

Access Checks

Supporting people to participate in co-design workshops

Background and Rationale

People with an intellectual disability are frequently excluded from participating in research due to barriers to accessing information in plain language, rigorous consent processes and perceptions about the capacity of a person with an intellectual disability to consent, the lack of universal supports that facilitate participation and challenges associated with recruitment (St. John et al 2022, Lennox et al 2005).

The Access Check is a guide that can be used to gather more information about an individual's access to communication. At the completion of the access check, a summary or profile will be prepared for the participant. Information gathered can be used to support a person participate in research and provided to the participant who may choose to share it with others. It consists of questions across three primary domains (environment, engagement, and communication) and is designed to be implemented in a conversational style.

Using the Access Check can help facilitators to identify specific needs, barriers and challenges that impact their ability to communicate effectively. It provides an avenue for participants to openly share their preferences and requirements that would most benefit them.

Access Check Quick Guide

Engagement	Environment	Communication
Engagement is the level of enthusiasm that encourages people to participate.	Environment refers to the surroundings or conditions within a service.	Communication refers to how people understand and use language with others.

Who is this tool for?

This tool is intended to be used by facilitators of meetings, workshops and/or projects who are looking to make their sessions more accessible for all attendees.

When should this tool be used?

The Access Check can be used before the individual attends a session held by the facilitator. You can also follow-up with the individual in the future to determine whether their needs have changed and/or if the supports provided were beneficial.

How to use the tool?

The tool will take approximately 30 minutes to administer. Before meeting the individual, prepare your handout that contains the supports you feel you can offer (you may add to this later). You can use the master list to help you think of support ideas.

Begin by having a conversation about the individual's access needs. You may like to use the broad questions to begin and then use the more specific prompts to get more detail if required. Fill out the individual's responses on the column on the right. Following this conversation, you should offer the individual a handout which contains a list of supports you CAN offer. Explain these to the individual and help them decide what could benefit them. They may need to take some time to think about their options.

Remember

The Access Check is not intended to be administered as a checklist. Instead, you should use the prompts to help structure a conversation about the individual's physical and communication needs and how they can be accommodated. You may find that some questions are more useful or relevant than others, so you may use your discretion to follow the lead of the person you are meeting. Avoid making assumptions about the individual's needs solely based on your observations. It is important to offer supports regardless of what **you** feel they require.

PART 1

Facilitator's Name:	Facilitator's Role:
Attendee's Preferred Name:	Attendee's Preferred Pronouns: she/her he/him they/them
Support Person/Carer Present:	Role/Relationship to Attendee:
Date Completed:	Follow-Up Date Completed:

PART 2

Engagement

Prompt	Response
1. Why have you chosen to engage in this project? What are you looking forward to/ excited about with the project? How did you hear about the project?	
2. Do you enjoy using technology ? What do you use technology for? Is there anything you find hard when using technology? (NOTE: Technology refers to devices such as phones, tablets, laptops, and computers)	
3. Tell me what helps you to engage and participate in activities. What helps you pay attention? What helps you stay focused? Are there any other strategies that make it easier to listen to people for long periods of time?	Pictures Fidgets Headphones Lighting adjustments Breaks Other:

4. Tell me how you feel about talking to new people or in a group? What helps you to feel comfortable?	Having time to get to know people before a meeting Bringing a support worker Making sure everyone gets a turn to talk Other:
5. Who would you like me to talk to when communicating about your participation:	Contact me Include this person
6. How would you like to be contacted?	Phone call Email Text message

Additional Comments:

Environment

Prompt	Response
1. Do you have a support person that may attend meetings with you?	Yes No Support worker Parents/Guardian Sibling Child Other: Comments:

2. Do you have access to technology such as a phone, tablet or computer?	Access to technology Do you know how to use your device? Do you need support to use this device? If so, how can someone help/support you? Have you used Zoom/Microsoft teams before? Comments
3. Do you have access to the internet at home?	Access to the Internet
4. Can you tell me anything in the physical environment that you find challenging? Do you have/use _____ ?	Motorised scooter Low mobility chairs Blind/low vision Hard of hearing/deaf Mobility aid Wheelchair Walking frame Comments
5. Do you have any sensory needs? Is there anything that makes you feel uncomfortable/comfortable in your physical environment? Does certain sensory stimuli make you uncomfortable/comfortable?	Temperature Sensory needs Lighting (dim/bright) Noise Visual stimuli (e.g., bright colours, bold text) Other:

	Comments
--	-----------------

Additional Comments:

Communication

Prompt	Response
1. Tell me about how you communicate with others. What is your preferred mode of communication? What works for you when communicating? Are there additional means that you use to support your communication? [see (8) for suggestions] Is there anything that makes it easier for people to understand you?	Verbal Non-verbal (e.g., sign language, gestures) Alternative and Augmentative Communication (e.g., communication boards, Key Word Sign, Proloquo2Go) Supports (e.g., using the hands up feature, interpreter, having information displayed on the screen, using chat function) Comments
2. Does anything make it hard/easy to understand others? Does using/having (see prompts below) help you to understand what others are saying?	Sign language Supports (e.g., simplified, agenda, interpreter, extra processing time) Do not use screen share Use screen share Picture and symbol cards Pen and paper Yes/no communication cards Audio (e.g. having information read aloud) Device e.g. iPad Other:

	Comments
3. Is there anything that people do that makes you uncomfortable when they communicate with you?	Prolonged eye contact Using difficult words Asking too many questions at once Speaking too fast/loud Other Comments
4. Do you speak a language other than English?	What language do you prefer using? What language do you understand the best? Would you like an interpreter? Comments
5. Do you have any resources/reports that might help us understand how you communicate?	Medical reports Communication dictionary My Health Matters folder Comments
6. Tell me about what it is like for you when someone shares their screen in an online meeting?	Does it make it easy for you to follow what they are talking about? Does it make it hard for you to understand who is talking because videos of the speaker are minimised?

Additional Comments:

Reference List:

Lennox, N., Taylor, M., Rey-Conde, T., Bain, C., Purdie, D.M. & Boyle, F. (2005). Beating the barriers: recruitment of people with intellectual disability to participate in research. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 49 (4), 296-305.

St. John, B. M., Hickey, E., Kastern, E., Russell, C., Russell, T., Mathy, A. & Ausderau, K. K. (2022). Opening the door to university health research: recommendations for increasing accessibility for individuals with intellectual disability. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 21(1), 130.

Additional resources:

- [Opening the door to university health research: recommendations for increasing accessibility for individuals with intellectual disability | International Journal for Equity in Health | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#) Links in the glossary to the following:
 - Plain Language Glossary [Microsoft Word - Appendix A. Plain Language Glossary Example_8.15.22.docx \(springer.com\)](#)
 - Understanding consent and assent in research [Microsoft Word - Appendix B. Understanding consent and assent in plain language_8.15.22.docx \(springer.com\)](#)
 - Supports I need for research participation checklist [Microsoft Word - Appendix C. Supports I Need for Research Participation_5.26.22.docx \(springer.com\)](#)
 - Easy read article summary [Microsoft Word - Appendix D. Easy Read Article Template_5.27.22.docx \(springer.com\)](#)
- Communication Disabilities Access Canada [Communication Access Form – Communication Disabilities Access Canada \(cdacanada.com\)](#)
- Checkup – Access for all resources: Improving accessibility [Improving Accessibility - CheckUP](#)
- Communication Access in Virtual Education (CAVE Checklist) [CAVE-Checklist-1.pdf \(successforkidswithhearingloss.com\)](#)
- Checklist for accessible content [Checklist for accessible content \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

PART 3

List of possible supports

This is a master copy that includes a wide range of supports. Pick the supports that are most relevant to your workshop and transfer it over to the template provided. You can also include other supports that have not been mentioned in the table.

Environmental Supports	Engagement Supports	Communication Supports
• Having a support person attend the session with you • Having a project member attend the session with you • Access to public transport • Space for mobility aid • Adjustable lighting (dim/bright lighting) • Closed doors • Diversity affirming signage and bathrooms • No background noises	• Regular breaks • Paired/group work • Using technology to share information (e.g., polls, whiteboard, chat box, Padlet/Menti)	• Interpreter (including Auslan) • EasyRead presentations and documents • Providing content/meeting agenda before the session to read over • Giving extra time to process information • Providing information in different formats (e.g., visual, spoken, written, video, printouts) • Not calling on me in front of the group • Live captions/transcriptions for online meetings • Hands up function to speak up



EXAMPLE
Available Supports



NSW Health

Having a support person
attend the session with
you ☐

Having a project team
member attend the
session with you ☐

No background noise ☐

Regular breaks ☐

Paired/group work ☐

Using technology to share
information (e.g., polls,
whiteboard, chat box,
Padlet/Menti) ☐

Interpreter (including
Auslan) ☐

EasyRead presentations
and documents ☐

Providing content/
meeting agenda before
the session to read ☐

Giving extra time to
process information ☐

Providing information in
different formats (e.g.,
visual, spoken, written,
video, printouts) ☐

Not calling on me in
front of the group ☐

Live captions/
transcriptions for online
meetings ☐

Using the hands up
function to speak up ☐

☐

☐

☐

☐