

# NEVER ★ AGAIN ACTION

**GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING**



**ACCESSIBLE  
IN-PERSON  
DIRECT  
ACTIONS**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

What is Accessibility?.....	3
Where do I start?.....	4
Things to keep in mind.....	5
Before Your Action.....	7
Roles .....	7
Supply Suggestions .....	8
Notes .....	9
During Your Action .....	10
Roles .....	10
Do's .....	11
Don't's .....	12
After Your Action .....	13
On Masks.....	14
On Burnout .....	15
Thank You & Follow Up .....	18

# WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY?

**Our commitment to accessibility means ensuring that the people who want to participate in our movement and actions, are enabled to do so.**

Accessibility is most often discussed in relation to disabilities, both physical and psychological.

There are also less-often talked about factors, including cultural norms, that can make spaces and movements either more or less accessible to people of various identities and experiences.

Accessibility both reflects and supports our Movement DNA Principles:

**We are building power together.  
We will not leave anyone behind.**



# Where do I start?

**Short answer: with your own community.**

When planning an action, think about what the action (and location) will physically look like, and what types of access needs might come up.

For example, a big march might require more accessibility aids like wheelchairs, having cars available, and ear plugs. A longer event is more likely to need things like water bottles and chairs.

Think about what kind of people you expect and/or hope will turn up at your action. If you know your membership includes people with certain specific access needs, or if an event is related to specific disabilities or access needs, these are also good to keep in mind.



# **Things to keep in mind:**

**Your efforts may not  
always succeed.**

Sometimes you will not be able to make an event accessible for someone, despite your best efforts.

**No event or space can be equally accessible to everyone at the same time.**

**No organizer can cover every base at once.**

**Don't let the perfect be  
the enemy of the good.**

If you're empathizing, listening, & thinking ahead, you're off to a great start!

**Your event will be more  
accessible than it would have  
been if you hadn't tried, and  
that's always a win.**

Not only is the list of possible access needs potentially infinite, but some access needs will **directly conflict** with others.

For example, some people need a quiet space, and others need to make noise to self-regulate, or be able to engage in discussion.

Which access needs are right to prioritize *for your chapter*, and *for your action*, will depend on **your specific situation!**

**You can't  
do it all &  
That's OK!**





# Before Your Action

Having an accessibility coordinator on your planning team is a great first step, and will help bring everything together!

## The Accessibility Coordinator...

- is part of the main planning team
- is responsible for thinking proactively about accessibility and keeping it part of the conversation
- ensures **clear and specific** information about accessibility is included in outgoing materials about the event

## Additional roles to consider include:

- **Access Point Person** (see section: "During Your Action")
- **"Care bear" team** (see section: "During Your Action")
  - If a care bear team already exists, consider integrating it with other accessibility roles & logistics!
- **Language interpreters**, for Spanish, ASL, etc, as needed

# **Before Your Action**

Having the right supplies on hand can make your action more accessible to a lot of people!

## **Good things to generally have on hand:**

- folding chairs
- traffic cones, or another way to mark space
- water bottles/gatorades
- snacks (well labeled/no common allergens)
- bandaids, other first aid supplies
- menstrual supplies
- ear plugs, sunglasses
- hand sanitizer
- fidget toys
- high-filtration masks (N95, KN95)
- clear and specific information

## **Useful items for more specific contexts:**

- wheelchairs – for fatigue in high-volume marches
- walking sticks
- respirators – for tear gas exposure
- vehicles and drivers available to transport food, water, materials, and/or people who cannot finish a march

A more detailed or complex action will require more careful consideration of accessibility factors! **When in doubt, ask your participants what they need.**





# Before Your Action

**Note: The members of the NAA Accessibility Team are not medical professionals or trained medics.**

Please utilize other resources for more detailed information on medical safety and preparation, which is extremely important to enable disabled folks' participation in higher risk actions.

Additionally, it is important to **be aware of typical & possible levels of violence** in the specific area where you are planning your event.

**This is critical both for medical preparation, and to ensure your participants know what they are signing up for.**

**Be particularly attentive to factors more likely to lead to police violence.**

## Accessibility Point Person:

- ensure accessibility guidelines are followed in event execution, including accessible language & clear directions
- coordinate with medical team, care bears, & any pre-arranged outside accessibility services (ie, interpreters, visual guides, etc)
- support and tag in care bears, medics, drivers, and other day-of roles as needed
- be available to help with any unexpected access issues that may arise

## Care Bear Team\*:

- direct participants to chairs, shade, bathrooms, etc
- distribute water, masks, hand sanitizer, snacks, etc
- coordinate as needed with access & medic teams to support participants
- may provide first aid supplies (bandaids, menstrual items, etc) when there is no medic team

\*The Care Bear Team provides a foundation of accessibility through easy access to water, rest, & care. For many disabled folks, keeping up with our basic needs is like a full time job, so this chance to even partially "clock out" is a huge step towards **enabling us to plug in.**

**DURING  
YOUR  
ACTION  
ROLES**



*The Access Point Person may also hold a smaller day-of role, like being on the Care Bear Team, as long as they stay flexible and put access first!*

## Running Your Action Accessibly:

**DURING  
YOUR  
ACTION**

**DO'S &  
DON'TS**



*This will require  
the work of more  
than just the  
accessibility team!  
Everyone involved  
in event planning  
and execution  
needs to work  
together to meet  
these targets!*

- **Safety First:** Distribute K/N95 masks, gas masks, respirators, etc, as soon as or before they are needed
- **Pace:** Set the pace of marches by your slowest walkers, not your fastest; don't force them past their capacity or leave them behind
- **Live Location:** Use a text chain or social media posts to keep participants up-to-date on your location while on the move
- **Navigation:** When not actively on the move, set up signs and/or visible guides to help people find and navigate the event, including directions to public restrooms and information about how accessible they are (stairs to get there, handicap stalls, gender neutral, etc)
- **Buddy System:** If someone wants a last-minute buddy, try and ask a friend, care bear, or floater to fill the role.
- **Risk of Arrest:** All individual jail support plans should **seriously consider accessibility factors**, including access to necessary medications, and extra support and/or supplies participants might need once released.



# DURING YOUR ACTION

## DO'S & DON'TS



*You don't  
have to know  
everything, just do  
your part: be  
curious, be  
empathetic, and  
be willing to keep  
pushing back  
against pervasive  
cultural ableism.*

## Access Barriers: What NOT to Do

- **Scents:** Don't wear excessive perfume, cologne, or other scented products
- **Physical Chaos:** Don't shove people, knock people down, or create a physically chaotic environment when not strictly necessary. Be especially careful of glasses, hearing aids, mobility devices, etc
- **Auditory Chaos:** Don't talk over event organizers, and refrain from yelling except when instructed to be loud
- **Language:** Avoid ableist & derogatory terms. *Words don't exist in a vacuum*, plus, saying exactly what you mean is more powerful than tired cliches:
  - **X** stupid, blind, etc, as insults
  - **X** sexual and gendered insults
  - **○** calling a cop an asshole
  - **○** calling a cop a fascist cog

**Finally: DO give participants an explicit opportunity to build & strengthen personal connections.**

Actively bringing disabled folks into community shows us that we're wanted & valued **as individuals**, and **that's what will keep us coming back.**





# ***After Your Action***

Most access-specific roles and work get done either before or during most actions. However, wrapping up an event in a well-organized way is an important part of accessibility for many folks.


Most of the access-specific work has been wrapped up at this point, but there are still a few things you should check up on:

Coordinate with and support jail support team as needed, and with any arrested parties who have known access needs

Any social media posts made after the action should still be accessible! This means using alt text + image descriptions on twitter , instagram, facebook, etc, and captioning video content.

In the event tear gas or other chemical weapons have been used, be cautious of remaining chemical hazards in the area.

**Most importantly:** Follow up personally with attendees a couple days after an intense action, especially those with known access needs--but remember not all access needs are known, and all attendees will benefit from this!



# Masks Matter

In the age of COVID, masks are necessary to protect ourselves and our communities--especially those who already struggle with health and ability, and who are less able to access appropriate care and support.

In the age of climate collapse, masks can also protect us from environmental harms.

Different people need different kinds of masks. We can organize mutual aid to collect and distribute masks. We can coordinate different kinds of masks for the people who need them.

We recognize the power of state surveillance to track immigrants and activists. Wearing masks makes it much more difficult for cops to identify us. We are committed to principles of harm reduction and solidarity.

**We protect us.**  
**We keep us safe.**



# On "Burning Out"

**Anyone can burn out. It happens.**

The signs of burnout can be very subtle, especially at first. You may think you're just tired, or need to try harder. You may get frustrated with yourself.

But "burning out" means that you can no longer just "push through it"—or, you can, but the cost of doing so just gets higher and higher...

**Burning out is *not* a sign of weakness, poor character, or lack of dedication—it is a sign of *too much for one person at one time*.**

**We collectivize our capacity by sharing roles and responsibilities, leaning on each other, and taking care of our own physical, mental, emotional, and/or spiritual needs.**

A strong interconnected network can create enough flexibility to **make individual burnout unnecessary.**





# Recovering From Burnout

**Healing from burnout is not linear. You may need to think about your needs in new ways in order to build more sustainable habits.**

Be gentle with yourself if recovery takes more than weeks, months, or longer.

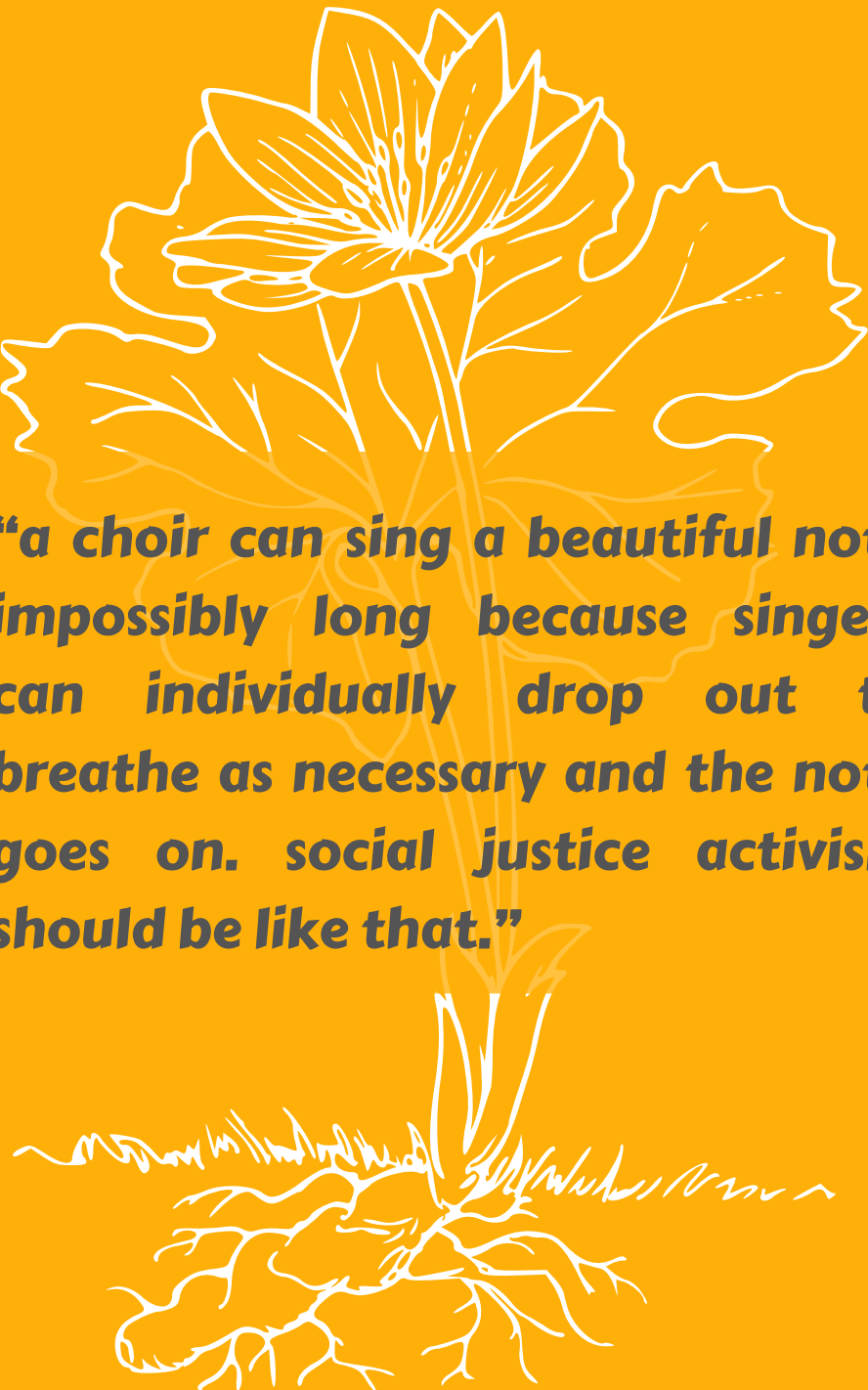
**It's okay to choose to rest** instead of involving yourself in every action. Pressure to recover as quickly as possible is part of what causes burnout to begin with.

**Ask your co-organizers and the other people in your life for the support you need. We're here for you!**

**By sharing our limits and needs, we protect our capacity, and show others in our spaces that they can do the same.**

Imagine how much stronger our movement could be if we all had the space to take the rest we need. **Together, we can work hard without burning out.**





**“a choir can sing a beautiful note  
impossibly long because singers  
can individually drop out to  
breathe as necessary and the note  
goes on. social justice activism  
should be like that.”**

**-@hungover\_the on twitter**



***Thanks for reading!***

**By reading this guide,  
incorporating its suggestions  
into your work, and sharing it  
with your organizing  
communities, you are part of  
our initiative to increase  
accessibility across NAA and,  
hopefully, across organizing in  
general. You rock!**

Please direct any questions,  
suggestions, or interest in  
becoming involved with the  
Never Again Action National  
Accessibility Team to **Noah**  
at **els5343@gmail.com**.

