How to Make Systems More Accessible

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1. Educational Resources

- Ensure visual materials, fonts, and layouts comply with accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG 2.1), including large fonts, high contrast, and alternative text for images.

- Utilize plain language guidelines to improve readability for neurodiverse individuals and those with lower literacy levels.

- Provide alternative formats such as audio descriptions and simplified versions to enhance accessibility.

- Incorporate braille, raised lettering, and QR codes linking to audio descriptions.

- Maintain high-contrast color schemes and large text sizes for individuals with visual impairments.

- Utilize universally recognized symbols to assist users with cognitive disabilities.

- Ensure documents are compatible with screen readers (e.g., properly structured PDFs with alt text).

- Offer multiple formats, including large print, Easy Read versions, and audio files.

- Ensure online resources meet WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards.

2. Community Engagement

- Collaborate with non-profits, caregivers, rehabilitation organizations (OTs, pain clinics), accessible education assistants, WorkBC, and other stakeholders to incorporate feedback from individuals with disabilities.

- Advocate for accessible engagement practices, such as:

  - Hosting meetings in accessible locations.

  - Providing captioning for virtual meetings.

  - Offering multiple formats for public feedback.

3. Policy Development and Implementation

- Require mandatory accessibility considerations in waste sorting area guidelines, including:

  - Sufficient space for mobility devices.

  - Reachability of bins.

  - Sensory-friendly signage.

- Advocate for accessible permitting and compliance processes to ensure accessibility is reviewed alongside other design elements.

4. Design Standards for Waste Sorting Areas

- Integrate tactile pathways for individuals with visual impairments.

- Recommend bin designs accommodating individuals with limited dexterity (e.g., lever-operated lids instead of heavy lift lids).

- Ensure adequate space for mobility aid users to maneuver and access bins.

5. Inclusive Waste Collection Services

- Develop assistive programming for those facing barriers to curbside and large-item drop-off programs, such as:

  - Door-to-door waste collection instead of curbside pickup.

  - Returning bins to their original location after collection.

- Partner with non-profits to collect deposit-eligible returns for those unable to access return locations.

  - Example: Individuals registered for assistive curbside programs could donate deposit-eligible items to non-profits that collect them directly.

  - This initiative increases funding for resources benefiting those with systemic barriers.

6. Accessibility and Inclusion in Repair Cafes & Share Sheds, etc.

Advertising in Strategic Locations

- **Physio, Chiropractic, and Concussion Management Clinics**

- These clinics specialize in therapies that involve tactile activities, making them ideal spaces to promote Repair Cafes.

- Engaging in hands-on activities can support motor skill development and social reintegration for individuals recovering from disabilities.

- **Seniors Communities & Centers**

  - Many retirees have backgrounds in skilled trades and could contribute their expertise.

  - Repair Cafes offer seniors valuable social engagement opportunities, particularly for those in assisted living who may have limited visitors.

- **Group Homes**

  - Many individuals in group homes have specialized skills in tactile and visual activities.

  - Inclusive advertising helps reduce isolation and fosters a sense of community engagement.

Ensuring Accessibility and Inclusivity

- Provide ear protection with a sign-in/sign-out system.

- Offer wheelchair-accessible tables and counters.

- Keep walkways clear and use non-slip flooring or mats.

- Ensure restrooms are wheelchair accessible.

- Designate a "quiet hour" when power tools and music are turned off.

- Provide signage in multiple formats: text, infographic, color-coded, and braille.

- Limit light-reflecting surfaces like glass shelves.

- Organize donations/drop-offs for easier access:

  - Separate books with small vs. large print.

  - Categorize clothing by fastener type (e.g., shirts with buttons vs. t-shirts, shoes with velcro vs. laces, pants with elastic waists vs. zippers).

- Provide carts or establish a drive-up drop-off area for individuals with limited mobility.

- Install handrails along ramps and steps.

- Use dimmable warm-colored LED lighting instead of fluorescent lights.

- Utilize 2-way radios for staff communication to minimize noise levels.

- If the Repair Cafe has a mobile component, partner with low-income housing organizations, co-ops, and seniors' homes to facilitate regular drop-offs and pick-ups.

  - Similar models exist in food banks and grocery donation programs.

7. Customer-Facing Accessibility Training

- Recommend accessibility and trauma-informed training across all phases of waste management services to ensure inclusive and respectful customer interactions.

8. Waste Collection and Hauler Requirements

- Promote inclusive employment best practices within waste collection services.

- Ensure collection areas are safely navigable for all workers, including those with disabilities.