

Accessibility & Responsiveness for Survivors with Disabilities

Scoring Instrument



safety first initiative

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Introduction

The Accessibility Responsiveness Tool provides a framework for domestic violence, sexual violence, and disability service organizations to think about the “when, where, what, and how” of providing inclusive, accessible, and responsive services. These services for survivors with disabilities reach far beyond the accommodations required by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act, 2000). First, this tool addresses inclusiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness by illustrating how policies and services are intertwined. Second, it addresses an agency’s day-to-day practices as well as its collective mindset and culture. Lastly, this tool reinforces collaborative partnerships which are essential to improving services for survivors with disabilities. This tool traces inclusiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness across the five following domains.

1. **Inclusive Practices-** Agency services, supports, resources, and assistance should be provided in an accessible, inclusive, and responsive manner for all people (with and without disabilities). This section focuses on the day-to-day services needed by survivors with disabilities. It addresses not only services, but training and information for professionals in order to provide the services, and the organizational systems needed to support accessibility and responsiveness. Cross-cutting themes include staff competency, safety planning, responsiveness, outreach, advocacy, communication, resources, training and information.
2. **Inclusive Communication-** In a time of increased technologies, communication takes on multiple forms. This section will address all forms of communication: web-based, print, face-to-face, and phone. Communications used to market the availability of services, to provide services, and to link with community resources should all be considered.
3. **Inclusive Environment-** An inclusive environment refers to the design of places, things, information, communications, services and policy that focuses on the user, on the widest range of people operating in widest range of situations without special or separate design (www.accessingsafety.org). This section traces principles of universal design as they apply to collaboratively serving survivors with disabilities.
4. **Inclusive Policies-** Inclusive policies support a welcoming environment for the widest range of potential users and circumstances in mind. In serving survivors with disabilities, policies for assuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing individualized accommodations to survivors needing support, and assuring the safety of survivors is essential.
5. **Building Capacity-** The culture of an agency or organization can promote or detract from inclusiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness. This section on Building Capacity focuses on the agency culture of and commitment to community partnerships. Specifically, this section identifies sub-areas of Partnerships, Leadership, Training, Inclusive Commitment, and Ongoing Evaluation as essential to building organizational capacity for serving survivors with disabilities.

Do You Have the Basics?

Completing an Accessibility and Responsiveness Review will leave a positive impact on your agency, but it is also a significant undertaking. The degree to which the following “foundation” pieces are in place *ahead of the Review* will likely be a predictor of your agency’s success with this tool.

Does your agency...

- ...have a solid infrastructure that has sustained for a number of years? (i.e. leadership, budget, presence in community, etc.)
- ...have leadership who have some level of commitment to responding to violence against persons with disabilities?
- ...have baseline awareness/knowledge of violence against persons with disabilities across all levels?
- ...meet your field’s standards of quality services? (check with your state coalition, certifying board, etc.)

Establishing Your Team

A good first step to this process is to decide who will be part of the review team, and what their roles will be. This tool is designed to guide reviews both for disability and victim services providers. Ideally, this tool should be completed by a multi-disciplinary team comprised of disability and victims services providers, including people with disabilities. Individuals in leadership positions as well as individuals working directly with survivors and/or people with disabilities should be included.

Orienting Your Team

This team should initially meet to scan the items on the tool, discuss if additional or different individuals need to be involved in the review process due to needed expertise, and plan time to conduct the accessibility and responsiveness review using the tool. It may help to identify a facilitator for the review. This person can help to keep the team on task, on time, and step in if the team becomes “bogged down” by a particular issue. As you are planning, consider what individuals or agencies will serve as a “resource provider”. These people or agencies are the ones you know you can call for advice and support to make changes or implement new policies in the identified areas.

How to Use the Tool

Within each domain are a series of **Guiding Questions**, **Suggestions**, and **Practical Ideas** providing examples of “what it looks like.” The suggestions and practical ideas are meant to be examples that any agency providing domestic violence, sexual violence or disabilities services could utilize. As a review team, use the guiding questions, suggestions, and ideas to steer your discussion. The **Notes** space is provided for the review team’s convenience to record additional questions that may have been prompted by the conversation and thoughts for follow-up. It may be helpful to read through the glossary prior to conducting the review as some discipline-specific terms may be unfamiliar.

This guide is meant to provide a broad sampling of guiding questions, practical ideas and suggestions. Some may be ideas you have not considered before. Some situations may not apply to your agency, while others may lead you into thinking of additional areas or approaches. It is not a definitive guide to ADA or any other legal requirements. As such, some of the items in the **Suggestions** and **Practical Ideas** column are actually legal requirements. Whenever possible we have noted these items with a star and a footnote suggesting that you need to check ADA compliance. There may be other items that are legal requirements that we have not noted; it is always a good idea to be familiar with legalities regarding people with disabilities. A good starting point is www.accessingsafety.org.

Scoring

An optional *Scoring Instrument* is also provided. The team may choose to record their current status of implementation of each review item. Scoring is recorded using status indicators of 1-5. This scale ranks the levels of implementation and collaborative partnership as it applies to improving inclusiveness, accessibility, and responsiveness. In some areas of review, notable progress may have been made, but not everything is completed. The scoring is meant to be flexible and used in conjunction with your reflections and next steps as a tool for thinking through your progress and ideas.

Scoring is as follows:

- (1) Not at all:** Item has not been considered.
- (2) Conversation Stage:** Initial conversations have occurred and strategies for addressing the indicator are being considered.
- (3) Planning Stage:** A plan for addressing the question has been developed, includes identification of key partners and action steps.
- (4) Initial Implementation:** We have begun work to address this question and have started to more regularly collaborate with community partner as needed. Some policies or procedures have been implemented.
- (5) In place:** We have policies and procedures in place to address the question, agency-wide. We frequently collaborate with community partners. This is part of the way we do business day to day.

Scoring Examples	<p>Your agency may have built a new wing that is completely ADA compliant and still be working to make the old wing/s in your structure compliant. Score as you see fit. This could be scored as 4 (initial implementation), then include additional discussion as to the thought process and why this score was chosen under the reflections and next steps sections.</p> <p>You realize that you need to review your agency’s policies to ensure they are flexible enough to accomodate survivors with disabilities. The issue has been raised in a couple of meetings but no formal plans have been made. This could be scored as 2 (conversation stage).</p>
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When scoring, it is important to remember that this is not a grade. It is a tool to facilitate the development of a work plan to address the needs of survivors with disabilities. It may be helpful to think of the completion of this process and something that can be used to leveraged funds--areas for improvement are not “bad scores” but a documented funding need for your agency.

Next, teams may also record their **Reflections** and **Next Steps** for each item. **Reflections** may include an explanation of how a score was assigned, names of persons that may need to be contacted in order to fully discuss the item, or other additional thoughts. The **Next Steps** space may be used to identify actions that should take place in order to address the item.

Finally, the *Scoring Instrument* includes an **Action Plan Worksheet**. This worksheet helps you and your organization to summarize the items you scored by identifying priority action steps, establishing a time frame, and clarifying responsibility and roles.

Inclusive Practices

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
1) Competency: To what extent does agency staff have the knowledge and expertise to serve survivors with disabilities?			
2) Resources: Does your agency have an employee designated to have expertise on serving people with disabilities who have experienced (or may be at risk for) violence?			
3) Training & Information: Does all agency staff have access to information and support needed in order to address the unique needs of survivors with disabilities in a timely manner? (“timely” may differ by setting: office, outreach site, residential, etc.)			
4) Training & Information: Are staff trained in best practices in providing trauma-informed services?			
5) Communication: Are staff members comfortable and skilled interacting with individuals who use different methods of communication.			

Inclusive Practices continued

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
7) Responsiveness: To what extent is staff able to respond to the immediate needs of a person with disabilities that has experienced violence?			
8) Outreach: To what extent does your agency outreach activities model accessibility and responsiveness?			
9) Advocacy: To what extent does your agency empower survivors with disabilities to advocate for their preferences in choosing services?			
Additional Comments:			

Inclusive Communication

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
1) Communication: Are agency informational and educational materials accessible to all individuals regardless of disability?			
2) Communication: Do you clearly communicate that your agency welcomes and can assist people with disabilities who are victims of violence?			
3) Communication: Can staff communicate with all service users regardless of their disability?			
4) Communication: Do all agency electronic resources (e.g., web pages) adhere to current web accessibility guidelines?			

Inclusive Environment

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
1) Equitable Use: Are your agency environments (physical, communication, policy) designed such that it does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users?			
2) Flexibility in Use: Are you able to accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities?			
3) Simple, Intuitive Use: Are your agency environments easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.			
4) Tolerance for error: If someone makes a mistake while participating in services, is it possible to self correct with confidence and dignity?			
5) Perceptible Information: Are your agency environments such that are able to communicate necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities?			
6) Low physical effort: Is your agency designed in such a way that it can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue?			

*Scoring Key (1=Not at all, 2=Conversation Stage, 3=Planning Stage, 4=Initial Implementation, 5=In Place)

Inclusive Environment continued

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
7) Size and Space for Approach & Use: Is your agency design such that appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility?			
8) ADA Policy: Has your organization developed a physical accommodations policy in accordance with the ADA?			
Additional Comments:			

Inclusive Policies

Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
1) Accommodations: Are there policies in place to determine needs for accommodations for survivors with disabilities?			
2) Accommodations: Do policies allow a survivor with disabilities to ask for individual accommodations? Are policies flexible enough to accommodate?			
3) Policies: Does your agency have a policy on the types of support and limits direct service staff and volunteers can/cannot provide?			
4) Communication: Does your agency have a complaint process for people with disabilities who believe they have been denied access to services because of their disability or related to disclosure of violence/abuse?			
5) Safety: Does your agency's emergency plan include procedures to evacuate individuals with disabilities and to alert individuals who may be hearing impaired or deaf?			
Additional Comments:			

Building Capacity

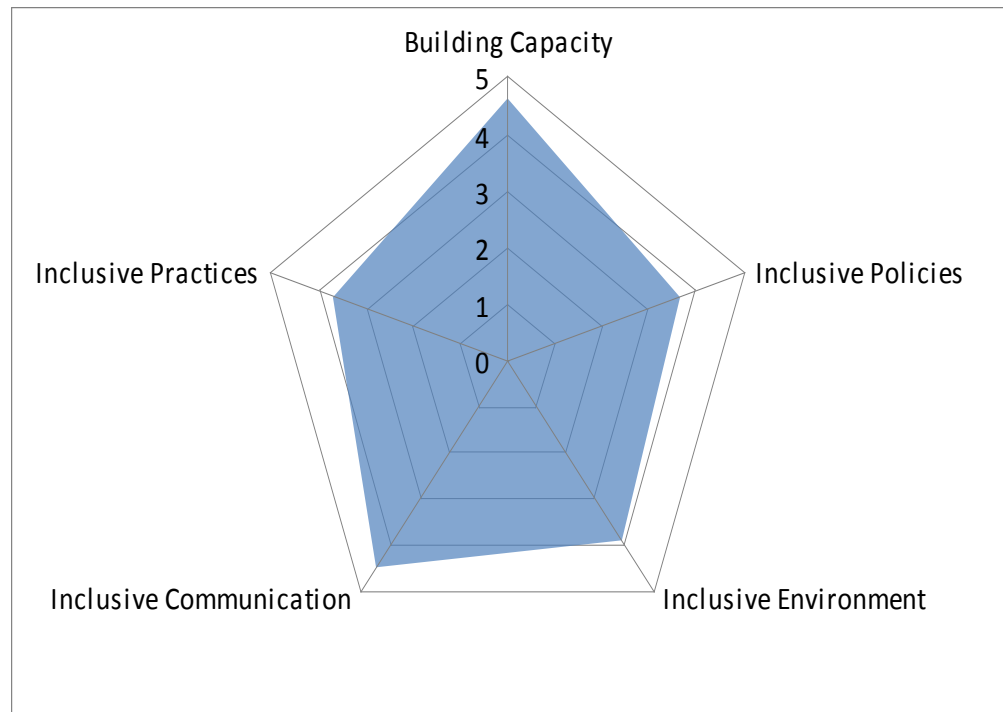
Indicators	Status (1 - 5)*	Reflections	Next Steps
1) Partnerships: To what extent do you have a collaborative working relationship with disability services/ domestic violence/sexual violence organizations to serve survivors with disabilities?			
2) Leadership: To what extent does your agency involve people with disabilities and trauma-informed philosophy in ways that influence and shape the agency?			
3) Training: To what extent does your agency sustain ongoing disability/domestic violence/sexual violence-related training?			
4) Inclusive Commitment: To what extent does your agency's organizational culture reflect behaviors, beliefs, standards, and values consistent with universal design, inclusion, & trauma informed perspectives?			
5) Ongoing Evaluation: To what extent does your agency monitor progress with regards to serving people with disabilities who have experienced violence?			
Additional Comments:			

Status Summary

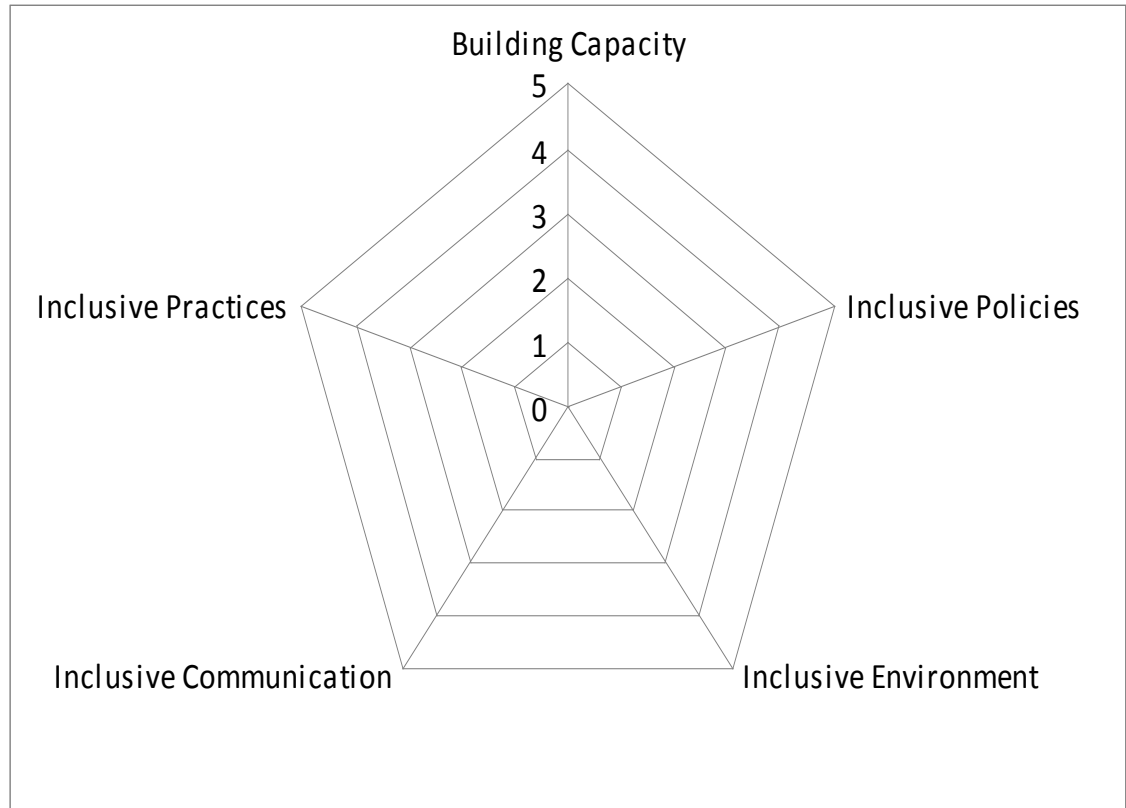
Once the review and scoring is complete, the findings should be summarized to facilitate action planning. First, calculate the average score indicating your determined current status within each category and record this value in the chart on the next page. Second, plot the values on the spider web graph, connect the dots and shade in the area. The extent to which the web is entirely shaded indicates the degree to which the essential features are implemented fully. Below you will find an example of how this will look. In this example, Building Capacity received a score of 4.6, so its area is shaded in blue to just over the 4. An electronic, Excel-based version where the summary will plot automatically is also available.

EXAMPLE

	Status Average
Inclusive Practices	3.7
Inclusive Communication	4.5
Inclusive Environment	3.9
Inclusive Policies	3.6
Building Capacity	4.6



	Status Average
Inclusive Practices	
Inclusive Communication	
Inclusive Environment	
Inclusive Policies	
Building Capacity	



***Scoring Key (1=Not at all, 2=Conversation Stage, 3=Planning Stage, 4=Initial Implementation, 5=In Place)**

Action Plan Worksheet

This worksheet is for your organization to summarize the items you scored under each domain and to prioritize those items you feel will be most important in moving forward with your action plan. Begin by looking at how you scored your items and then ask yourselves the following questions: Is this item a high or low priority? What are the next steps? What are the considerations for each of these next steps? How long will it take to complete these steps? See below for a key with suggested considerations. You can always revise, delete, or edit these items later. Depending on the detail and extent of your plan, it may require additional space.

Inclusive Practices Next Steps	Considerations	2 Years	5 Years	Who Will Implement?
EXAMPLE: <i>Develop training and protocol for first responders on appropriate responses and actions to take.</i>	T ST CAP R I	X		<i>Assistant to the Director</i>

Considerations Key: **C**= Cost; **CAP**= Capacity; **ST**= Staffing; **M**= Measurement/Data Collection; **PC**= Political Climate;
T= Time; **R**= Readiness; **SEQ**= Sequence of Required Steps; **SC**= Systems Change; **I**= Impact

Inclusive Communication Next Steps	Considerations	2 Years	5 Years	Who Will Implement?
EXAMPLE: <i>Get feedback from clients regarding the accessibility, usability, and appeal of communication materials and create an ongoing process for getting feedback.</i>				
Inclusive Environment Next Steps	Considerations	2 Years	5 Years	Who Will Implement?
EXAMPLE: <i>Improve Universal Design of communication through visual and physical markers for way-finding, assuring materials are perceptible through multiple formats.</i>				

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Inclusive Policies Next Steps	Considerations	2 Years	5 Years	Who Will Implement?
EXAMPLE: Review current policies for accommodating individualized needs (beyond the scope of universal design) and add clarifications as needed regarding the expectations or limits of direct service staff and volunteers.				
Building Capacity Next Steps	Considerations	2 Years	5 Years	Who Will Implement?
EXAMPLE: Exchange information and training opportunities with other disability and victim services providers. (High Priority)				

Considerations Key: C= Cost; CAP= Capacity; ST= Staffing; M= Measurement/Data Collection; PC= Political Climate; T= Time; R= Readiness; SEQ= Sequence of Required Steps; SC= Systems Change; I= Impact