitor Services
- Audiotape or videotape
- Computer screen with reader

Accessible Web Sites

- Consistent page organization
- Clean visual layout
- Links use text that makes sense
- Images use the “alt” attribute
- Multimedia provides captioning and transcripts
Hallmarks of Accessible Web Sites

• Graphs and charts are summarized
• Tables make line-by-line reading sensible
• No flickering words or images
• Information for access features is provided
• The web site has been checked

Let’s look at some examples

www.nysirrc.org
www.healthytransitions.org
What do you think about accessibility on these web sites?

- [http://www.dokimos.org/ajff/](http://www.dokimos.org/ajff/)
- [http://nihseniorhealth.gov/](http://nihseniorhealth.gov/)

**Website Policy Example:**

“The City of North Las Vegas public Internet web site and its content will be developed and maintained for accessibility by all persons. Some web content such as video, audio and scanned images is difficult, if not impossible, to make accessible without affecting its viability. To meet the needs of all persons, the City will provide accessible content whenever possible and where not possible without affecting viability, will provide accessible alternatives upon request, free of charge. Means to make requests, including by telephone or e-mail forms will be prominently displayed on the City’s Internet web site.”
Who is Invited? Inclusive Marketing

- Do your marketing materials reflect inclusion of all people of all abilities? How so?
- Does your organization have a written policy about inclusion? How is it shared?
- Does your organizations have a person identified as an Inclusion Point of Contact? What are his/her responsibilities?

Welcoming Marketing Materials

- Consistently use person first language
- Identify an Inclusion Point of Contact
- Offered in alternative formats and use a variety of media
- Display the International Symbol of Accessibility
- Describe modifications and adaptive equipment
- Include statements of nondiscrimination that welcome all
- Use good design in web pages and printed material
Inclusion Point of Contact

- Designated to coordinate inclusion (ADA guideline)
- Addresses questions and concerns regarding inclusion
- Contact name, phone number, address, fax number, and e-mail should be available on all communications and in alternate formats

Marketing a Variety of Ways

Are you reaching people in multiple ways?

- Newspapers
- Radio
- Mail
- Internet
- Flyers
- Brochures
- TV
- Social Media
Communication and Marketing

A best practice example:

National Aquarium Accessibility Guide

Is Everyone Invited? Accessible Registration

- Location is accessible to all
- Forms are available in alternate communication
- Inclusion point of contact is identified on form
- A place to note needs or accommodations is included on registration forms
The Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve welcomes people with disabilities to all our programs. If you call ahead to let us know your specific needs, we will be happy to learn how we can best serve you.

Do you require any specific supports or accommodations to participate in the program you are interested in? If so, please check here and a staff member will contact you.

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**Using the iPad to Help with Communication**

**Vision**
Using the iPad to Help with Communication

Hearing

Other Languages
Using the iPad to Help with Communication

Non Verbal

Using the iPad/smartphone to Help with Communication

Multiple Uses
Using the iPad and Technology to Help with Productivity

Using the iPad and Smartphones to Help with Marketing
Using the iPad and Technology to Help with Information Sharing/Databases

Accessibility

Park Apps

Using the iPad and Technology to Help with Information Sharing/Databases

Park Apps
Using the iPad and Technology to Help with Information Sharing/Databases

Trail Apps

Summary

• Questions?

• Resources and handouts
Contact Us

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www.nysirrc.org