



Fix The  
System  
NOT  
ME!



ACCESSIBLE  
ACTIVISM



# Welcome!

Thank you for engaging with Accessible Activism, a guide created to help transform the way disabled people plan for and participate in multiple forms of activism with the support of community and fellow organizers. We hope this contributes to the life-affirming and essential practice of interdependence within activism.

Please share this resource using [Bit.ly/AccessActivism](https://bit.ly/AccessActivism) and the hashtag #AccessibleActivism

To activate screen reader support within this Google Document, press Control + Alt + z (on Windows) or ⌘ + Option + z (on Mac) in this form.

To provide feedback and offer ideas, please use this [Feedback Form](#).

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Image Description of Cover Graphic on Page 1: A dotted pink, yellow, orange, and blue gradient background with the words “Accessible Activism” in bright yellow all caps across the lower half. The image is collaged with three photos. Top center, a vintage white-bordered photo from Glenn Lomax’s collection, taken from the [NYT](#). At the center, Black Panther and disability rights activist Brad Lomax on his birthday with his friends and family at his mom’s house in San Francisco in 1981. Brad is tilted back in his blue wheelchair and is smiling while family and friends happily surround him. The right image is cut off the edge of the page: a member of ADAPT sits in a wheelchair holding a sign on a stake that reads “Fix the System Not Me!” with a person standing next to them. The bottom left image is by Bryce Boyer of Jacqueline Mitchell and shows her speaking into a megaphone.

Short descriptions of each graphic header are in Alt text.

## Accessibility Note:

A team of disabled collaborators created this guide. As such, we use identity-first language throughout to describe our team's preferred method of identity expression. We've done our best to enact accessibility within the Google Document format by providing a glossary, image descriptions, alt text, as much plain language as possible, and using legible fonts and color choices. Should this document not meet your needs, we encourage anyone to create a personal copy to edit, delete, rearrange, and annotate.

Where we may fall short is the length of this guide and recommended readings linked out as resources; for anyone who feels fatigued or overwhelmed as a result of this resource, please know we understand and we hope all are able to digest the provided information in the span of as much time as it takes.

It's not necessary that every activist knows how to respond to every access need. That's why we organize together and work on teams. It's important that as an organization you know this information, and know who to go to for what. Access is achieved when we each contribute what we can and collectively, that's often a whole lot.

We did our best to eliminate typos, formatting errors, and gaps in information all while honoring the limitations of our bodyminds and understanding that perfectionism is an ableist tenet of white supremacy that we work to dismantle through our choice to allow imperfection in all endeavors. Please bookmark this resource and check back periodically for edits and additions, which will be prefaced with "EDIT" for readers to locate easily.

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Header images by [Studio MB](#)



# Introduction

The revolution must be accessible. As we continue revolutionary actions, access should be the norm. The future we are building needs to ensure all of us are at the table. Access should not be a “special” accommodation someone has to go out of their way to ask for.

A large portion of the folks we want fighting by our side are disabled people. If disabled people must ask for accommodations, then they’re an afterthought; they are not being centered. How is your event and movement staying true to its mission if it’s not centering those most marginalized within it? For example, 1 in 4 Black adults have a disability. It is essential for anti-racist activism to center and follow the lead of Black, Indigineous, Black Indigenous, and people of color disabled activists.

Resist the pull of capitalist urgency. Disabled people prove time and again that moving at the rate of the most impacted ensures that nobody gets left behind. Slowing down ensures that we resist pushing ourselves past our limits, allows us to view and solve problems from new angles, and helps create sustainable movements. Disabled people have been organizing for forever and we know what it’s like to constantly negotiate barriers. We have so much wisdom to offer and most of us are waiting to be asked for insight.



While making activism accessible, remember that not all disabilities are visible. Disabled people are likely already attending your events. How can you accommodate people with disabilities and make everyone feel comfortable asking for and using accommodations?

While planning any event, you will likely identify many components that are inaccessible. Please do not hide these barriers. Communicate barriers honestly and clearly by providing as much information as possible. Remember that disabled people can choose for themselves whether or not they'd like to try navigating these barriers or if they're non-negotiable barriers. Many guides and books exist that outline how to make events accessible and we did our best to link some of them in this guide.

Please consult as many resources as possible and also understand that nothing can replace the insight gained from consulting disabled people in the planning stage. Ideally, pay a group of disabled people to help with planning, as there is not a singular experience of disability. Having a disability does not mean that a disabled person is an expert or even knowledgeable about accessibility or accommodations, but they are certainly experts on their personal experience, which is invaluable feedback. Disabled accessibility coordinators or consultants are equipped to advise on a wide array of disability experiences and how to accommodate them.

Our practice of accessibility and foundation of Disability Justice is deeply indebted to the Black, brown, queer and trans founders of Disability Justice: Patty Berne, Mia Mingus, Stacey Milbern, Leroy Moore, Eli Clare, and Sebastian Margaret. We are grateful to the elders, mentors, and leaders who came before us and credit them with the framework that our work is built upon.

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Photo by [Jen White Johnson](#)

*Image Description: A person with olive-colored skin bends over a wood table to create a protest poster. There are two printed sheets of artist Jen White Johnson's graphic of the Black power fist in red against white paper. There is an infinity symbol on the hand and the words "Black Disabled Lives Matter" down the wrist. Next to the neon pink poster board are markers, a blue baseball cap, fingerless gloves, and cardboard all placed on a bench.*

# Glossary

EDIT: AAC: We reference Augmentative and Alternative Communications (AAC) several times and created activism-related AAC printables, found in the Resource section. This [blog post on AAC by Just Keep Stimming](#) is an awesome overview of AAC, what it is, who benefits from it (hint: everyone!), how it can be used, and offers many high tech and low tech options, especially apps.

Ableism: “a system that places value on people’s bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence, and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, colonialism, and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person’s appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel, and ‘behave.’ You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism”

[\*A working definition by Talila “TL” Lewis in conversation with Disabled Black and other negatively racialized folk, especially Dustin Gibson, updated January 2020\*](#)

Access needs: the baseline tools, accommodations, or barrier reductions a person needs in order to participate in an activity, including the ability to learn and communicate. Access needs have an enormous range. Everyone has access needs, regardless of disability identity. In some situations, *not* meeting a person’s access needs can be life-threatening.

Some examples of access needs:

- I need to eat breakfast before going to work.
- I need to sleep 8 hours every night.
- In order to leave my house, I need to know where the nearest toilet is at all times.
- In order to be at a group event, I need to not encounter a person wearing scents or perfumes.



- In order to attend an event on the second floor of a building, there must be an elevator.

You may encounter conflicting access needs, in which one person's access need creates a direct barrier to another person's access. For example, one person's service animal may cause an allergic reaction for someone else. Conflicting access needs are quite common and can often be resolved with creative solutions such as "safe spaces" or clearly outlined spaces and/or times during which an activity will be happening so that disabled folks can make informed choices about how/where/when to show up.

Access note/access statement: a message outlining the philosophy and logistics related to accessibility, to be made public prior to an event, or permanently housed on a website page, or posted prominently in a building. An access statement should include as much detail as possible, including access barriers and limitations, so potential attendees can make informed choices. It should also include information about who to contact with questions and/or specific accommodations that have not been addressed. An example of an access statement is our "Accessibility Note" at the top of this very document.

Access guide: a guide to an event, building, campus, or program created to specifically help folks plan for and find things related to their access needs. An access guide might include a map with clearly marked accessible restrooms, benches, public outlets, and medic tents, information about access barriers and how to find accommodations, and tools such as audio recordings of pamphlets or signs. Access guides should be distributed widely and available in accessible formats like screen reader compatible documents, braille, and large print printed documents.

Accommodation: a supplement, change, or adaptation made for a specific person or group of people in order for them to be able to communicate, learn, or participate in an activity. Events should consider and center access from the start, so participants do not need to ask for accommodations. However, it's impossible to anticipate every possible need, and it's most important to put energy and resources into accommodations for actual participants requesting them, rather than imaginary scenarios.

Accommodations should be resourced, supplemented, evaluated, and expanded over time in order to ensure efficacy.

Barrier: anything that prevents a person from communicating, learning, or participating in an activity. Barriers can be attitudinal, structural, visual, non-visual, subtle, or explicit. Anything can be a barrier. It's impossible to be fully barrier-free due to conflicting access needs.

Plain Language: clear, straightforward expression using as few words as possible. Avoid using words with multiple meanings and abstract expressions. Use active voice and “front-load” writing with important details first. (A note: we’re making a plain language version of this guide!)

Strategy: [Ejeris Dixon says](#). “A political strategy is a plan containing a series of goals and campaigns, placed within a defined and intentional order to move towards our vision.” Use this guide to support your team in developing a clear strategy for centering access, not only at individual events, but within your organization’s vision.

## Core Resources

Please read these crucial resources in full as companions to this document, as ability allows. We hope that the information we provide will serve as a supplement to the following, listed in alphabetic order:

[Coronavirus Risk Reduction During Protests](#): A Google Document outlining best practices to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19 during actions. ***Please read this resource!***

[Crippling The Resistance: No Revolution Without Us](#): Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha writes of the common frustration disabled people experience while watching the revolution from isolation and ties it to the necessity of including disabled people in activism. This is a great read for nondisabled people to get

an idea of common struggles and, most timely, features a list of ways disabled people can participate without risking COVID-19 infection.

[Disability Justice Primer – Sins Invalid](#): This AWESOME primer “offers concrete suggestions for moving beyond the socialization of ableism, such as mobilizing against police violence, how to commit to mixed ability organizing, and access suggestions for events. Skin, Tooth, and Bone offers analysis, history and context for the growing Disability Justice Movement.” We owe so much to the work and organizing of the creators of this primer and we hope you’ll pay for, read, practice, and spread the thoughtfulness of the primer far and wide. Much of the wisdom found in the Sins Invalid Disability Justice Primer is not covered in this guide, which is why it’s so important that you invest time and effort into consuming the primer!

[Get In Formation: A Community Safety Toolkit](#): Vision Change Win created this amazing toolkit that provides information on “Verbal De-escalation, Office and Organizational Safety, and Security for events and actions, along with specific information tailored to this historical moment of both uprising and viral pandemic.” We will offer information beyond this guide and we’ll also repeat many things found in this guide for emphasis.

EDIT: [PROTEST RESOURCES by SIQ](#): “As a protester participating in direct action during COVID-19, how can you help to ensure that you don't spread the virus to vulnerable communities? And mutually, how can the chronically ill / disabled community aid you from home? COVID-19 has forced us all to face the systems that were designed to fail us. Now we must protect each other from not only the virus, but the system as well. In this document we have attempted to collect resources that will help not only those participating in direct action, but also those who cannot participate in direct action, including the disabled and chronically ill community, as well as those who are unable to for any other reason.”



# Ways to Participate Beyond the Streets

There are many reasons why disabled people may be unable to attend organized events, even with the most expansive accommodation plans in place. Exposure anxiety, agoraphobia, chemical and/or scent sensitivities, sensory sensitivities, bathroom schedules, lack of transportation, being a disabled caregiver, and histories of inaccessibility and the trauma that it holds are just a few reasons why people either choose or are forced to not attend. Most urgently, the threat of COVID-19 and other disabling events of 2020, like police violence, create valid reluctance and inability to attend. Disabled elders provide us with a rich history of ideas on how to participate and lead the revolution from our sickbeds and confinements of home, hospitals, care facilities, and institutions. Contemporary disabled activists continue to radically pave the way in regards to innovative ways to participate.

Organizers must meet the conflicting access needs of disabled people by offering multiple ways to participate, banishing the ableist notion that “pounding the pavement” is the most valuable form of

activism and dismantling hierarchies of participation. We all must constantly remind and affirm that existing is a crucial part of activism and that “doing” is not a prerequisite to be in community.

This section title is taken directly from [“26 Ways to Be in the Struggle Beyond the Streets”](#) created by Piper Anderson, Kay Ulanday Barrett, Ejeris Dixon, Ro Garrido, Emi Kane, Bhavana Nancherla, Deesha Narichania, Sabelo Narasimhan, Amir Rabiya, and Meejin Richart, with design by Alana Yu-lan Price. Jane Berliss-Vincent created [this screen reader friendly version](#) of the same resource. We strongly encourage everyone to get familiar with and enact these 26 stellar practices. Additionally, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha expands on this list by offering a few dozen more ideas on ways to participate beyond the streets in [Crippling The Resistance: No Revolution Without Us](#).

We wish to reiterate several of these ideas and offer a few more of our own. Below are some roles that disabled people may want to take on in lieu of attending a live event.

*Please remember that having alternative roles is not an excuse for your event to be inaccessible. Please remember that disabled does not mean access to more time; if anything, the disabled experience of time is often limited due to planning and attending to medical needs and appointments, being unable to do anything during flare ups, and barriers to completing tasks. Please consider that many events can be digital and prioritize virtual events as to include more disabled people.*

Roles that \*some\* disabled folks might want to take on in lieu of attending a live event:

- Amplify the event (if appropriate/safe)
- Be an emergency contact
- Be in charge of ordering, organizing, labeling, and packing supplies for Street Medic teams
- Collect, upload, and organize archive documentation including photos, videos, transcripts, and tangible archives like posters and zines
- Cook pre/post-protest meals or prepare medicines/tinctures



- Create art, write copy, or proofread posts for social media
- Create posters for people to use at events. We especially love using the [#BlackDisabledLivesMatter graphics](#) by disabled artist-activist Jen White Johnson.
- Create social stories or social experience narratives (guides with text and photos to help people preview an event or experience) to help people know what to expect during an event. These serve as resources that offer visual and written descriptions of event processes and help with previewing. We'd love to expand this guide to include a social story for different activism-related activities, so please be in touch if you'd like to create one!
- Create the event playlist
- Fundraise. Even setting up a Venmo request button on your Instagram stories and then requesting small amounts from followers to eliminate steps on their end goes a long way!
- Offer space for resting/care/spirituality
- Organize letter writing campaigns, especially for kin and comrades in prison to update them on an event, action, or effort
- Plan events/protests (even if they can't be at them)
- Plan Twitter storms and other social media actions
- Provide access support (see more on this in the "Before the Event" section)
- Provide audio descriptions
- Provide audits of plans
- Provide childcare
- Provide IT support
- Research and create signage that shows all ingredients in food and drinks provided at an event
- Send messages asking your favorite news sources to make their content accessible
- Speak at events/protests (even if they can't be at them). For more, see the hybrid event model section.
- Translate documents
- Virtual Protesting: [Don't Undervalue the Work the Virtual Protesting Can Do](#)
- Volunteer for [@ProtestAccess](#)

- Write and distribute scripts for phone calls, important conversations, etc.
- Write content warnings
- Write plain language guides to policy, legislation, or plans
- Write scripts, run-of-show plans, and AV cues for events
- Write summaries of theory, articles, books, documentaries, etc.
- Write transcriptions, alt text, image descriptions, and add closed captions to media taken by street journalists in real-time or post-event

Have more ideas? Fill out our [Feedback Form](#)!



# Before the Event

As people committed to accessibility know, inclusion takes time and care. If you're new to offering accessibility or planning through the lens of disability inclusion, welcome! We recommend doing serious capacity analysis before committing to offering accommodations, as a half-hearted or lax approach to accessibility can be hurtful and potentially dangerous. As a strategy, groups may choose to commit to adding one or two accommodations at every event, as to build a practice of accessibility and as to allow room for analysis, tweaking, and implementing feedback. If possible, we recommend having an entire team dedicated to accessibility for effectiveness and sustainability purposes. Of course, there should be disability leadership within this team.

Remember that accessibility is a practice of trust and providing consistent accommodations over time will grow disabled participation. Disabled people are tired and often spiritually/physically/emotionally hurt by being treated as testers or afterthoughts, so again, gain the trust of disabled people through consistency, quality, and openness to feedback.

## Resources:

[Writing Good Accessibility Information by Ellen Murray](#): “A guide to making your work, campaigning, and communities accessible for disabled people.” Not only does this guide offer advice on writing access statements for promotional materials, it also offers easily digestible information on the following: getting to an event; seating; quiet spaces; facilities; Access for d/Deaf, hard of hearing and sound sensitive people; access for blind, visually impaired and light-sensitive people; access for Autistic, mentally ill and otherwise neurodivergent people; food and drink; and signage and wayfinding.

[Ways to start: Creating Access from #AccessIsLove](#): From the awesome #AccessIsLove team, “There is so much more people can do when it comes to accessibility. These are just a handful of basic suggestions we offer as a place to start. Access should be a collective responsibility, instead of the sole responsibility of it being placed on just one or two individuals. It is all of our responsibility to think about and help create accessible spaces and community. This is not about everything being 100% accessible to everyone, but rather centering access as a core part of the way that we want to live in the world together--as a core part of our liberation.”

EDIT/Update: [Accessible Activism Lending Library](#): We propose that communities are primed to create lending libraries of accommodational items in order to make events and event spaces more accessible. This brief document provides a list of suggested supplies, ideas on how to collect the supplies, and a few ideas on how to effectively run a lending library.

## A Note On Preventing Burnout and Creating Movement Longevity

Many resources exist on how to overcome burnout after activists and organizers reach a point of shut-down or exhaustion. We think that more strategies must be in place to prevent burnout from occurring in the first place. While this is a sector that needs more collective focus, we offer a few resources in the section at the end of this document and suggest the following:

- Set reasonable expectations and learn how to create long-term visioning and planning.
- Hold space for creating boundaries and celebrate when members of your community exert boundaries.
- Create systems of accountability.
- Start from scratch when necessary, but understand that blueprints for organizing exist in abundance.
- [Learn how to apologize](#) and embrace generative conflict.
- Do not hoard information, power, leadership, or keys to success. Create accessible information sharing that a group can access and prioritize record keeping and note taking so that new members can fill-in, catch up, and seek out the information and resources they need. For example, groups should know how to safely access passwords and groups should prioritize creating role descriptions with resource lists and how-to guides.
- Value lateral leadership models instead of hierarchical leadership models.
- Learn how to identify signs of what burnout looks like for you and come up with a plan on how you'll accommodate and address it. Burnout can look or feel like the following: anger, anxiety, brain fog, difficulty communicating, disappointment, fatigue, going nonverbal, guilt, illness, insomnia, irritability, isolation, lack of motivation, numbness, pessimism, physical pain, sadness, shame, symptom flareup, visible signs of flareup like hives. We realize that this list may look and feel very similar to your "normal" when it comes to living with chronic illness and/or disability.
- Create opportunities for community-building that are fun, rejuvenating, and restorative. We must advocate towards COVID-safe social opportunities that are highly socially distanced or virtual so that disabled people don't feel further isolation by missing out on social events. Prioritizing bonding activities that happen in-person during a dangerous respiratory pandemic is, unfortunately, ableist.
- Protect and honor taking breaks. If someone announces a break, celebrate their assertion and honor their wellness by respecting their boundaries.

## Before the Event: for Event Planners & Organizers

### Major Components of Planning an Accessible Event:

#### → Timeliness

- ◆ Spontaneous actions are often unsafe and especially inaccessible for disabled people.
- ◆ Consider that disabled people have to arrange some or all of the following:



- Transportation: Many disabled people don't have access to or are unable to provide personal transportation, much of public transportation is inaccessible due to conflicting access needs and infrastructure inadequacies, and rideshares often discriminate against disabled people. Not only that, but many disabled people must plan routes and research parking, paths of travel, and infrastructure barriers. It takes a good deal of time to plan, schedule, and secure reliable and safe transportation.
  - Energy allocation: A hidden part of disability is that many of us must rest heavily before and after events in order to attend. This is often scheduled and another reason why we are often unable to spontaneously participate, or participate with short notice.
  - Care work: Disabled people are caregivers and disabled people receive care from caregivers. This is a commitment and need that requires a financial investment. Disabled people need time to find people to cover their own care work, whether it's being given or received.
  - Medical planning: Many disabled people can't rely on services that offer nondisabled people ease such as fast food, so consider that disabled people spend more time planning and preparing food. Many disabled people often have to plan medical care around events they'd like to attend and many people often schedule "maintenance" medical appointments after attending events to help them recover.
- ◆ With this in mind, it's best to offer as much head's up as possible before an event so that disabled people and their care teams can effectively plan. If possible, we recommend offering two weeks advance notice at minimum.
  - ◆ Not all events and actions offer the luxury of time. Still include disabled people in invitations to and planning of spontaneous and urgent events/actions.
  - ◆ Most importantly, offering ample time between the announcement of an event and the event itself gives people room to request accommodations and for access teams to enact those accommodations. Accessibility offered at the last-minute is certainly doable, but quite often stressful and may make for a tough experience.

→ Location

- ◆ Many resources exist that help organizers analyze a space for accessibility. We strongly recommend that full location evaluations be done before choosing a location for an event.

→ Infrastructure

- ◆ Rent and place ramps.
- ◆ Ensure that elevators work and if they don't, relocate.
- ◆ When renting platforms and stages, rent ramps to go with them. Always have a ramp available, even if nobody requests it.
- ◆ Create more accessible parking spaces and safe drop-off spaces by using water-dissolvable chalk paint, traffic cones, and printable signs. Be sure to have people designated to this area to help facilitate rogue parking.
- ◆ Place wayfinding signage.
- ◆ Designate accessible seating that is not blocked or trapped by standing people. Choose chairs that can accommodate weight and size. Space chairs with ample room to travel between rows and stretch legs out.
- ◆ If the event is taking place somewhere with difficult terrain such as tall grass, sand, cobblestone, brick, broken concrete, or other uneven surfaces, consider creating a rogue accessible pathway using plywood or similar.
- ◆ If the event is taking place during inclement weather, place large umbrellas, tents, heaters, or fans and the like. As a reminder, inclement weather is not the prerequisite for providing these accommodations! Many disabilities render people sensitive to temperature and exposure, so always having shade and heating/cooling available is a standard accommodation.
- ◆ Rent wheelchair accessible portable toilets and place them properly.
  - Position portable toilets on flat surfaces with easy entry, i.e. do not place them against a curb so that people have to step up to get inside.
  - Position portable toilets in a place that has a large, clear, barrier free space in front of it so that wheelchair users can enter and exit with ease.

- Post signs on the accessible portable toilets that let people know their use should be prioritized for disabled people.
- ◆ Sound amplification
  - Rent and place speakers throughout the event space. Test them to make sure there is no painful feedback, fuzz, or reverberation.
  - Rent and place mics that are adjustable so that people can use them handsfree.
- ◆ Designate spaces
  - Smoking spaces far away from people
  - Scent-free spaces if a fully scent-free environment is not possible
  - Quiet spaces
  - Medical spaces
  - Cool-off/heat-up spaces
  - Optional nursing spaces
  - Meaningful engagement spaces for people who may be unable to fully participate, like viewing spaces for people unable to march, for example
  - Accessible seating
- Collaborations
  - ◆ Include disabled people as speakers, leaders, and prominent decision makers. Remember #DisabilityTooWhite and strive to platform disabled people that aren't white and straight, as that is who currently takes up the most space in the disability community.
  - ◆ Ensure that any nondisabled speakers evaluate and edit their performances or speeches to be inclusive of and sensitive to disability.
- Materials
  - ◆ If there are print materials, consider offering them in large print, braille, audio, and digital.
- Communications
  - ◆ Eliminate [ableist language](#)

- ◆ If your group, organization, or event has an inclusion statement, be sure to include disability. Remember that simply listing disability doesn't actively dismantle ableism and there must be action paired with recognition.
- ◆ If the event has promotional materials, consider depicting disability on it. We love visual representations of our diverse disability experiences that aren't paternalistic or tokenizing. Work with disabled people to make sure you get representation right! Again, remember to avoid depicting #DisabilityTooWhite!
- ◆ Write access information for promotional materials. Again, we recommend [this guide](#).
- ◆ Write access guides for events to be distributed via as many communication pathways as possible.
- ◆ Offer image descriptions for all images/graphics.
- ◆ Create accessible press, social media, and other promotional material. Just because something is published digitally does not mean that it's accessible. Here's an inexhaustive list of things to research and implement to produce accessible media:
  - Video access: Accurate caption, audio descriptions, video descriptions
  - Website access: Create websites that meet WCAG standards or better. Do not use plug-ins that claim to increase accessibility because they often cause more problems than solutions. Alt text, test screen reader compatibility, check contrast, use legible fonts, etc.
  - PDF/Document access: Make it keyboard navigable, make it searchable, alt text, test screen reader compatibility, check contrast, use legible fonts, etc.
  - Twitter access: Alt text, describe GIFs, post accessible videos that have audio descriptions and captioning or provide your own as a thread, #CamelCaseHashtags
  - Instagram: Alt text, image descriptions, video closed captions, add captions to stories using the text feature or Apps, don't use GIFs that flash more than three frames per second, avoid using jarring or disorienting filters, #CamelCaseHashtags
- ◆ Create and share a photography policy

- Consider publishing a photography policy, designating an area for photos and videos, and announcing the photography policy beforehand.
  - Many disabled people are uncomfortable being photographed or videographed because they fear being tokenized or surveilled. Disabled people may fear that their state support could be taken away if they are photographed or filmed during an action. With this knowledge, decide on whether or not photography is allowed and by whom and make sure people attending the event know the policy.
  - Consider that abuse of disabled people at the hands of police should be filmed for evidence and create a safety plan surrounding that possibility. Of course, the first step before documentation should be aid and deescalation.
  - *Please remember that the state has used photos of actions posted to social media to target activists after events. Please remember that this especially impacts multiply marginalized and posting photos is a huge safety issue.*
- Release Access Info: Write an Access Note or Access Guide and distribute it widely before an event. Access info should include as much information as possible and may outline the following:
- ◆ Route
    - Parking: Access, Free/Paid (coins/card), path from parking to event
    - Type of Street: smooth pavement, uneven pavement, loose gravel, brick, inclines, hills, debris, dirt, shaded, exposed, etc.
    - Are there designated sidewalks? Ramps and curb cuts? Barriers on sidewalks like restaurant seating, cracks, uneven pavement, tree routes, snow, leaves?
    - Wayfinding: Tactile, visible, easy-to-miss, size, height of signs, language of signs, material of signs (are they hard to see because of reflectiveness, etc)
    - Public transportation
      - Provide information on all public transport available, including the distance one must travel between public transportation stops and the event location.



- If possible, provide fund reimbursement for transportation and try to make this process as simple as possible by not asking for receipts or offering reimbursement rounded up to the nearest dollar as to avoid clunky change.
- ◆ Bathroom and Water Access Info
  - Bathroom Information
    - Single-person or stalls?
    - Type of stalls?
    - Changing tables available (child and adult)?
    - Trash cans available? Location of trash cans?
    - Types of hand drying options available?
    - Are bathrooms gendered?
      - ◆ Consider making bathrooms nongendered for events using [Ellen Murray's Gender Neutral Toilet Signage Kit](#)
  - Water Information
    - Water available?
    - Types of fountains available? Height of fountains?
    - Cups and plastic straws available?
- ◆ Sensory Info
  - Type of lighting?
  - Type of sound?
  - Fidget toys available?
  - Quiet space available?
- ◆ What supports are offered?
  - Will there be interpreters? (ASL and/or other languages)
  - Communication access real-time translation (CART): aka open captioning, real-time stenography, or real-time captioning.
    - Converts speech to text, most often displayed on screens

- There are many advantages to having CART. It's great for people who missed a part of programming and need to look back at the captioning to catch up. It's great for people who learn best through multimodal forms of information sharing. It offers a historical document that once completed can be referenced later for any number of needs.
- Remember that CART is not a translator feature! If you are presenting in multiple languages, you need that many CART providers in corresponding languages.
- Will there be caregivers?
  - If possible, release their information and credentials and establish a way for disabled people to communicate with caregivers before the event.
  - Outline exactly what care will be offered (changing, bathroom support, feeding, etc).
- Will there be childcare?
  - If possible, release the names and photos of caregivers to prepare young people for the event. If possible, preview the types of toys, games, or activities that will be available. A social story or access guide would be helpful for kids.
- Will the lodging be accessible?
  - If the event is expecting people from out of town, offer information on accessible hotel options and housing. Remember, just because a hotel markets itself as accessible doesn't mean that the space will actually be accommodational or properly built with ADA requirements. If possible, preview lodging spaces and have photos available for people to look at ahead of making reservations and traveling.
- What is the schedule?
  - Release the schedule early, post the schedule prominently, and build in ample break and transition time.
  - Remind people that the schedule may change so that we can move at an accessible rate and make sure everyone's needs are met.

#### ◆ Safety

- What training have the event organizers taken? Deescalation? Naloxone administration? Crisis intervention? CPR? First aid? How can people seek out those services? Will helpers have identification so people know how to spot them when in need?
- What is the fire evacuation route, especially for people who use mobility aids? Is there a tornado shelter and does it require navigating stairs? Who will be able to help with physical evacuations? Will pathways be cleared in the event of snow, ice, or wet leaves? If not, will the event be rescheduled or moved to virtual?
- We strongly advocate for never calling or involving the police. However, that isn't always possible, especially if they show up on their own accord. Being honest about the possibility of police presence is an essential access practice. Will the police be present? If so, in what capacity and proximity? What will event organizers do before calling the police, during police intervention, and after police intervention?
- Can organizers provide both long and short term support should attendees become disabled by police violence?
- ◆ Help people know what to wear, bring, and prepare for:
  - Consider the type of event and what people will be doing (standing, sitting, walking)
  - Will the event be longer than a few hours? (think: food, diapers, medications)
  - Is there a potential for physical danger? (think: tear gas, arrests, other forms of brutality)
- Plan a route and release the map in promotional materials
  - ◆ Avoid hills, streets without sidewalks, and places with poor infrastructure like cracks and potholes
  - ◆ Map: show slopes, show accessible parking spaces, show bathrooms, show curb cuts, draw path of recommended route, show public transportation stops, label types of terrain, label distance between things, clearly label everything using legible and contrasting fonts, write an image description of the map
- Make disaster preparedness plans
  - ◆ Plan, map, and announce evacuation routes

- ◆ Warn people of potential sensory triggers in the event of a fire or other emergency, like loud sirens and flashing lights
- ◆ If the building has stairs, come up with a plan on evacuating people who use mobility aids. If a person who uses a mobility aid attends your event, you may consider asking them if they are open to having a conversation about the aid they may need during an emergency or an evacuation.

→ Make safety plans

- ◆ Learn how to treat overdoses and let people know whether or not you can accommodate that.
- ◆ Disclose whether or not police will be or may be present at an event (we heavily advocate towards never involving the police, but some police presence may be unavoidable, given particular circumstances), let people know what you'll try to do to deescalate before calling the police, and what behaviors or situations may trigger event organizers to call 911.
- ◆ If you have an intimate relationship with attendees, ask them to submit their personal safety plans to event organizers beforehand, if appropriate. This can help event organizers and attendees know what helps them in high-risk or high-stress situations.
- ◆ Publish safety plans in Access Notes and be sure to go over safety plans at the start of each event.

→ Provide training

- ◆ Train volunteers, peacekeepers, staffers, speakers, servers, caretakers, and anyone formally associated with the event on disability etiquette, accessibility, hidden disabilities, deescalation, what to do instead of calling the police, and the like.
- ◆ Train everyone on safety protocols, especially emergency evacuation and disaster preparedness.
- ◆ Train street medics through a disability and accommodational lens.

→ Offer accommodations that go above and beyond

- ◆ Proxy program: <https://www.sufferingthesilence.com/marching-with-me>
- ◆ Build pop-up environments

- Cool down space: ice buckets, hoses, ice packs, fans, etc.
- Warm up space: heating pads, heating blankets, heaters, etc.
- Quiet spaces/Clement spaces: comfy spaces, tents, stim toys, etc.
- Rest and recharge space: cots, mats, pillows, etc.

## A Note On Scents and Chemical Sensitivities:

- Scents and chemicals are a major barrier that many spaces, events, and groups fail to accommodate.
- The disabling events of 2020, especially a respiratory virus that leaves people with long-term symptoms and continued climate chaos, will increase disabilities like chronic migraines, allergies, asthma, MCAS, or multiple chemical sensitivities. We can accommodate these disabilities and illnesses by reducing triggering fragrances and chemical exposure that often have a debilitating multi-system response.
- We strongly and urgently ask that spaces and organizations create Scent-Free Spaces. Here is an awesome guide on going [Fragrance Free](#).
- It takes a great deal of effort for disabled people to make it to an event or place. Getting sidelined by an unforeseen barrier like scents or chemical exposure can be disheartening and can cause illness that lasts weeks to months, and even years.
- Things to consider:
  - ◆ Even “all natural” or organic products can be harmful. When we say scent-free we really mean all scents and fragrances! For example, an organic ethically sourced lavender essential oil can still be harmful to people!
  - ◆ Personal & Community Practice
    - Get in the habit of going scent-free. As your hygiene products run out, replace them with non-scented options as much as possible. This includes, but is not limited to: laundry detergent, hair products like shampoo conditioner hairspray gel, deodorant, hand sanitizer
    - Transition the cleaning products and sanitary products at your organization to be scent-free and less toxic, especially hand soap. Eliminate scented filters, candles, air fresheners, and the like.
    - If your organization has the budget, offer a scent-free product monetary bonus to incentivize people to switch out their products.



- In the very least, try your best not to put on scented products before an event.
- See especially: smoking and vaping.
- ◆ Communicate
  - Clearly post when a space is cleaned with cleaning supplies on your website. Alert people on social media that you're having a cleaning day in your space.
  - If you are unable to offer a scent-free space, clearly write in promotional materials "This is not a scent-free event/environment/space."
  - If you do have a scent-free policy, make sure it's broadcasted regularly, especially as new people follow your social media accounts or join your community.
- ◆ Smoking and Vaping
  - Try your best not to smoke or vape before or during an event. If you smoke or vape before, try your best to change into clean scent-free clothes. What may be a subtle scent to you could be deeply harmful to someone in your community.
  - If the event is stationary, have organizers announce and designate a smoking section. Do not smoke or vape in a crowd, as this can seriously aggravate a variety of medical conditions. Smoke very far away from the crowd. Please know that your smoke break could cause unseen ripple effects, like sending a fellow activist into a flare up that may last weeks to months.

## Hybrid Event Models

When an on-the-streets or in-person event is the best strategy, we recommend adding virtual components to create a hybrid model for those that are unable to attend. This usually requires technology and we recommend testing tech set-ups prior to the event if possible.

→ Engage remote presenters while hosting an in-person event

- ◆ Disabled people should be platformed during events, but lack of accessible infrastructure, expensive and inaccessible transportation, lack of care support, symptom flares, and transmutable viruses like the flu and COVID are just a few barriers to disabled participation. We offer a few ideas on how to still include disabled presenters.

- Proxy model: With consent, have a designated person read or present a disabled person's speech or commentary. We recommend printing and holding up a large photo of the disabled person unable to be present (with consent, as always) so that there is a visual reminder to the audience. We also suggest providing several verbal reminders to properly attribute the words by saying something like, "Again, I am reading a speech prepared by NAME." If it's safe and with consent, give the audience the person's social media handles or contact so that there can be a social aspect to the work, which is so often missed by disabled people forced into isolation.
- Hybrid model: Using tech set-ups, it's possible to livestream a disabled person's speech or commentary. One recent Black Disabled Lives Matter protest had a person give a speech from their home via Zoom. The protest organizers put a mic to the iPad at the in-person event and everyone could hear the speech. If people wanted to interact, they could move closer to the iPad and communicate directly with the person speaking. An ASL interpreter could stand next to the iPad to translate and a CART provider could also be in proximity to display live captioning on a screen projector.

#### → Livestream

- ◆ If it's safe, offer multiple live streams of an event. Be sure that the person running the livestream is able to monitor the chat box and take requests from people participating virtually. For example, the livestream host may ask, "Is there anything you would like a close-up of?" or "Would you like a tour of the medic tent or any part of the space in particular?" Provide audio descriptions and live captioning to the livestream as much as possible.
- ◆ Test audio and provide a quality experience. We know that multiple restraints exist, especially as it relates to technology. We encourage people to understand that sitting at home and watching something with poor audio, jerky or fuzzy visuals, automated captions that are inaccurate, or lapses in internet connectivity can contribute to feelings of missing out due to disability since it's obvious that those who are able to participate in-person are getting an advantage. We can create better access by approaching difficult tasks, like connecting microphones to a livestream platform, with a great deal of love.

#### → Offer Summaries

- ◆ If safe, offer transcripts, notes, replays, phone calls detailing an event, photos, and videos soon after the event so that disabled people can get an understanding of what happened if accommodations were not possible or not present.

### → Pause and Check-In

- ◆ Build in ample check-ins to your event schedule. Be sure that there is a way for people watching from home to alert organizers to audio or visual issues.
- ◆ Understand that it's better to pause an event to fix accessibility issues than it is to push forward in order to stay on schedule or maintain appearances.

Centering access at a protest or action is a practice, not a destination. It is likely that you will not meet everyone's access needs for every event. Keep in mind that due to conflicting access needs, it's impossible to ever reach full access. Be humble, take note, and find solutions for the next time. It's also likely that even if you think through every possible access need you can think of, some disabled activists will still not be able to attend. An elevator to a subway will be out-of-order, or they'll be flaring up and unable to get out of bed, or they'll get sick from the scent in a taxi or rideshare, or they're immunocompromised during a threatening pandemic. Find ways to continue to center disabled allies beyond their role in your event and continue to go out of your way to extend invitations to the disability community.

## Before the Event: for Attendees, Supports, & Caregivers

This section is meant to help attendees specifically consider the access needs of themselves and others during a protest or action, and is not an exhaustive list of things you should know and prepare before attending, such as legal/safety considerations or protest strategy. Make sure to read the info specific to your event and connect with comrades who have attended similar actions to the one you're attending. Many documents on protest safety and preparation exist. This section aims to provide accessibility-specific information perhaps not found in those common resources.

### → Request accommodations

- ◆ Hopefully there will be a clear way for you to request accommodations at an event. Remember that it is always within your rights to ask for what you need. We extend solidarity to the pain we experience when we must constantly ask for inclusion and basic rights.
  - ◆ Ask a friend to request accommodations for you. Requesting is emotional work and hopefully a friend can alleviate that weight for you!
  - ◆ Learn [what a street medic is](#) so that you feel comfortable asking for their assistance should you need it.
- Have a buddy with you
- ◆ It's helpful if you can support each other's needs! Maybe one of you can see, and the other can carry water.
  - ◆ Talk to your buddy about how often you'll need breaks and what those breaks might look like.
  - ◆ If it feels safe to do so, post in the event communication spaces that you are happy to be someone's buddy and offer to meet via a phone call, FaceTime, etc. before the event to establish trust.
- Create a safety plan and share it with people who attend with you.
- ◆ Establish an emergency contact person. This person should be someone who is not attending the event and who will be reachable via phone during the event and all the way until you make it home safely.
    - Safely remind your contact person where you will be and the approximate time they can expect an "I'm safe" text.
    - Consider sharing your emergency contact information with an event coordinator or street medic in the event that you get arrested, hospitalized, or are in need of more support. You will then have an advocacy team that knows your specific access and medical needs.
  - ◆ Know your needs for before, during, and after the action(s)/event.
  - ◆ Know your boundaries.
    - How long do you want to be at a location?
    - What would cause or cue you to leave early?

- What behaviors make you feel unsafe?
- What might cause anxiety, stress, or a meltdown?
- ◆ Know your triggers.
  - Carry a small piece of paper with a list of ways to soothe yourself should you need to be reminded. You can also have this list on your phone, if having a phone is safe. Soothing mechanisms can be breathing exercises, fidget toys, playing a song you like with headphones in, or taking breaks to scroll on your phone (again, if having a phone is safe).
  - Create a plan for soothing and comfort to happen after the event should you be triggered during the event.
  - Create a list of things that may cause you pain or a flare up onset.
- ◆ Designate a place to meet should anyone get triggered or separated from the group.
- Know Your Rights & Learn About Best Practices
  - ◆ Many fantastic resources exist that highlight activists rights and teach [basic protest safety](#). We recommend learning those guides, attending local trainings, and remembering that this document serves as a supplement to existing material in order to provide accessibility and disability specific information.
  - ◆ Here's a great [Know Your Rights](#) pocket guide from Portland organizers.
  - ◆ If you have an attorney, print and fill out this [Jail Support Form](#) and give it to them prior to an event.
  - ◆ Many of our suggestions involve writing lists on phones, using phones for soothing or distraction, or relying on phones for communication. We want to emphasize that phone safety should be prioritized and we encourage everyone to take extra care to reduce and eliminate surveillance by practicing safe phone protesting/action techniques.
- Create an exit plan in case of medical emergency, locate the nearest hospital, and have your emergency contact available.

- ◆ Note: You might have different emergency contacts for different things. The person you call when you're injured might be different than the person you call when you're arrested. Know your people, and make sure they know they're your people.

→ Medicine

- ◆ Friendly reminder to take your meds!
- ◆ Write down any medical conditions and medications
  - On the back of your sign, a note in your pocket, on your body. This is helpful if you become unable to communicate verbally and need to point at key information to a street medic, buddy, etc.
- ◆ Bring your medicine in its prescription bottle, even if you think you'll be home in time to take it. This is important in the event that you get arrested and need medicine distributed. It could also be helpful if you get held up longer than you anticipated.

→ Plan ahead for fatigue and physical stress. Rest, take pain medication or herbal tinctures, or utilize other tools you have for entering high stress environments. Let your caregivers know that you may need extra support after an upcoming event.

## What to Bring

- Gloves
- Goggles/protective eyewear
- Hand sanitizer
- High-calorie foods
- Inhaler
- Masks
- Mobility devices and mobility aids
- Prescription medication in original bottles (even if you think you'll be home before you need to take it)
- Tissues

- Water in a bottle you don't mind getting lost or destroyed, depending on the type of event.
- Wear glasses and bring spares if possible. Don't wear contacts, as it's a danger should you encounter tear gas.
- Wear clothes and shoes that are comfortable and moveable and that you wouldn't mind getting damaged or destroyed, depending on the type of event.
- Check out the list below for more ideas on what to bring!

## Before the Event: for Street Medics

1. Educate yourself on the access needs of participants. While it's impossible to know every possible access need that might arise, some attendees may choose to disclose disabilities or potential needs in advance. For example, you may know in advance that you'll be sight guiding a blind participant, or that several participants using mobility aids are attending your event, and you can review this guide accordingly.
2. Prepare your medic supplies. Below is an inconclusive list of supplies that includes accommodations specific to disability needs. A huge component of accommodations is letting people know what's available. Can you post a list or photo of supplies that will be available on social media before an event? Is it possible to carry a double-sided sign similar to a picture menu that shows what's available? Perhaps you can create a "flag" with fabric that lists all the supplies you have in your backpack and safety pin it over your backpack. People will be more likely to ask for help if the offer is visible.

## List of Supplies:

Below is a list of supplies crowdsourced from a group of disabled people. Much of this list will be redundant to typical street medic packs and we offer notes for some benefits of these supplies that may be less obvious. Please note that becoming a street medic takes a serious commitment to specialized training and carrying these supplies does not turn a person into a street medic, but it certainly can be helpful to have these things for yourself and other event attendees.



We also suggest that some street medic teams may be well positioned to create “[lending libraries](#)” of larger, reusable investment items. These suggested items are delineated with an asterisk\*. Properly cleaning and sanitizing these items between each use with low-to-non-toxic and scent-free cleaning supplies should be a priority.

- Access Vest\*: A safety vest for each member of the access team that says something like “ACCESS TEAM” or “ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT” or “ACCESS SUPPORT” in large legible letters.
- Anti-fog wipes: There are many glasses wipes on the market that significantly reduce fog caused by wearing a mask. Most should be scent-free, but many can cause reactions to people with chemical sensitivities, so be aware of that and ask for consent before opening them in proximity to people. Also store in an airtight container away from commonly used supplies.
- EDIT: Anti-chafing supplies: Chafing can be extremely painful and sensorily overwhelming. Having something like scent-free anti-chafing sticks can offer a great deal of relief, especially during actions with lots of movement.
- Automatic small fans\*: Consider buying fans that do not require a person to hold it themselves, if possible, as to accommodate people who may be unable to hold an object while needing heat relief. Fans can also be used to regulate emotions because they provide a nice sensory experience.
- Baby wipes: Try to find unscented and hypoallergenic baby wipes. If the wipes have a scent, tell the person about scent/ask for consent before using it if possible.
- Battery packs\*: External phone chargers help people who use their phone as a primary means of communication.
- Blankets\*: While quite cumbersome and not suitable for most street actions, weighted blankets can be extremely soothing during anxiety attacks and autistic meltdowns. Cheap fleece blankets are also soothing and should be washed with unscented laundry detergent between each use, if possible. Of course, emergency rescue blankets have many medical uses, and can also be used to create ad hoc privacy barriers for anyone experiencing a meltdown, anxiety attack, or having an emergency bathroom situation.

- EDIT: Blister pads
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC): We assume that disabled attendees will bring their own AAC and we also advocate that medic teams carry them as well. Please see our Printables section for downloadable AAC! EDIT/Update: If it's safe to have phones at events, we recommend downloading an app like "Speech Assistant AAC" and "Emergency Chat."
  - Communication Cards
    - [Stickman Communications](#) offers card packs that may be helpful to hand the keyring cards to attendees who are unable to speak. They can flip through different medical/situational descriptors and pick one that best describes their needs. This type of communication is especially effective for people whose executive functioning decreases during distress, which is common for all people, but especially for those with PTSD, any number of mental illnesses, autism, or multi-system disorders that disrupt communication.
  - Communication Boards (All in Printables section!)
    - Create your own board (about the size of an iPhone) that fits in your pocket and says YES | NO | I DON'T KNOW in clearly contrasted colors. If someone is unable to communicate, try asking them yes or no questions and invite them to point to their answer on the board. Consider lightly supporting their arm to complete the action if they are weak or are having motor difficulties.
    - Consider printing these [communication boards](#) typically used for hospital stays and having them available in medical tents.
    - Each printed piece of paper should be attached to something sturdy, like cardboard. Consider laminating boards with clear packing tape for easier sanitization between each use and for durability purposes.
  - We are working on communication cards specific to activism, protests, and organizing.
- Cots\*: If your team has cots, consider letting trusted activists borrow them for events because laying down or elevating legs are common access needs. Also consider writing the weight that the cot supports in large writing as to encourage fat participants to use the cots without fear.

- Disinfectant wipes: Encourage participants to wipe down microphones, megaphones, and other objects that may be used by multiple people between each use. Note that these wipes may aggravate chemical sensitivities, so use them with consent and keep the wipes in an airtight space away from other commonly used supplies.
- Ear defenders\*: Ear defenders offer more sound protection than earplugs and good pairs can be found for as cheap as \$15 a pair. Offer these to people who need sensory relief, or people that may benefit from a visual cue to show other people that they're in need of space/time alone, like after getting out of jail. Ear defenders might be especially good for the lending library.
- Earplugs: Consider putting pairs in individual baggies if possible for easier distribution and sanitary purposes and so that people might be able to get further use out of them.
- Extension cords
- Extra shoe laces: You never know!
- Foldable chairs\*: When buying chairs, try to get wide chairs that support a lot of weight to accommodate fat people. If your team has folding chairs, consider letting people borrow them for events because sitting is a common access need. Also consider writing the weight that the chair supports in large visible writing using a permanent pen as to encourage all participants to use it without fear.
- Hand and foot warmers
- Headlamps and flashlights
- Heaters
- Heated blankets and heat pads
- Incontinence underpads
- Inhalers
- Knee pads for street medics: Your access needs matter!
- Laminated guide: Again, can you create a "menu" of what's available in your pack?
- Pads, tampons

- Plastic straws: The only safe straw on the market for disabled people and people receiving medical attention is the plastic straw. To learn more about the ever pressing issue of medical ableism, check out #SuckItAbleism on Twitter. Straws were created with the medical purpose of helping disabled people consume liquids, and long bendy plastic straws are especially useful in a variety of situations.
- Portable phone chargers
- Saline: Saline is sometimes better than water for rinsing eyes, especially for people with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome.
- Sharpies: Offer ways for people to write important information on their bodies. We have yet to come up with a way to offer this to people with chemical sensitivities that aren't incredibly labor intensive, like sewing information onto clothing.
- Sidewalk ramp, portable\*: This won't be feasible for many actions, but again, perhaps street medic teams can help create, store, and lend larger supplies to community members.
- Sign to indicate ASL available\*: Invest in large, durable signs that indicate where an ASL interpreter is located. Consider attaching it to a large pole so that it's visible from a distance. In the Printable section!
- Stencils: Create a braille stencil for important phone numbers using a thin piece of cardboard and a small hole punch. Place this stencil over someone's arm and use clear nail polish to create a raised braille phone number. This suggestion came to us via Twitter and we are curious to hear of efficacy.
- Unscented hand sanitizer
- Unscented lotion
- Unscented sunscreen
- Sun protection:
  - Disposable sunglasses: Consider carrying and distributing roll-up sunglasses similar to what ophthalmologists use, even on non-sunny days, as eye protection can help people feel safe during sensory overwhelm.
  - Reusable sunglasses\*
  - Visors

- Warm gear: Extra socks, gloves, hats, scarves, etc.
- Water for service animals
- Welding gloves for tear gas canisters
- Wheelchair and other mobility aids\*: Many communities have nonprofits dedicated to refurbishing donated mobility aids. Mobility aids can also be found at garage sales and discount donation stores. We suggest having mobility aids that the community can rent for free, as many people can't afford their own mobility aids, have dynamic disabilities that don't always warrant a purchase of mobility aids, but without mobility aids they are unable to participate in specific events, like organized marches. We love the practice of taking a wheelchair to an event with a sign on it that says, "Need a ride?"
- Food & Medicine
  - Cough drops/lozenges/hard candies: Be able to provide the full ingredient list and consider having a few options like sugar-free and gluten-free. Cough drops are great for their most commonly known uses and are also awesome for emotional regulation. Hard candies are great for diabetics and hypoglycemia.
  - Electrolytes in many forms, especially electrolytes that are sugar-free and artificial dye free. Also consider electrolyte popsicles on hot days.
  - Water soluble pain medications for people with feeding tubes
  - Meal replacement shakes for people with feeding tubes, gastroparesis, etc.
  - Notes on food allergies, gluten intolerance, and other food sensitivities
    - Ensure that all medicines are gluten-free. For instance, clear-coated Advil gel capsules are made with gluten and will cause major issues for someone with celiac. Cheap gluten-free meds are available and are clearly labeled as such.
    - Ensure that all snacks are actually gluten free.
    - Celiac-safe snacks are often more specific than gluten-free snacks. Be sure to have at least one celiac-safe option, even if it's a tasteless "allergen free" bar because it's at least providing safe calories.
    - Avoid providing food that contains common allergies:

- Cow's milk
- Eggs
- Gluten
- Nuts
- Oranges (avoid providing citrus in general, as it can spray when peeled/consumed and cause airborne reactions)
- Red Dye 40
- Soy

## Setting Up the Event

→ Physically set up the space

- ◆ Clear sidewalks and ramps of disruptive items (e.g. electric scooters left in the middle of a sidewalk)
- ◆ Avoid setting up tables/tents blocking curb cuts and ramps

→ Clearly mark bathrooms, sanitation stations, and medic tents as well as their pathways.

- ◆ Put signs about 4 ft off the ground if possible to accommodate a variety of heights.
- ◆ Consider using tape, sidewalk chalk, or washable chalk paint to create impermanent wayfinding markers on paths to important spaces like bathrooms.



# During the Event

## During the Event: For Access Teams, Participants, and Everyone!

- Communicate!
  - Announce and show what is available in terms of food, drink, medical supplies, and other supports.
  - Announce and show evacuation routes. Give disabled people the opportunity to tell planners how they would like to be assisted in the event of an emergency.
  - Give an audio description and physically point to pathways to important locations like bathrooms and medical tents.
  - Announce where a smoking section is. Ask that anyone wearing fragrances go to a certain area as to not aggravate people with sensitivities.
  - Go over safety plans, emergency exits, and evacuation routes. Allow time for disabled people to ask questions and request accommodations after outlining evacuation routes.
  - Allow people the opportunity to be themselves and move in a way that feels comfortable to them. Encourage sitting, laying, stimming, and stretching.

- Scan your environment to look for potential barriers or access needs and how you may be able to help if needed. For example, have the access team maintain clear pathways and unobstructed entrances, bathrooms, and seating areas. Have the access team ask attendees to move themselves or their belongings to reduce obstruction, self-seclude to smoke, and other accommodations listed throughout this guide.
- Trust that disabled folks - and all folks - know what they need better than you do, and listen when they tell you their needs.
- Ask for consent before touching someone or offering any other type of access support.
- Get creative with solutions. As long as the person you're supporting can communicate their needs (remember, there are many ways to communicate!) and you are physically capable of meeting that need, you can often find a solution even if it's something you haven't done before.
- Recognize your limits, acknowledge when you don't know how to help, and find a buddy, access team member, or other organizer to support you when you're beyond your knowledge zone
- Don't assume somebody wants your support, even if they seem to be struggling
- Don't assume you know someone's access needs just by looking at their body, their medical apparatus, or their mobility aid.
- Don't leave anyone behind. Don't let a disabled participant get arrested alone without an access support person, if at all possible.

## During the Event: Potential Scenarios

Below is an non-exhaustive list of some disability and health-related scenarios you may encounter, created by a group of disabled activists. It's helpful for every participant to have an access-centered mindframe while attending an action. There are infinite combinations of disabilities and access needs, and it would be impossible for this guide to prepare you for every single one. We've tried to focus here on potential scenarios in which it may not be obvious how to accommodate the person whom you're trying to support and to correct common frustrations among disabled people who historically do not get their needs met often.



## EDIT: Ask First!

- EDIT: We need to be clear that this section is not a broad recommendation to ask people to share vulnerable and personal information with you, most especially information related to diagnosis, disclosure of disability, etc. Disabled people are tired of strangers asking them personal questions. It's traumatic, disturbing, paternalizing, too forward, and often creates uncomfortable power dynamics. To be clear, this section is advice for people who know how to establish [access intimacy](#) (link to awesome, essential blog post by Mia Mingus), for people in care worker roles, and for people who follow the leadership of disabled people.
- Always establish consent before offering accommodations, feedback, and the like.
- People with connective tissue disorders, such as Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), are especially sensitive to physical interventions like eye rinsing. Always ask before providing help and let them guide body movements, such as tilting their head back. Remember, these types of disabilities aren't immediately visible, so always ask first.
- If you spot behavior that seems out of place, consider kindly asking, "Do you have accessibility needs?" This may open conversation to let people say whether their behavior is or is not related to disabilities and to let them share their needs.

## Communication

- A note on accommodating nonspeaking people:
  - ◆ Remember not to speak down or speak condescendingly to nonspeaking people, in both tone and language used.
  - ◆ Do not assume that nonspeaking people are less capable because they're not speaking.
  - ◆ Do not speak over nonspeaking folk.
  - ◆ Remember to embrace pausing, taking breaks, and allowing ample time for communication.

- ◆ Download and program an AAC app on your phone, like “Speech Assistant AAC” and “Emergency Chat.”
  - Program your AAC app to have pre-set buttons.
  - Type things out on your app and show that to people to communicate.
  - People using AAC apps can type things out and have it read aloud either by the app or by another person.
  - Remember, typing can be really hard and can take time, so be patient!
- When assessing an injury, don’t be afraid to ask, “What is normal for you?” to get a baseline.
- When giving treatment, ask, “Is there any accommodation you need or anything you need access-wise?”
- Disabled people are happy to be asked “Is this impairment or something else?” by legitimate questioners like medics.

## Autistic Support

- Learn how to spot an autistic meltdown and offer support.
  - ◆ [Meltdowns -- The 3 Stage Model](#) by Autistic Blog
  - ◆ [How to Spot & Support an Autistic Meltdown](#): a break-out guide created from crowdsourced information from autistic activists.
- Learning how to support autistic people during high-stress moments can quite literally save their lives. Please make sure at least a few people on your team are comfortable with these guides and reach out to autistic people in your community to learn more about their needs. Remember, autistic people are the best experts on the autistic experience.

## Blind Participants and Visual Impairment

You may encounter someone who is blind or visually impaired who wants/needs assistance finding their way. This is especially likely in scenarios in which someone experiences temporary vision loss due to tear gas. Always ask for consent before offering assistance.

### → Wayfinding and Signage

- ◆ Again, it's important to have accessible wayfinding signage.
  - Proper height, braille, large signs, legible fonts, high contrast color combinations like black and yellow, or no-signal blue and white.

### → Sight Guiding

- ◆ [Listen: How to Sight Guide with Dr. Amy Kavanaugh](#)
- ◆ Follow #DontGrabJustAsk on Twitter
- ◆ Introduce yourself. "Hello, my name is [NAME]. Would you like some assistance?"
- ◆ Offer verbal descriptions.
  - Example: "The cars have stopped to let you cross. There is a curb cut with a raised surface on the other side of the street."
- ◆ Hold a shoulder, or the crook of someone's arm to offer physical guidance. You may also need to physically support the person by placing your arm under their arms.

## D/deaf & Hard-of-Hearing Participants, and Participants with Hearing Loss

- In general, hearing aids and assistive listening devices amplify sounds, but do not necessarily make sounds clearer.
- Tips for speaking to a person who is hard of hearing, [sourced from Camisha L. Jones](#):
  - Lightly tap on their shoulder to get their attention, or wave.
  - Face them with your mouth in clear view for lipreading if possible.
  - Wear a clear mask to unobstruct as much of your mouth as safely possible.
  - If a clear mask is unavailable, communicate by typing on a phone or writing on a piece of paper.

- Be cognizant of speed. Speak at a slower pace and try to enunciate, but not condescendingly so.
  - Feel free to check in every once in a while to check that the person is hearing what you're saying.
  - Be willing to repeat yourself when requested.
  - Before raising your voice or shouting, ask if increasing volume would be helpful.
- People with hearing aids are at risk because hearing aids can be knocked off. Be aware of this at protests, marches, or events that could include shoving or chaotic movement.
- Download speech to text apps on your phone so you can communicate with d/Deaf folks and folks with hearing loss.
- It's good to have an interpreter or someone who knows ASL so d/Deaf people can communicate with you. Do your best to learn a few basic ASL phrases, even if it's just "yes" "no" and "[do you need help?](#)"



# After the Event

Processing and evaluating an event is crucial for the sustainability of a movement. While we labeled this as after the event, much of this can be prepped before an event and sent out or distributed as the final step after an event. Attendees can also look to this section to plan out their post-event plan. For example, participants might place a laundry basket for their clothes in a garage or car, if possible, as to make the post event recuperation easier. Remember that everyone has access needs regardless of disability identity and anticipating rest, recuperation, and relaxation should be a part of strategy!

## Check on your disabled allies immediately after the event!

→ Offer arrest support and begin posting bail

- ◆ As an FYI, here's what law enforcement are told their requirements are for accommodations: [Commonly Asked Questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act and Law Enforcement](#)
- ◆ Did anyone who was arrested need access to medications, interpreters, or other medical devices?
  - Check in with the contact person of anyone who was arrested to make sure physical needs are cared for and accommodated.

- If anyone with significant access needs was arrested, make sure their access needs are met. As a reminder, interpreters are required as an accommodation in jails and prisons under the ADA, though securing compliance is quite difficult.
  - If you encounter difficulty getting people's access needs met after they've been arrested, begin a campaign. Alerting local news stations, creating a Twitter storm, and flooding phone lines about the incarceration of a disabled person can make a huge impact and is quite urgent. Know that this may be a need and have response teams on standby to do PR.
  - Contact local disability advocacy rights organizations to help advocate for disabled people incarcerated, injured, or violated during actions.
- Did anyone lose access to mobility devices, medications, glasses, hearing aids?
- Is the physical space preventing anyone from mobility? (e.g. damage or blockades to ramps)
- Does everyone have access to transportation home/away from the event?
- In the days following the event: Continue to check on your disabled allies!
  - ◆ Flare-ups of many illnesses/injuries are common after stressful/high energy events. Your disabled comrades are likely attending to chronic pain, illness, and injury.
  - ◆ Find out what they need.
    - Food? Touch? Ride to the chiropractor? Walk their dog?
    - Therapy resources? Processing support? Reassurance? Grounding?

## After the Event: for Event Planners & Organizers

- Create after care practices
  - ◆ Ensure that anyone who may have been dysregulated or triggered by the event has appropriate care before leaving them. Do not leave comrades in distress alone, ever.
  - ◆ Make space to debrief the emotions of the actions, immediately and also on a continual basis. This should be a practice for all folks, not just disabled people. All spectrums of activism work are traumatizing! Take space to talk about not just tactics but how those tactics made you feel. How

can we make this work safer and more sustainable? How can we build safety within our organizations?

- ◆ Consider having individuals in your organizing cohort write crisis plans. More information about this practice is available through [the Fireweed Collective](#) (fka The Icarus Project). An example of a crisis plan is linked [here](#), courtesy of WRAP. Have a policy regarding these plans. Will they be held by one member? Will they be shared with everyone? Will they be held by that individual? Make sure a universal policy is agreed on.

→ Rest, recuperate, relax. See also suggestions for attendees, supports, & caregivers.

→ Evaluate

- ◆ Distribute an evaluation to collect feedback from attendees and even people who were unable to attend.
  - Ask them to evaluate barriers that they were able to overcome and barriers that they were not able to overcome.
  - Ask them to list what went well and what didn't.
  - Be sure to offer this evaluation in multiple formats to accommodate different styles and abilities of communication.
- ◆ Questions to ask collaborators:
  - What accommodations were we able to provide? What accommodations were we unable to provide?
  - Did people take advantage of our accommodations?
- ◆ Offer ways to give anonymous feedback.

→ Communicate with people who didn't show up or seemed to "drop the ball"

- ◆ If someone seems to have disappeared, stopped showing up to organizing meetings, or didn't show up to your event, don't assume they lost interest or are "bailing" on your organization. Check in to see if they're okay, what their interest/ability is to continue organizing with you, and find out more about their pacing/access needs.

## After the Event: for Attendees, Supports, Caregivers, & Everyone

- Wash clothes and wash body/hair if possible to reduce transmission of COVID-19.
- Wash or dispose of masks properly.
- Repair, replace, or crowdsource from mutual aid groups any supplies that need replaced.
- Report to event organizers about access barriers so improvements can be made.
- Rest, heal, take good care (we could write another whole guide just on this one!).





# Further Resources

So many fantastic, liberatory resources exist and this is just a tiny sampling of some go-to links. If you have suggestions or comments on this resource list, please fill out our [Feedback Form](#)!

## Printables

[Alphabet Boards](#)

[YES | NO | I DON'T KNOW AAC Board - Black & White](#)

[YES | NO | I DON'T KNOW AAC Board - Color](#)

AAC Wristband - Coming Soon!

Activism-Related Communication Cards - Coming Soon!

[ASL Sign](#)

[ACCESS TEAM Sign](#)

[Ellen Murray's Gender Neutral Toilet Signage Kit](#)

[Accessible Entrance Sign](#)

[Accessible Bathroom Sign](#)

[Accessible Parking Sign](#)

[Communication Board for Readers and Spellers](#)

[Cue Cards](#): “Cue Cards is a new resource developed by Eastern Health Language Services to assist health professionals and clients / carers who primarily have English language difficulties, or problems communicating with each other.”

[Letter Board and Topic Board Free Download](#)

[Paramedic & EMS Symbol Board](#): “This free board is available in British English and American/Spanish. It was created to improve communication for individuals who don’t speak English who are in emergency medical situations. The board includes a pain scale as well as 26 functional images to help with emergency relief efforts.” [Source](#)

## Links

EDIT: [PROTEST RESOURCES by SIQ](#): This Google Document provides an incredible collection of vital material and resource links. It’s a great catch-all for information covering multiple subjects including info on preparing for direct action, following direct action, COVID-19 resources, donation info, on-the-ground protest safety, recommend reading for chronically ill/disabled allies, direct action resources, street medic resources, indirect action resources, donation/organization resources, bail funds, and mental health resources. **We really encourage everyone to interact with this awesome resource, especially if you find the Accessible Activism Guide too long or inaccessible due to length, information overload, or large blocks of text.** What the Accessible Activism Guide lacks in brevity, the PROTEST RESOURCES guide makes up for tenfold. Plus, their link list is stellar!

EDIT: [The Revolution Must Be Accessible](#) by [HEARD](#): “There has been a huge increase in online movement organizing, education, and information sharing in response to COVID-19. As organizations and movements work to create and archive these online learnings, solidarity demands that all virtual learning spaces be access-centered. This resource, created by HEARD advocates, serves as a guide for community

organizers/educators on how to build virtual learning communities that are grounded in the principles of disability justice and language justice because the revolution must be accessible!” **Available in multiple accessible formats, this fantastic resource is, again, a much more digestible offering than the Accessible Activism Guide and provides details on online movement accessibility not covered here. Please check it out!**

EDIT: [@Access\\_Guide](#): “Resources & tips for digital accessibility. Following pedagogy of Disability Justice, Transformative Justice, and cross-movement solidarity.” This page is great for people interested in fantastic bite-sized tips on making virtual and digital offerings accessible.

[Activist Trauma Support](#) “Formed in 2004 in the UK, due to a recognition of the potential for people involved in political activism to have distressing or traumatic experiences. Over the following decade, ATS ran Wellbeing Spaces at a number of large convergences like G8 and Climate Camps, facilitated workshops at many gatherings, supported individuals by telephone as well as face-to-face, produced the literature available on this site and collaborated with groups doing similar work in other countries. The initial focus on post-traumatic stress widened to include burnout when this too was observed to be a problem in activist groups and grassroots campaigns...As of 2014 we no longer operate as a group, however this site will keep functioning as an archived resource. All information is valid at the time of writing, but please note that the website is no longer being updated.”

[All About AAC: A Guide to Augmentative and Alternative Communication Options!](#) “Augmentative and alternative communication is essentially any communication that doesn’t involve mouth words. Most people think of apps and high tech, but there are many other forms of AAC too! Using a dry erase board, texting, picture communication symbols, etc – all are forms of AAC. Even this post can be considered AAC! Not only that, but there are a lot of ways to help make AAC accessible. There are options such as eye gaze (using eyes to select things on the screen), laser pointers with communication boards, having an aide help, switches to help choose things (switches can also help people operate toys too!), and tactile options too.”

A Primer on Working With Disabled Group Members for Feminist / Activist Groups and Organisations, 2018 by Romily Alice Walden

[Accessible Icon Project](#) “The Accessible Icon Project is an ongoing work of design activism. It starts with a graphic icon, free for use in the public domain, and continues its work as a collaboration among people with disabilities and their allies toward a more accessible world.”

[Beyond The Streets - 26 Ways to Be in the Struggle](#) “This list is designed to celebrate all the ways that our communities can engage in liberation. For a range of reasons, there are and always have been folks who cannot attend rallies and protests but who continue to contribute to ending police and state violence against black people. People seek justice and support liberation in an array of ways, yet their bodies, their spirits, and their lives may not allow them to be in the streets. We believe that we will win. And we need the presence of everyone in the movement to do so. We affirm that all contributions are political, militant, and valued. By and for those in our communities who can’t be in the streets, we offer a list of concrete ways that we are in the movement, and that we are supporting liberation every day. We see you. We are you. See you in the struggle.”

[#BlackLivesMatter reading list](#) highlighting work by Black disabled people from [Alice Wong of Disability Visibility](#)

[BEAM \(Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective\) Toolkits and Resources](#)

[Disabled people fight police violence with accessible protests](#) Worker’s World/Mundo Obrero article highlighting disabled activists’ efforts to make George Floyd protests more accessible.

[Decarcerating Care](#) Taking Policing Out of Mental Health Crisis Response, “IDHA seeks to advance a discussion of alternatives to policing and criminal justice that is rooted in the lived experience of mental

health service users and survivors. In this context, it is crucial to center the particular ways in which psychiatry has been used to exert control over Black bodies, not unlike the prison system. From the historically racist roots of diagnosis; to the ways in which the pain of racial oppression is erased or made invisible due to the subjective nature of psychiatric diagnosis; to the significantly higher rates at which Black communities are diagnosed with ‘serious mental illness,’ it’s clear that replacing policing with more mental health care is not the answer.”

[Decarcerating Disability virtual event](#) A talk focusing on Liat Ben-Moshe’s book [Decarcerating Disability: Deinstitutionalization and Prison Abolition](#), featuring Ben-Moshe, [Dean Spade](#), and hosted by [Women and Children First](#). Captioned and ASL interpreted.

[Medical Apartheid: THE DARK HISTORY OF MEDICAL EXPERIMENTATION ON BLACK AMERICANS FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT](#) “The first full history of Black America’s shocking mistreatment as unwilling and unwitting experimental subjects at the hands of the medical establishment. No one concerned with issues of public health and racial justice can afford not to read this masterful book that will stir up both controversy and long-needed debate.”

[Mutual Aid Resource Folder](#) and [Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid](#) created by Rebel Sidney Black

[Half Assed Disabled Prepper Tips for Preparing for a Coronavirus Quarantine](#) by Leah Piepzna-Samarasinha

[Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity Through This Crisis And The Next](#) by Dean Spade: “This book is about mutual aid: why it is so important, what it looks like, and how to do it. It provides a grassroots theory of mutual aid, describes how mutual aid is a crucial part of powerful movements for social justice, and offers concrete tools for organizing, such as how to work in groups, how to foster a collective decision-making process, how to prevent and address conflict, and how to deal with burnout. Writing for those new to activism as well as those who have been in social movements for a long time, Dean Spade draws on years of

organizing to offer a radical vision of community mobilization, social transformation, compassionate activism, and solidarity.”

[Rest for Resistance](#) A gorgeous zine with advice on preventing burnout and honoring rest, especially made for queer and trans people.

[Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People](#) “This Disability Justice Primer, based in the work of Patty Berne and Sins Invalid, offers concrete suggestions for moving beyond the socialization of ableism, such as mobilizing against police violence, how to commit to mixed ability organizing, and d/Deaf access suggestions for events. Skin, Tooth, and Bone offers analysis, history and context for the growing Disability Justice Movement. The Second Edition includes the addition of a new section on Audism and Deafhood written and edited by members of the d/Deaf community, and a Call to Action from Survivors of Environmental Injury, as well as disability justice timelines, an extensive glossary, and a resource list for learning more.”

[Optimizing Communication in Schools and Other Settings... : The Hearing Journal](#) Article with suggestions for creating greater access for communicating with d/Deaf children in the context of the pandemic and mask-usage. These suggestions can be applied to other situations/contexts as well.

[The Abolition And Disability Justice Coalition](#) ADJC offers this website as a tremendous resource to gain a comprehensive understanding of Disability Justice, alternatives to policing based in Disability Justice, crippling abolition, and more.

[The Ultimate Tear Gas Guide: Everything You Need to Know](#) by Eeden Shale

[Protest Safety Guide](#) guidelines for safer protesting during the COVID19 pandemic, organized by Black Lives Matter Seattle

[\(PARTIAL\) LIST OF PRODUCTS FOR CHEMICALLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE AND THEIR ALLIES/FRIENDS](#) compiled by Diana Lion

[Frontline Medics](#) Instagram for Frontline Medics, a Womxn/femme Led, Indigenous, Autonomous, Community Medic Collective. They share wonderful resources for protest and pandemic safety and community care.

[Disability Justice Is an Essential Part of Abolishing Police and Prisons](#) Talila “TL” Lewis writes of the need to eliminate ableism in our movements and demonstrates why social justice must centralize the multiple facets of disability, especially beyond the all too common white depiction of disability. Lewis says, “advocates for any other form of racial, environmental, and economic justice must work to understand how ableism interacts with racism, classism, and other oppressions and violence to create, perpetuate, and exacerbate inequities.”

[Sign-language interpreters volunteer at protests: ‘This revolution has to be accessible’](#) Article from the San Gabriel Valley Tribune about people volunteering to be Pro Bono Sign Language Interpreters at BLM protests, making it more accessible for D/deaf people to participate in direct actions.

[Contrast and Color](#) Resource guide for creating graphics and designing spaces that are more accessible to those with low-vision. This is mostly geared towards homes but the principles explained here can be applied to other spaces and situations to great effect.