Inclusive Facilitation for In-Person Events

Practical Things to Consider

64 Million artists

Introduction

This is a best practice guide made up of tips and tricks we have learned along the way for use in planning and delivering an inclusive in-person event. They are suggestions that we use regularly in our practice here at 64 Million Artists. We have kept this in bullet point form for ease of use – a checklist of things to consider.

There are three main sections: Pre-Event, During and Post. As might be expected, most of the work happens in preparation for the event, but we also have some helpful recommendations for things to consider during and after events.

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Planning ahead

On the day

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Planning ahead

These are things you should consider before delivering an in-person session.

Things for you to consider in the planning

- Build in an access budget. Sometimes access support means bringing in professionals like British Sign Language interpreters or note-takers. Consider and build in the cost for this.

- Carry out **a risk assessment**. This should consider the space you are using, the activities you will be doing, and any specific requirements participants may have, for example, whether you need any safeguarding support. If you Google 'risk assessment for creative activities', you will be able to find some good examples from other organisations as a starting point.

- Consider if you need a co-facilitator. Reflect on the group you are working with, your experience, the length of the session and the needs of the participants. How many people would you be confident facilitating on your own? This will be different case by case, and your risk assessment will also guide you.

- Ensure the venue has step-free wheelchair access and accessible toilets.

- Consider the venue/space you will be facilitating in:

    - Is there sufficient room for breakout spaces?
    - Is there a quiet/rest space?
    - Do you have access to an outside space if needed?
    - Is there enough light and ventilation?

- If possible, visit the space you will be facilitating in (or ask for clear photos and dimensions) to familiarise yourself with
the set-up and layout for activities.

- Find or create a simple map to the space you will be holding your event in to share in advance with participants.

- Inclusion begins before people are in the room. Ensure the language you use in the sign-up form and in your promotional materials is inclusive and clear.

- Ensure the language you use in the session and on any resources is inclusive. For example, if you are inviting people to do a movement exercise during the session, ensure that you are using inclusive language. Rather than saying

'Walk across the room', you could say 'Travel across the room'.

- In planning your session, ensure that you have a range of ways for people to engage. Consider access needs and different ways of learning.

- Make sure you build in reflection time for yourself and your co-facilitator, if you have one, and build in reflection time for the participants during the session too.

- Think about how you will evaluate and get feedback either during or post-session. Will you build in time for feedback during the session through walk-and-talk conversations, a group sharing, or could you create a feedback wall?

- If you plan to connect participants post-event, get consent to share any contact details in advance, if possible, at the point of sign-up.

- Have a clear bulleted brief and agenda: aims, expectations, format, and outcomes.

- Consider what the appropriate resources for your session are (e.g. real Post-it notes that don't fall off the wall) and resources for different access needs (e.g. fidget toys).

Things to communicate with participants

- Accessibility check. Include access questions on the registration form. For example:
  "Do you have any access requirements or support needs we should be aware of? What can we do to support participation?"

- Circulate a map for the venue you will be running your session in and a map to the room.

- Circulate transport options to the venue.

- Provide clear communication on what the event is, what participants can expect and what the objectives are.

- Circulate a basic agenda and key information at least a week before the event.

- Circulate '**community guidelines**' for the event. These are a precursor to any contracting you might do in the room, so that people know what to expect. Find an example of our Community Guidelines here.

- Circulate a detailed agenda for those who need it or have requested it.

- Schedule reminder emails ahead of the event, including key information if needed.

- If you plan to capture a photo or video during the event, always ask for consent in advance. Make sure participants are aware of the photographer's presence and what images will be used for, with a clear process to opt in or out.

- If providing refreshments, always ask for dietary requirements or any allergies in advance of the event.

- Include facilitators' photos on registration pages and event information in order to support representation or for participants to familiarise themselves with who will be holding the space ahead of the event.

On the day

These are the things you should consider when arriving in the room you will be facilitating, and during the session you are facilitating.

Things for you to consider on the day *before* participants arrive

- Arrive early. Have the room set up in advance of the event start time.

- Check through your agenda, slides and materials with your co-facilitator, if you have one, and continue to have check-ins with them throughout the session.

- Have your room set up and ready to go at least 10 minutes before participants arrive, and take some time for yourself to breathe.

- Always have water available and tea/coffee/snacks if possible.

- Ensure any food provided is labelled with dietary/allergens and can accommodate the needs of the group.

Things to consider for participants *during* the event

- Ensure people know where to find things: toilets, materials, quiet space, fire exit, and you.

- Ensure photo consent is honoured. When you start the session, make it clear who is capturing any photos/video, and invite anyone to let you know if they don't want to be photographed.

- Share the agenda at the start of the session. Honour it, or be transparent about live changes.

- Always hold a creative check-in and, if it's a physical one, make sure it is appropriate to the mobility of all of the people in the room. Invite people to share their name and pronouns if they feel comfortable. Facilitators should model pronoun sharing in order to give permission to participants to share.

- Plan regular breaks and stick to them, including a lunch break and 10-minute comfort breaks, depending on the length of the session.

- Permit participants to be in the space however they are most comfortable, whilst respecting others' needs.

- Start the session with the 'community guidelines' and include group contracting (depending on the duration of the session).

- Acknowledge power dynamics in the room and hold space to maintain boundaries.

- Always hold a check-out or winding down, especially if heavy topics are explored, and build in adequate space and time for it.

- Alongside a check-out, share a summary of next steps, including what participants can expect post-event.

Post-event

These are the things you should consider when your session comes to a close.

Things for you to consider post-event

- Hold a facilitator debrief. Take time to reflect on how the session went for you, any co-facilitators and the people taking part:

    - How did the results of the workshop meet the objectives?
    - What were the outcomes?

- Write your reflections down. This could be for an internal or external blog.

    - What were your wins?
    - What were your learnings?
    - What would you do differently next time?

- What opportunities can come from the results of the session or your learning?

Things to communicate to participants post-event

Share a follow-up email to include, where appropriate:

- Any next steps

- Evaluation methods and ways for participants to provide feedback

- Any pictures or content that have been captured

- Any slides shared in the session

- Relevant links and resources referenced

- Let people know how to get hold of you if they have any follow-up questions

- Depending on the nature of the content, ensure that people don't feel a cliff edge at the end. If it's a one-off or the last session, what additional resources can you signpost people to?

- Where you have permission, connect attendees post-event for peer connection.

Thank you

We hope you have found our list of things to consider helpful in planning your event and wish you all the success in getting the most out of your session in a supportive and inclusive way.

The team at 64 Million Artists