

# Physical Accessibility

Physical accessibility refers to the way an environment is designed, structured, and maintained to facilitate access for everyone in the community. It goes beyond mere compliance with laws and building codes, as cultural considerations often influence physical design. Because of this, physical accessibility involves incorporating as many universal design principles into the physical environment as possible, as well as fostering a community mind-set that's capable of growth and accountability.

# Topic 1: Transport and Getting to the Venue

## What?

Transport accessibility refers to the availability and convenience of transport options. It involves easy access to locations, timeliness, and affordability while also ensuring physical accessibility through reliable infrastructure.

## Why?

Access to public transport is crucial for Young People with Disabilities (YPwD) as it enables them to participate fully in community life. Without adequate transport accommodations, YPwD may face social isolation, limiting their ability to engage in educational, employment, and social opportunities. This lack of access not only affects their personal development and well-being but also reinforces misconceptions among community planners and developers that YPwD are not active participants in the community.

# Topic 1: Respecting the disability community

## How?

- Provide an image of the pedestrian route from the nearest bus stop to the venue, (e.g. a Google Maps screenshot). Briefly describe this route and mention any relevant access information such as route distance, terrain and paths, high sensory hotspots, identifiable features, etc.
- Report cars illegally parking in ACROD bays and on pathways to local councils or police. There is also an app called "Snap, Send, Solve" that has integrated with several councils over Perth.
- Provide up-to-date information on the bus route/s that go to the location, including how frequently they run, and a link to Transperth to view their timetable/s.
- Ensure pathing between ACROD bays and along essential routes in and out of the building are free of obstacles. Common obstacles are trolleys, e-scooters, debris, furniture etc.
- ACROD bays are not to be used as loading zones and should be kept clear of obstacles such as trolleys or debris.

# Topic 1: Respecting the disability community

## How?

- Signage at the entrance needs to be concise and relevant to someone at the foot of the establishment, such as opening hours, expectations of behaviour, prices, programs and contact details, etc.
- Not all disabilities are visible, if someone has a valid ACROD permit, they are allowed to park there.
- Include pictures or way-finding videos of the entrance of the venue in online listings and participant's emails.
- Communicate the location and number of bays, distance from the entrance, what side the shared space is on, size of the bays, etc. It is also helpful to provide an accessible map of the route from the nearest ACROD bays to the venue's accessible entrance.
- Signage and pathing for nearest toilets should be available and obvious near the entrance.
- Communicate parking costs, such as parking fees and hours, where and how to pay.

# Topic 2: Navigation

## What?

Navigational accessibility in physical spaces emphasises ease of movement and the ability to interact with the environment. It involves making modifications or providing support to ensure that individuals with disabilities can access and navigate environments safely and independently.

## Why?

While new and current infrastructure is more likely to be accessible due to the hard work of disabled advocates, much of our cities and buildings were created with the needs of the people living with disabilities in mind. Improving navigational accessibility expands the benefits to everyone in the general community.

# Topic 2: Navigation

## How?

- Prioritise pathways between entrances, emergency exits, toilets, elevators and other functional spaces of the building.
- Doorways should be a sufficient width, with adequate contrast on the doorframe and handles; install threshold ramps on doorways with difficult terrain.
- Choosing high-contrast furniture, e.g., a white chair on a black floor.
- The minimum width for pathways should be 1m, with no obstructions.
- Use bright lighting in areas where people need to navigate; adjustable lights are recommended for true flexibility.
- Providing sufficient signage and braille, especially for key features such as toilets and elevators.

# Topic 3: Sensory/Chill

## Spaces

### What?

A therapeutic space where you have high control over sensory elements; ideally these spaces are kept sensory neutral until people enter the space and it changes according to their needs. Sensory spaces aim to create a safe and relaxed space by adjusting a room to reduce stress, reduce overwhelm when processing information, and give the user a sense of control over their environment.

### Why?

Creates a safe place that provides relief from sensory under/overwhelm, offers privacy and is also a cultural location for others in the community. Sensory rooms are for everyone.

# Topic 3: Sensory/Chill

## Spaces

### How?

- Consider the demographic and environment and plan accordingly, e.g., planning for an outdoor event is much different than planning for established infrastructure.

### What to communicate:

- Location, opening times, and type of space and its purpose.
- List of what is provided and how to access it, e.g., stim toys, seating, activities, charging stations.
- Factors that are out of your control and barriers to access.
- Incorporate a variety of techniques and materials that incorporate all the senses; hearing, vision, smell, taste and vestibular (movement).
- Environmental adaptability is incredibly important as each person's ideal amount of stimulation is different.
- YDAN provides a low sensory chill-out space service that you can book through [hello@ydan.com.au](mailto:hello@ydan.com.au).



# Topic 4: Bathroom

## What?

There are two different kinds of bathrooms for people living with a disability. **Accessible** toilets are designed for people with mobility aids who need more room for transfers and support people. **Ambulatory** toilets have the same accommodations as accessible toilets but do not provide additional space. Accessible/Ambulatory toilets can be used by anyone, regardless of health status or gender. They are intended for anyone who will benefit from the increased space, accommodations and privacy.

## Why?

Without disabled access toilets, YPwD cannot reliably leave the house and keep their dignity at the same time. Delaying going to the toilet can cause significant health consequences for us while also increasing the likelihood of incontinence in the future.

# Topic 4: Bathroom

## How?

- **What to communicate:**
  - Features provided, e.g., adjustable toilet seat height, changing stations, showers, sharps disposal, left-hand (LH) or right (RH) grab rails.
  - Opening and closing times.
  - Closest available accessible toilets if unavailable; the National Public Toilet Map is a helpful resource.
- Space is an important resource, so any furniture provided should not impact the ability of a wheelchair and two people to spin 360 degrees comfortably.
- Do not tie up emergency cords, they should be accessible from the floor.
- Do not use the disabled access toilet as a form of alternative storage.
- Toilets need to be frequently inspected for wear and tear, especially on the hinges of the toilet seat.

# Topic 4: Bathroom

## How?

- Doors need to be easy to lock and unlock and capable of being opened independently without asking for permission or assistance.
- Soap dispensers, paper towels, hand dryers, sharps disposal etc, should be accessible from wheelchair height.
- Sanitary bins should be kept next to the toilet for ease of access. If providing pads and tampons, have these within reach of the toilet.

# Topic 5: Hygiene and Covid Safety

## What?

Maintaining hygienic environments is crucial, as unhygienic conditions can lead to discomfort and pose significant health risks. This is especially true for YPwD who are immunocompromised or rely on accessible toilets. For us, exposure to unsanitary conditions can be a frequent barrier, heightening our vulnerability to infections and illnesses. Ensuring cleanliness and proper sanitation in public spaces, including accessible facilities, is essential to safeguarding health and well-being.

## Why?

Everyone has a right to clean environments and to sanitation that is physically acceptable and ensures dignity. YPwD are at an increased risk of contracting contagious illnesses such as COVID-19 and influenza, with greater consequences when we do get sick. This increased risk compounds the chronic isolation felt by members in our community.

# Topic 5: Hygiene and Covid Safety

## How?

- Places people touch frequently such as doors, tables, and braille, should be sanitised at regular intervals.
- Documents that regularly get touched and reused such as brochures, menus, etc., should be laminated (matte sheets to reduce glare) and wiped down after use.
- Dirty toilets are inaccessible and unusable. Toilets should be cleaned and maintained regularly.
- Providing hand washing/sanitisation stations at entrances, receptions, toilets, places where food and drink are served, and locations that are expected to have large groups of people.
- Providing an adequate sharps disposal bin.
- Providing a variety of PPE and training for staff on how to use it correctly.
- Maintain a workplace culture that prioritises COVID and hygiene management. This can be done by encouraging staff and participants to not come in while sick, offering work-from-home/hybrid working options, and leadership modelling safe practices.

# Self-audit

1. My organisation finds the transport options to our selected venues to be both convenient and accessible.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

2. The navigation pathway within my organisations chosen venues supports safe and independent movement.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

3. My organisations chosen venues offer sensory spaces that are flexible enough to accommodate various sensory needs.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

4. My organisation finds that the accessible and ambulatory toilets in our selected venues are functional, clean, and well-equipped.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

5. My organisation maintains clean and well-kept work environments, fostering a strong culture of hygiene awareness.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

## Did you like this resource?

Please consider filling in our anonymous online survey. The link to this survey is available on our website or by scanning the QR code. You can also email any feedback to our team at [hello@ydan.com.au](mailto:hello@ydan.com.au) or text/call 0403932 741.



## Learn More

**Did you know there are other Accessibility Guides on YDAN's website that cover the other 4 types of Accessibility?**

**Wanting to improve your accessibility further and receive tailored recommendations specific to you? See more online and contact us about YDAN's auditing service. Or if you would like to learn more about disability access and inclusion, check out our website for the workshops and trainings we deliver.**

## Disclaimer

The information in this resource is general advice and not legal, medical or professional advice. It is based on the personal experiences, perspectives, and research of the contributors and our living experience as an organisation. When looking for specific legal advice about disability accessibility, it is important to seek legal advice specific to you and your situation.