



AN INCLUSIVE WORKSHOP FOR AUDIENCE WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES

General Objective

The purpose of this worksheet is to give several methods and examples of how you can organize an inclusive workshop for an audience with mental disabilities, including those who have down syndrome.

In this practical sheet, you will:

- ✓ Learn the most important practicalities of organizing a workshop,
- ✓ Become aware of the key points to keep in mind when creating a workshop.
- ✓ Use your newly gained knowledge of these techniques with your learners.

What you'll need:

- ✓ A computer which has an application on which you can create the workshop slides and include the necessary information and images. (eg. PowerPoint)
- ✓ Internet access with which you can show the videos related to the workshop (via any browser – e.g., Google Chrome)

Challenges and issues

To organize disability-inclusive workshops, it is very important for the presenter to understand that mental disability can take many shapes and forms, thus that there is diversity of disability. Members of the society with psychosocial

disabilities include people with mental disabilities. These persons tend to face many challenges related to their emotional functioning to their surroundings

Accessible physical environments or information services are those that can be accessed by all members of the society, irrespective of any disability they have. Universal Design is the design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design". The concept asserts that anything and everything should be designed to be accessible not only to persons with diverse disabilities, but more generally to the broadest possible spectrum of humanity.

For society to be inclusive, we need to follow more often the universal design principle, meaning to be inclusive and accessible, rather than one or the other, like presented on the image below.



Adaptation

1. Accessibility is one of the key points when organizing a workshop for people with a (mental) disability. It is important to make sure that the venue where the workshop is organized is accessible and there are clear directions for the participants on where the workshop will be done. It is also important to consider how the topic of the workshop might be viewed from a disability perspective. Special attention should be paid to a location's physical features in terms of space, height, surface materials and gradients.
2. Invitations are expected to be sent far in advance of the workshop, for participants with disabilities to plan their journey and prepare for it. It is advisable to prepare a short "accessibility request form" along with the invitation, for the participants to submit any requests, such as disability transportation. It is important that any communication is sent in accessible formats. An example can be found in the Additional sources link.
3. During the workshop, allocate enough time for breaks and make sure that the communication needs of different persons in the audience are accommodated.



4. Fonts are also very important when creating the workshop, as the ones used need to be as readable as possible. Clear, large-sized fonts are preferred, and it is advisable to use one font throughout the whole workshop. Serif fonts such as Times and Times New Roman are considered the most readable for printed materials, whereas for content that is read from a screen, sans serif fonts, such as Arial and Verdana can be clearer. However, for very high-quality screens that can display fonts with clarity, serif fonts may be as readable as sans-serif. Below we have listed several examples of the recommended fonts for the workshop.



5. Clarify whether any of the participants need any guides or interpreters, captionists, note taking services or support assistants. Communication assistants may also be useful for participants with psychosocial disabilities, autism, learning disabilities and aphasia. Workshop organizers may also wish to recruit volunteers to provide further assistance ahead of the meeting.

6. When preparing the structure of the content of the workshop, keep in mind the following aspects:

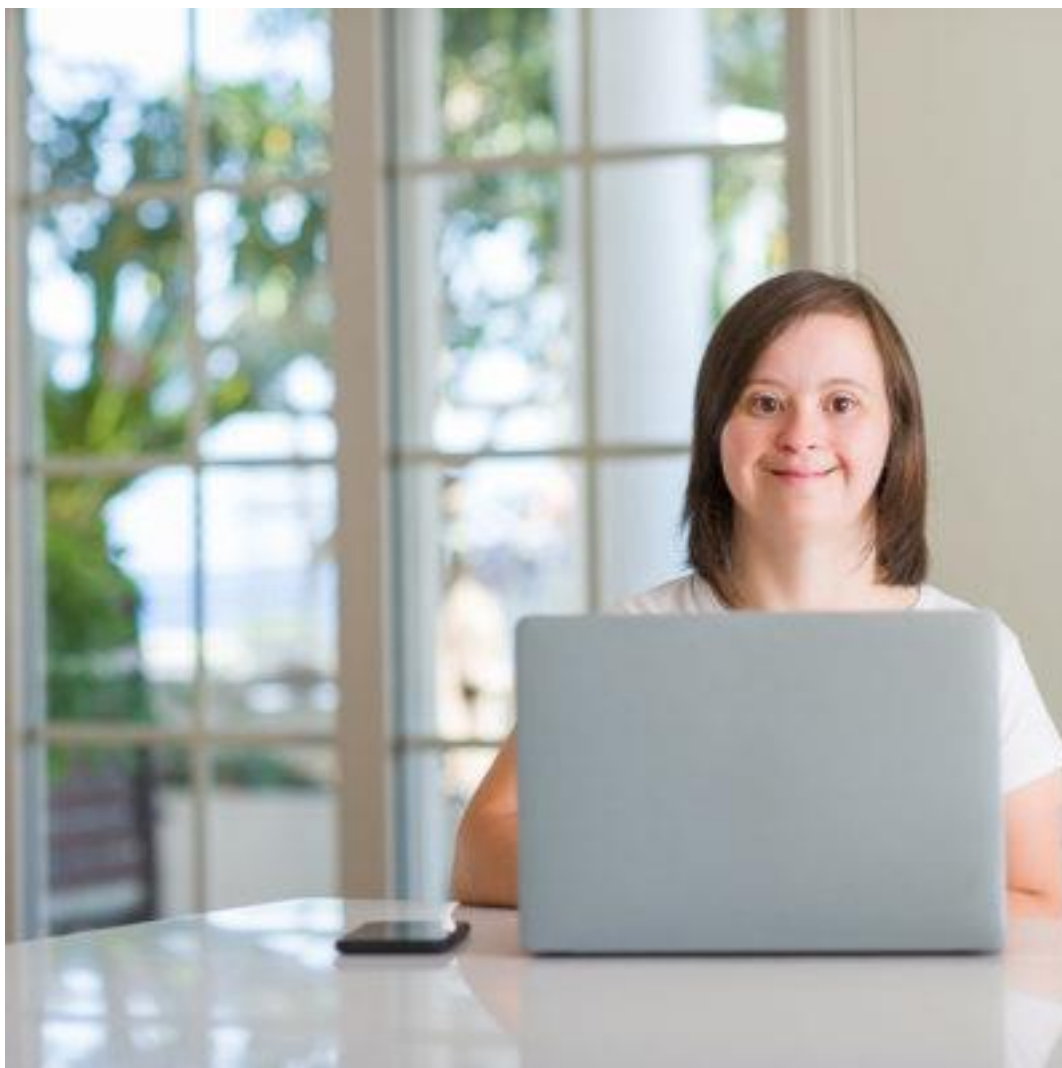
- theme or topics
- how much people taking part know about the topic
- size of the group
- size of the meeting room
- number of rooms available
- length of a session
- meal or drink breaks

Structure depends on the theme and goals of the event. A traditional structure involves presentations by an individual before a large audience, followed by questions from the audience. During a part of the workshop, it is advisable that participants break up into groups of about 5 to 10 people, to discuss a specific issue. A note-taker may be chosen by the working group to take a report and comments back to the larger group. The advantage of this format is participation. Another advantage is that the organizers can determine which individuals would benefit from meeting one another in a more personal setting and organize a workshop around them.

7. Equipment is also an important aspect to consider. Some things you may need, depending on the group size and venue size can be the following:

- Microphones and stands.
- Loop system for people with hearing impairments.
- Film projector.
- Overhead projector.
- Charts and diagrams.
- Audio-visual equipment, video, tape recorders, etc.

Note: If you need the workshop participants to bring any equipment with them, please include this in the invitation.



Practical examples and inspiration



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKku4RAWa4M>

Sample Materials that can be used during the workshop:

<https://worldinstituteondisabilityblog.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/disability-awareness-workshop.pdf>

Disability mainstreaming workshop - facilitator's guide:

[https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Disability Mainstreaming Workshop Facilitator %27s Guide.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Disability%20Mainstreaming%20Workshop%20Facilitator%27s%20Guide.pdf)

Additional resources

Definitions of terms such as captionists, support assistants; Sample Accessibility Request Form, Floor Plan and other tools can be found in the Annexes of the following document:

<https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Disability%20Inclusive%20Meetings%20PDF.pdf>

Webinar: Disability Inclusion Planning Toolkit Workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIH0egrpiuw>