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Thank you,

Sonja Gaudet
Citizenship Coordinator

Laura Hockman
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION – CITIZENSHIP ENGAGEMENT TOOL

Independent Living (IL) is a vision, a philosophy, and a movement of persons with disabilities. Born on California university campuses in the 1970s, the movement spread to Canada in the 1980s, and has since reached around the globe and changed the way people view and respond to disability.

Independent Living was founded for the right of people with disabilities to:

- Live with dignity in their chosen community.
- Participate in all aspects of their life.
- Control and make decisions about their own lives.

The IL vision and philosophy has been articulated through the Independent Living movement – a network of individuals and community-based resource Centres across the country – and supported by a national organization, the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC).

The IL movement differs from traditional service models providing organizations support by emphasizing peer support, self-direction, and community integration by and for people with disabilities themselves. The IL model embraces the notion that rights and responsibilities are shared between citizens and the state, focusing on building a country based on the principles of inclusion, equity, affordability, and justice.

Traditionally, decisions were made by the state, without consulting the citizens that were directly impacted by the policy and/or program. Funding cuts and policy changes have placed greater emphasis on working across sectors (working horizontally) to find solutions to complex problems.

Both governments and communities have started the work of shifting the decision-making process from traditional consultations to one of citizenship engagement-a process characterized by mutual trust and a sharing of power. This model of Citizenship Engagement fits with the principles of Independent Living, and has been the inspiration behind the development of a Citizenship Engagement Tool.

The Citizenship Engagement Tool will increase the capacity of developing and existing ILRCs and other community based organizations to effectively consult with people with disabilities in their community.

For existing ILRCs, this guide will be an invaluable resource for two reasons:

- 1 In general, ILRCs can use this guide to reconnect with their membership and community as a whole to remain community based and consumer controlled. Most funding bodies require some level of consultation with the community to demonstrate the need for the development or continuation of programs and services. For example, the accreditation process being implemented by CAILC requires evidence of community consultation with consumers, members, and other stake holders
- 2 As a condition of membership with CAILC, Centres are required to be community based, consumer controlled, cross disability, and able to respond to newly defined needs. Consultation with a Centre's membership and community is essential to stay abreast of new issues facing local communities and people with disabilities.

This guide will focus on the four most common consultation options:

- Public Forums
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Surveys

In addition, to discussing common consultation methods, this guide offers users a plain language and practical resource guide, complete with supply lists, sample budgets, accessibility considerations, and information management tips.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

To effectively engage citizens with a disability in a community consultation, the process must have purpose, be well planned, and complete accessibility must be ensured. To be clear about the purpose, you must have grasp on the two most important terms: community and consultation. For the purposes of this guide these two terms refer to:

A consultation is the act of deliberation between two or more people on a particular matter while keeping the final outcome in mind. It is a discussion method at which different views are exchanged and advice and information is given and gathered.

A community is simply a collection of relationships. Community can be placed geographically as a city or town in a province, or as a particular institution or organization (ex. University of UBC or The Vernon Disability Resource Centre).

The best definition of a community for the purpose of identifying a need to developing an ILRC, would be to define it in a unique manner that captures the relationships of the members of the community with a disability, existing service providers to people with disabilities, and potential consumers of an ILRC. By defining community in this manner, our community consultation process will be able to focus on the importance of relationships.

The consultation method you choose will be determined by answering the following questions:

What information are you hoping to gather?

- Feedback about services and programs?
- information about gaps in service?
- Feasibility of developing an ILRC?
- Connecting with consumers, members, and your local community?

For what purpose will you use the information?

- Improving or expanding service delivery?
- Increasing or sustaining program funding?
- Networking with community members or funding bodies?

Who are the stakeholders with the information you need?

- Consumers?
- Members and Board of Directors?
- Community members?
- Local Service Providers?
- Local Government
- Funding bodies?

What human resources do you have available for consultation, marketing, and evaluation process?

- Volunteers?
- Board of Directors?
- Staff?

What financial resources do you have available for consultation?

- Do you have a budget available?
- Can you access funding from a funding agency? For example: United Way, provincial or federal government.
- Can you solicit donations of supplies or services from the community?

No matter what your budget or purpose, there is a method of consultation to meet your needs. This guide will focus on four different consultation methods:

- Public Forums
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Surveys

For a developing ILRC, all the above methods may be used to get as much feedback from various stakeholders as possible. An existing ILRC, may use one method to reconnect with their membership and another method to complete a strategic plan.

With a limited financial budget and limited human resources, a survey or phone interview of stakeholders may be the most cost and time efficient method.

“Consultations included public forums, focus groups, individual consumer surveys, organization interviews, and community meetings.

All forms worked together to provide different perspectives and pieces of the puzzle. Due to the strong commitment to being community-driven and consumer controlled and cross disability, all were very important to the initial development of the ILRC.”

(ILRC-NFLD)

One tool that can be used in any consultation method (Public Forum, Focus Group, Survey or Interview), is a SWOT Analysis.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is an effective method of identifying your **Strengths** and **Weaknesses** and of examining the **Opportunities** and **Threats** an ILRC can face in your community.

Why use this tool?

Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework helps you to focus your activities into areas where you are strong and where the greatest opportunities lie.

How to use this tool?

To carry out a SWOT Analysis, write down answers to the following questions. Where appropriate, use similar questions:

Strengths

- What advantages do we have?
- What do we do well?
- What relevant resources do we have access to?
- What do other people see as our strengths?

Don't be modest. Be realistic. If you are having any difficulty with this, try writing down a list of your characteristics as a group as well as individually. Some of these will hopefully be strengths!

Weaknesses

- What could we improve?
- What do we do badly?
- What should we avoid?

Again, consider this from an internal and external basis and as a group as well as individually. Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that we do not see? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities

- Where are the good opportunities facing us?
- What are the interesting trends we are aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

- Changes in government policy related to your field.
- Changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes, etc.
- Local Events.

A helpful approach to looking at opportunities is to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

Threats

- What obstacles do we face?
- What is our competition doing?
- Could any of our weaknesses seriously threaten our programs and services?

Carrying out this analysis will often be illuminating – both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

Before your group begins a consultation process it is important to consider how the feedback and information that is gathered from focus groups, surveys and interviews will be organized and kept confidential.

Information Management Tips

Ensuring accuracy and confidentiality of the information received during any consultation method is critical to building trust and outlining issues facing people with disabilities.

Obviously, some basic ingredients to gathering and organizing information are:

- Computer tools: lots of memory, a word processing program (ex. MS Word), a printer, an Internet connection, etc.
- Filing system for participant's information: locking filing cabinet, file folders, labels, etc.
- For more information about supplies, please refer to the Appendices section - Sample Supply List.

Even more important when gathering information is HOW and WHAT you ask participants. Here are some tips to consider when developing your questions and your topics of discussion:

- Always maintain professionalism – know your boundaries in regards to how much personal information you need to hear.
- Respect Confidentiality – no gossiping!
- Stay on track with your questions and conversation.
- Choose the person best suited to gather and organize information – someone who can and will keep it confidential.
- During interviews be prepared for some participants to become emotional while sharing information. Show empathy and compassion to the individual.
- Do you want the information to be given with yes/no answers, short/long explanations, or on a type of rating system (1 - 5, bad – excellent)? If your information is given in the written form of explanations and sentence answers, it may be harder and take longer to input this data into an organized format or table. If your information has been gathered through a rating system, you may find it easier to document and keep record of.

Here is an example of a table that can be used to input information from a survey, interview, or evaluation that has been gathered through a rating system.

Total the number of individuals who rated each category the same.

Category	1	2	3	4	5
Idea or purpose of event					
Accessibility					
Staff					
Facilitators					
Format of session					
Location					
Volunteers					
Refreshments					
Were your concerns heard?					
Enough time?					
Did you feel positive about things when you left?					

“I found it very hard to keep track of all written answers from my surveys, interviews, and feedback forms. This consumed a lot of my time organizing the information that I had spent so much time gathering in the first place. Using a rating system with a table to “plug” my results into will definitely be the process I use in the future!”

(VDRC – Citizenship Coordinator)

Marketing Your Consultation

There are many options available when deciding how best to advertise your community consultation. For example, utilizing the following options to explain the consultation method and purpose:

- Newsletter
- Website
- Invitation
- Newspaper
- Television
- Radio

The marketing method you choose will depend on if your Centre is developing or existing. For existing Centres, all the above options may be available to you. It is important to ensure you have a representation from all your stakeholders-members, volunteers, consumers, Board members, staff, and community partners. These stakeholders need to be engaged in the process to have a voice in the development and sustainability of the centre.

For developing Centres, the last three options above may be your best choices, until the Centre has developed a membership base, consumer groups and community partners. When marketing your ideas about developing an ILRC in your community, people will want to know what your Centre offers that other agencies do not. This information will need to be given to the media in order to reach potential consumers and community members at large. You will need to emphasize the characteristics of an ILRC that make it unique.

Some key phrases used to describe an ILRC:

- A resource Centre which provides specialized information and referral, peer support, and skills training programs for people with disabilities.
- A Centre which is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.
- A Centre which offers “bridges” back to the community for individuals who have recently become disabled.

An ILRC offers these benefits to consumers:

- Empowerment to make informed decisions on matters that affect their lives.
- Providing opportunities for consumers to live independently in their own environments by enabling them to make informed decisions.
- Support and social interaction with peers.

If you are sending out a media release regarding an event - like a public forum or a focus group - the public needs to know the following:

- Who – name of organization
- What – type of event
- Where – location
- Why – purpose of event
- When – date and time

To increase the community's interest in your centre, emphasize the unique qualities of the centre.

For more detailed information about marketing strategies, please refer to the Marketing Strategies for ILRCs manual developed by the Richmond Disability Resource Centre by contacting them at :

www.drcrichmond.ca or richmondrc@shaw.ca

"I do believe that the time, energy and resources dedicated to carrying out a consultation that was inclusive and actively sought viewpoints from literally 'everyone we could think of', helped to shape the ILRC. It gave us a clear indication of what consumers were looking for and helped people in the leadership roles be connected with community throughout the process."

(ILRC - NFLD)

PUBLIC FORUMS & FOCUS GROUPS

A public forum is a meeting format which allows the public or a group of community members, to debate and express themselves and their views on a particular issue. It is a meeting to discuss matters of a general interest.

A focus group is a smaller version of a public forum. It is a small group of representative people from the community who are to be questioned about their opinions regarding a specific issue – in this case the development of an ILRC.

Both formats are very successful research tools that can be used to determine the need of a desired outcome. Often these two formats are interchangeable depending on the amount of people you anticipate to attend the meeting. Larger meetings will be more effective when conducted as a Public Forum and smaller groups of individuals will benefit from a Focus Group.

Either way, a successful public forum and/or focus group for people with disabilities will be determined by the efforts of three key people: the Event Organizer, the Chairperson, and the Presenters. One of these three individuals is often also the facilitator of the meeting.

In the information to follow, you will find some facilitation tips and suggestions for the roles of the three key people which are meant to help organize events within a framework that respects accessibility and inclusion:

Facilitation Tips

It would be helpful if the person chosen to facilitate a group of individuals who are sharing information about the development of an ILRC, has some of the following characteristics:

- accepting of others
- adaptive
- proactive
- responsive
- charismatic
- empathetic
- flexible
- inspirational
- objective
- sense of when to stay quiet
- active listener

Your facilitator should also have some knowledge base in the area of:

- problem solving skills
- different learning styles
- persons with a variety of disabilities
- communication skills
- keeping participants on track

These are all useful group management skills, particularly if a conflict or difficult situation arises within the group.

A facilitator's role is to help with HOW the discussion is proceeding. In short, the facilitator's responsibility is to address the journey, rather than the destination.

Create a Friendly Atmosphere

Introduce yourself first and explain your role as the facilitator and the purpose of your session.

Depending on the size of your group, have each participant introduce themselves one at a time.

Reiterate to participants, if there are any accessibility concerns that may have been overlooked, to have them brought to your attention at this time.

Set Ground Rules

Ask the group to agree to a few ground rules at the beginning of the discussion such as:

- Speak one at a time.
- Participation from everyone.
- Respect each others feelings and ideas.
- No such thing as a stupid question.
- No verbal put-downs.
- No interruptions when someone else is speaking
- Equal time for all members.
- Start and finish time of session – be flexible.
- Time of breaks.
- Smoking considerations
- Any allergies, such as perfumes, need to be taken into consideration at this time.
- Reassure your participants that what is said in the group stays in the group.

If an attendant of any capacity is present - nurse, interpreter, care-giver, etc. – he/she is expected to maintain confidentiality as well.

Help the Group Get Started

Some groups may be reluctant to start talking. Depending on the format of your consultation, whether you have a presenter or not, and the questions you have prepared, address them yourself first before you direct them to your participants.

If you have a large group, you may want to consider dividing them into smaller groups to provide a safe place for participants who have difficulty communicating verbally or for other reasons. This will depend on whether you have someone prepared to facilitate each smaller group.

Keep in mind when planning the format of your session that role play and small group work can enhance participation.

At this point, you are ready to follow the agenda or model that you have created for your consultation method.

Closing

Thank the group members for their contributions and acknowledge positive outcomes that have been achieved. Summarize the major points that have been discussed.

Finish with your evaluation and feedback process. You may want to give the participants the choice to exchange contact information with one another, as well as yourself, so that everyone can keep in touch between sessions and regarding progress being made. Remind participants that this is optional and only a suggestion. You should also ensure that you are familiar with the guidelines and provisions of applicable Privacy Legislation, to avoid sharing types of information covered under the legislation without following appropriate procedures

Contact your specific, local privacy commissioner, if you are unsure.

Roles of Key People

Event Organizers

As stated above, the Event Organizer may also be the facilitator of the group – see Facilitation Tips above.

Be familiar with and ensure that all accessibility considerations have been made. This information would have been gathered from the registration form – see Appendices section - Accessibility Information & Checklist.

Provide a copy of the Accessibility Information section of this guide, to the Chairperson and the Presenters to help these players plan and prepare communications that reflect access and inclusion.

Design agendas to include regular breaks for participants, and guide/service dogs (approximately 20 to 30 minute health break and a 90 minute lunch break).

Promote a scent-free environment by providing advance notice to presenters and participants to refrain from using perfumes, colognes, and strong scented toiletries.

Keep in mind the needs of various participants, such as seat allocation nearest to the sign language interpreters for persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

Request advance copies of presentation materials from presenters to forward copies participants (ex. sign and simultaneous language interpreters, note-takers and captionists) before the meeting.

Prepare event signage using large print and contrasting colours (ex. directions to meeting rooms and washrooms, scent-free environment poster, emergency exits, participant nameplates and name tags).

Find participants to volunteer to help persons with disabilities who require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Chairpersons

As stated above, the Chairperson may also be the facilitator of the group – see Facilitation Tips above.

Ask participants, interpreters, interveners, captionists, and note-takers to introduce themselves at the onset of the meeting and to identify themselves before speaking throughout the meeting for the benefit of participants with visual disabilities.

Inform participants of the nearest emergency exits and accessible washroom facilities.

Remind participants to use microphones.

Encourage clear speech at a moderate pace by all attendees to help interpreters, interveners, note-takers, and captionists communicate with persons who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Briefly describe the content of the agenda and handout materials.

Clearly indicate changes in topics, breaks, and adjournments during the course of the event.

Advise participants to be aware of interpreters, interveners, captionists, and note-takers who are providing services that require concentration.

Advise participants that interpreters will say everything that is signed, and sign everything that is said. Interpreters will not add words, edit or censor a conversation.

Remind participants that the event is scent-free.

Presenters

Be familiar with Accessibility Information section of this guide – Appendices.

Request to the Event Organizer that any alternate formatting requirements be arranged prior to the presentation and to adhere to the planned schedule.

Have alternative formats distributed to the appropriate participants when distributing conventional print handouts before the event.

Speak clearly and face the audience during the presentation.

Periodically verify with the audience if the message and presentation material is being understood and rephrase to clarify as needed.

Allow adequate time for persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing to process onscreen messages in addition to adequate time for the interpreters to communicate the spoken word through sign language interpretation.

Use plain language and presentation materials that are crisp, to the point, and not too lengthy. Slide presentations that are too busy can create information overload.

Ask speakers to give you a list of the types of equipment they will need: overhead, screen, projector, flip chart, etc. ahead of time. Also ask how they intend to give their presentation: seated, at a table, behind a podium, walking around the room, etc.

All three key people need to be aware of the safety precautions necessary when in the planning stages. (See Safety Considerations)

Safety Considerations

To ensure the safety of all participants, discuss evacuation plans and procedures both with your planning committee and the facilities manager of the venue where you are having your consultation.

Have the people working at the registration table request that the participants identify their particular evacuation needs when they confirm their attendance during registration at the event.

Provide the facilities manager with a list of participants who need assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

At the beginning of the event, advise participants of the emergency exits located near the meeting rooms and washrooms. At this time, once again invite participants to identify their requirement for assistance in the event of an emergency, and notify the facilities manager of any updates to the list.

To facilitate a coordinated and expeditious evacuation, request volunteers to assist persons who have identified a need for assistance.

“Many perspectives coming together as a whole to focus on growth and ability. It was amazing to see the many positive attributes that already exist and can be improved on.”

(VDRC - Consumer)

MODEL FOR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Focus Group or Public Forum – Example 1

Question:

Would an Independent Living Resource Centre for people with disabilities benefit and strengthen our community?

One of your facilitators will explain what an ILRC is, the Mission Statement, and the programs that it offers:

- Parking Permit Program
- Peer Support Program
- Computer Program – CAP Site
- Pre-Employment Skills Program
- Information and Referral Program

You will have five flip charts set up around the room all colour coded differently. Each chart will be used to discuss certain issues regarding its applicable program as suggested above.

As your participants arrive, give them each an agenda of the session which is also colour coded to match the flip chart that they will be going to first.

Have the group break up into four smaller groups and go to the flip chart corresponding to the color on their agenda.

There will be a facilitator at each chart to discuss issues and questions about the specific program at each flip chart.

Move groups along with a signal telling them to proceed to the next flip chart every 15 minutes. Allow every group to go to each flip chart before your break.

Break Time – 20 minutes – refreshments and mingling.

Gather participants together in a horseshoe formation with all flip charts placed in front of them. As a group, identify the most important issues on each flip chart one at a time.

This process will help to prioritize what the people of your community think are the most important issues that need to be addressed at a centre. It will help to guide you towards how best to develop the centre and programs need to be a priority.

Conclude your session with a feedback or evaluation form for everyone to fill out as they leave and let our participants know when they can expect to hear back from you.

Because you have used the flip charts to record your information, you will have these to refer back to along with your feedback information.

“I liked the focus group, it was fun and I learned more about the ILRC. I was not intimidated.”

(VDRC – Consumer)

“I was amazed to see how empowering the consultation process was for consumers and volunteers.”

(VDRC – Staff)

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MODEL

DEVELOPING AN ILRC IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Focus Group or Public Forum – Example 2

Have the room divided into four stations with a table, chairs and a facilitator at each station.

Each facilitator will have questions pertaining to the programs being discussed at their station.

Divide participants into four groups and have them go to a station.

Have one of your facilitators explain the purpose of your meeting - **identifying the need for an ILRC in your community** – and that each group will circulate around the room from station to station at 20 minute intervals.

This time limit will be indicated by a signal from one of the facilitators.

Let the participants know that break-time will be after each group has visited two stations – this will be in approximately 40 minutes.

During break time, allow participants 15 minutes to mingle and have refreshments.

Assure them that if there isn't enough time to finish their refreshments, they can do so as they circulate around to the last two stations.

Conclude your meeting with time for your participants to fill out an evaluation or feedback form.

Give them a time frame as to when you will be contacting them about another possible group session and the outcome of this one.

Be sure to thank everyone for their participation and confirm the importance of their input!!

Sample questions for each station and facilitator:

GROUP 1

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Do you have problems getting information on training, events, and services available to the disability community?

Do you have access to computers and appropriate accessibility (software, hardware) to research and access information on disability supports, family support, employment, and other resources available in this area?

GROUP 2

INDEPENDENT LIVING/EMPOWERMENT SKILLS

What training programs and services are you using now that support the independent living philosophy?

How can they be improved?

What training programs or services are lacking?

GROUP 3

PEER SUPPORT

Would you use a centre for peer support & training on independent living skills, employment supports, to develop advocacy groups for social, computer, or other reasons?

What is the best location for an ILRC?

GROUP 4

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

Are there major barriers to people with disabilities in our community that need to be addressed such as age or gender issues, living situations, etc.?

Are there changes that have been brought about by the creation of the "City of _____" such as transportation, for example, that need to be addressed?

The facilitator at each group will keep notes of all the discussion that is happening. Be sure to keep on track as 20 minutes for each station will go fast.

"With on-going consultation, our centre has seen an increase in the amount consumer inquiries and quality of service."

(VDRC - Executive Director)

EXPLORING THE NEED FOR AN ILRC

Focus Group or Public Forum – Example 3

This topic can be whatever you choose – Exploring needs, barriers, particular issues, etc. In this case, we would like to gather information about;

How will an ILRC benefit the lives of people with disabilities and their community?

MODEL FOR SHARING INFORMATION

First Round

This model can be used to encourage your participants to be open with their issues. It also gives them a guideline to follow so that everyone's information is shared in the same context.

Have your participants seated in a circle configuration. Starting with the facilitators of the focus group, begin sharing information in this format:

How will an ILRC benefit “self” in relation to the five following areas:

1. MYSELF
2. OTHERS
3. COMMUNITY
4. VOCATION
5. HIGHER POWER

Have one of the facilitators keeping track of all information being shared. You can also suggest that each participant keep their own notes as they will be asked to share what the others have talked about, in the **Second Round**.

Remember that this model will bring up a lot of group discussion along the way. Encourage everyone to give feedback to the participant who is sharing as this will ensure that many issues and concerns will be addressed, possibly even some unexpected ones! This will make for a comfortable and open atmosphere.

BREAK TIME: 15-20 MIN. – Limit conversation to topic.

Second Round – Debrief

Starting with the facilitators, take turns around the circle to share what information has been gathered up to this point.

This is where it is helpful if everyone has taken notes along the way.

This exercise will help to validate each person's issues and ensure that information is correct. The participants will know and feel that they have been heard.

Third Round

Take turns around the circle – give every participant a chance to say anything that they may have forgotten or missed.

Conclude your time together with a feedback form for everyone to fill out before they leave. Also, give everyone a time frame as to when they will be contacted regarding the success that the focus group brought to your end result:

Establishing an ILRC in your community!

INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE CENTRE AND MY COMMUNITY

Focus Group or Public Forum – Example 4

This model will help to determine the need for an ILRC in your particular community.

The questions are followed by suggested answers or prompts in order to encourage and begin getting feedback from the participants.

COMMUNITY

What is community?

- Associations and activities bringing people together.
- Integration of all people.
- People caring about people.

What does community feel like?

- Welcoming.
- Familiar – like “bumping” into your friends.
- Sense of “belonging”.

CONNECTING

How will an ILRC bring the community together?

- Something the community stands for.
- Friendships.
- Support.

How will an ILRC “fit” into the community?

- Offering unique services.
- Partnering with other established services.
- Offering awareness and education to the local levels of government.

SPIRIT

Where does spirit come from?

- People wanting to join.
- If you create a good place with good people, the “spirit” follows.
- Diversity.

How do we create spirit at an ILRC?

- Being totally inclusive and accepting off all people with disabilities.
- Being creative with our programs.
- Challenge other support services to promote us.

PLACE

What location would be the best for an ILRC?

- Close to other support services.
- Close to the downtown area.

How do we make it accessible?

- Build with a Universal Design concept.
- Offer accessible technology.

Remember to have participants fill out a feedback or evaluation form before leaving the session. Also, take notes of all the information that is being shared during the group session and let people know when they can expect to hear back from you.

SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

A survey is a method of gathering detailed opinions and information regarding a specific issue and to consider the data to be representative of a desired outcome.

An interview is an informal or formal meeting arranged for the purpose of obtaining information about a particular issue, sometimes more personal information.

Surveys and interviews, either conducted at a person's house or over the telephone, are useful ways to collect the views of people with disabilities. These methods have several advantages:

- costs are reduced
- transport difficulties are avoided
- alternative care arrangements are not necessary
- consultant and participant can be flexible in the way they discuss the issues and use the time allocated for the consultation
- if advance notice is provided, this gives people with disabilities time to prepare their ideas
- for many people it is less threatening to express their views in writing than in a public meeting, as it is important for them to maintain confidentiality regarding their input
- if made available widely, this method can encourage individual people with disabilities to contribute to the consultation process as well as existing service providers

One-to-one interviews and surveys are a good way of addressing the communication needs of people who have limited concentration and comprehension. This method can also suit people who find groups threatening, such as some people with a psychiatric disability, people with hearing disabilities, etc.

Telephone interviews and surveys allows people with disabilities living in rural and remote areas to participate in the consultation process without having to leave their home. Consideration should be given to the use of 1-800 numbers to reduce the cost to callers.

For people who are deaf or are hard of hearing the use of operator assistance through the National Relay Service and the availability of Teletypewriter (TTY) services should be encouraged.

An important part of ensuring that a survey or interview method of consultation is accessible to people with disabilities will be the preparation and availability on request of information in accessible formats, including Braille, audio tape, easy English, electronic disk, via the Internet, etc.

As it is often difficult for individuals to prepare lengthy written submissions, assistance in writing responses may be appropriate, or people may be encouraged to call a number and record their views on to tape.

“I found that for my Citizenship Project, doing one-on-one surveys and interviews with consumers, potential consumers, service providers and other community members, gave the process a very personal touch!

(VDRC – Citizenship Coordinator)

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Example 1

These questions will help you to determine the needs of people with disabilities in your community.

Have you ever looked for information about the following:

YES

NO

N/A

(not available)

Housing

Travel

Transportation

Attendant Care

Employment

Recreation

Education

Leisure

Other: please

specify _____

What (if any) is your disability?

Where do you generally go for INFORMATION?

Where do you generally go for SERVICES?

Are you happy with the information and support services you have received – please comment?

Have you had trouble finding out what your rights are?

YES

NO

What kinds of information, supports, services, etc. would you like an ILRC to offer your community?

Thank you very much for taking time for this interview and your input to this questionnaire.

Please return by _____ and send to/or contact _____

CONSULTATION THROUGH INTERVIEWS

Example 2

These interview questions are examples you might want to consider as you determine the need for an ILRC in your community:

When the term Independent Living is used, it means making your own decisions, planning your future, and taking responsibility for those decisions.

As a person with a disability, is this important to you?

YES

NO

Are you able to do this now?

YES

NO

The Independent Living Movement has been growing rapidly in Canada for about 15 years. People with disabilities get together to learn from one another and therefore have a stronger voice.

Would group support be helpful for you?

The National Association has 25 Independent Centre across Canada in major cities. For the most part, these centers are controlled and staffed by people with disabilities.

Do you feel that people with disabilities are able to do the best job?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

One major concern of ILRCs is that programs be available to people regardless of their disabilities.

Are there people in your community who need help and are not getting it?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

The Independent Living philosophy encourages people with disabilities to be a part of their community and help others be aware of what they have to offer.

Would you like to be more involved in community life?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

An ILRC offers information on disabilities, accessible housing, employment, transportation, special needs for education, alternative medicine, recreation, taxes, rights, etc.

Would you find this information useful and helpful for yourself and others you know?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

At an ILRC, people with disabilities talk with others who have been through some of the same things, they help each other.

Are there times when you need someone like that around?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

An ILRC would help you reach your goals and dreams.

Do persons with disabilities need this kind of empowerment?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

Is there a talent or skill you would like to develop?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

If so - what needs to happen?

Is there a place you would like to go but can't (store, restaurant, bank, etc.)?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

If so – where would that place be?

Are there courses you would like to take?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

If so – what courses would they be?

Would you like to have a job?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

If so – what needs to happen for you to get a job?

Are there groups of people you would like to get to know?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

If so – how can you get to know these people?

What do you think would be most valuable to your community?

Keep in mind that all these programs are offered at an ILRC.

Number these in priority to you (1 = “highest” – 4 = “lowest”):

Research

Information

Peer Support

Empowerment

Be sure to thank your participant and reassure them that they can contact you at anytime if they would like to add information or take away any of the information that they shared with you.

(Leave participants with your contact information.)

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Example 3

“I am calling today to share some information with you about Independent Living and to ask you some questions about the possibility of developing an ILRC in our community.”

At this time, give brief background information on the Independent Living Philosophy and what an ILRC has to offer to people with disabilities.

Date called: _____

Name and address of person

called: _____

Disability:

YES NO SELF FAMILY MEMBER

Type of Disability:

VISION

MOBILITY

HEARING

SPEECH

LEARNING

ENVIRO SENSITIVITIES

OTHER _____

What do you already know about Independent Living Resource Centres?

Would you like more information mailed or e-mailed to you?

YES NO

What concerns would you like to see addressed for people with disabilities in your community?

Where do you presently get support, if any?

What programs would you access at an Independent Living Resource Centre?

- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
- RESOURCES AND INFORMATION
- SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT
- EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT

What skills, talents, hobbies, and interests do you have that you would like to share with others at an ILRC?

SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

Example 4

This survey is one you could distribute to other service providers to determine what services are or are not available for people with disabilities in your community. Be sure to include a brochure about an Independent Living Resource Centre.

Have your contact information here:

Please complete this form and return it to us at your earliest convenience. We thank you in advance for your help.

Name of Organization/Agency: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ -

CLIENTELE/MEMBERSHIP

Target group: _____

Target age: _____

Approximate number serviced: _____

AREA

Area serviced: _____

How long in area: _____

Partner organizations: _____

Head office, telephone, and address:

SERVICE/PROGRAMS

Those offered: _____

Greatest success in your opinion: _____

Greatest frustration: _____

Programs offered specifically for people with disabilities:

Service most requested by the community of people with disabilities that you cannot deliver: _____

COMMUNITY NETWORK

Having read about an ILRC, how do you think we could assist each other?

What are your hopes for an ILRC? _____

What are your concerns for an ILRC in the community?

Would you like to see an ILRC be a part of your community?

YES

NO

NOT SURE

Thank you for your time and honesty in filling out this survey!

EVALUATION

An evaluation is the process of examining a plan or a system (in this case the development of an ILRC) to determine whether there would be a value to the outcome.

Evaluations of consultations are useful to record the process and outcomes, provide an information base for future use, ensure that mistakes are not repeated, and that successes are built upon.

Suggestions for questions to address in your evaluation:

- Were objectives of the consultation met?
- Did people with disabilities participate?
- Did people with disabilities from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds participate?
- Were your participants of both genders?
- Were appropriate career and service providers included?
- Did people with disabilities feel that their concerns and issues were heard and understood?
- Was material presented in the appropriate formats?
- Did participants leave with a positive feeling about the possible outcome?
- Is the evaluation form easy for the participants to complete?
- Is the evaluation form easy for you to gather the outcome information you need?

Following are some sample Evaluation Forms you may want to use or refer to when you design one for your specific consultation

DEVELOPING AN INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE CENTRE

Example 1

Date of Event: _____

The purpose of this evaluation is to give feedback so that we can know where our strengths and weaknesses were, when we were planning this session. This is also very useful for future reference for up-coming events and group discussions.

Please rank each item from 1 – 5 (1 being most satisfied and 5 being least satisfied) based on your overall satisfaction with the event.

_____ Purpose of event

_____ Location

_____ Accessibility

_____ Staff

_____ Volunteers

_____ Enough break times?

_____ Facilitators

_____ Refreshments

_____ Format of session

_____ Enough time?

_____ Did you feel positive about things when you left?

_____ Do you feel that you will benefit from an ILRC?

Please comment about the items that you felt were less satisfactory and give any suggestions about topics that we may not have covered.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation. Your feedback is greatly appreciated and very useful!

WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Example 2

Dear participant:

We are pleased to have been able to facilitate this workshop which will help us determine the need for an ILRC in our community. This allows growth for all of us.

Your feedback is an integral part of this process so we would like to thank you for taking time to fill out this form.

Please circle the appropriate answer:

How old are you? 0 – 12 13 – 18 over 19

What gender are you? Female Male

Do you have a disability?

YES NO

Was the format accessible for you?

YES NO

Why not if no? _____

Was the location accessible for you?

YES NO

Why? _____

Were you happy with the facilitators?

YES NO

Will an ILRC better the quality of your life?

YES

NO

Do you need a French copy?

YES

NO

Do you feel the need for an ILRC was determined at this session?

YES

NO

Would you be interested in volunteering at an ILRC and contributing to your community?

YES

NO

What services would you primarily access at an ILRC?

- Computer Access
- Information and Referral
- Peer Support
- Empowerment & Skill Development
- Research & Service Development
- Parking Permit Program

Any other
comments:

Please return to: (your contact information)

Thank you very much!

REPORTING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

Many people have invested a great deal of time and energy during the community consultation process, so you should report back to them what your results were in order to ensure their continued support.

Once you have completed the community consultation, it is time to review the information collected, create a summary of findings, and write a report. This report will gather together the views and opinions of the consumers on the possibility of developing an ILRC in your community.

You may want to begin your report with a description of the community where you live. Include the size, location, population, and the number of persons with a disability in your community. Include any other towns or communities that may have been included in your consultation.

You will want to briefly describe the IL philosophy, who are the key individuals trying to develop an ILRC, and what the potential benefits are that an ILRC will bring to the community.

It is important to remember that the report should focus on the results of the community consultation process and the suggested recommendations and conclusions that came from it. Avoid using too many statistics as this makes for tedious reading.

You will want to communicate the conclusions and recommendations of your report to the community at large. There are several ways to do this:

- Public Information Forum
- Newspaper article
- Appearance on a local TV channel
- Appearance on a local radio station

Whatever the outcome of your community consultation process, you should establish credibility for your organization, especially if the results identify a need for and are in support of an ILRC.

If you are unsure of how to begin writing this report, contact CAILC for samples of similar reports which have been created by other ILRCs following their community consultations regarding the development of their Centre.

Here is a sample outline for your report and something you can follow to get you started:

- Introduction
- Method of Consultation
- Participants of Consultation
- Results of Consultation
- How would an ILRC benefit our community?
- Recommendations and Conclusions
- Summary

"Developing the programs and activities was and is an ongoing process. We are in a small out of the way location. We have meetings at the member level, the staff level and the board level so that we are always keeping abreast of the current needs and wants. We do a lot of work with other organizations to inform and train our members and staff. There is never a dull moment and laughter within the centre is a terrific by-product and my reward for all the hard work."

(ILRC – Sudbury)

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APPENDICES

- **Disability Information**
- **Accessibility Information and Checklist**
- **Sample Supply List**
- **Budget Considerations**

DISABILITY INFORMATION

What is a Disability?

The term **disability** is often interchanged with the term impairment or handicap. To clarify, the following definitions should provide a clear understanding as to the usage of the term.

- **An impairment** is a medical condition resulting from injury, disease, or other disorders which interfere with the body's structure or function. It produces a reduction in physical, mental and sensory abilities.
- **A disability** is the restriction or loss of a person's functional ability resulting from the impairment.
- **A handicap** is an environmental or social barrier that limits or prevents an individual from fully participating in everyday activities and opportunities.

(World Health Organization 1993)

There are people who live with a wide array of physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. Some disabilities are more discernable than others.

Persons who use wheelchairs, scooters, service animals, canes, or walkers are easy to identify.

Less obvious are persons with developmental/intellectual or mental disabilities, such as those with learning disabilities or schizophrenia, and persons with HIV. Persons with less visible or invisible disabilities may be reluctant to disclose their disability.

There is no single, monolithic "disability community." It is made up of many smaller communities that may vary from one geographic location to another, and according to type of disability.

For example: groups of persons with spinal cord injuries might be higher in an area that provides housing for persons who use wheelchairs. Similarly, groups of persons with visual impairment may be greater around a training facility, such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

Regardless of groups of people with similar disabilities, it is important to remember that the disability community is composed of separate unique individuals who differ from each other and have needs specific to that individual. In other words, just as no two people are alike, no two brain injury survivors or persons with cerebral palsy are alike or have the same needs.

Words with Dignity

Persons with disability can and should be described in words and expressions that portray them in an appropriate, positive, and sensitive manner.

The following guidelines are supported by more than 200 organizations that represent Canadians with a disability. (Active Living Alliance 1999)

Instead of . . .	Use . . .
Disabled person	Person with a disability
Invalid	Person with a disability
Crippled with, or suffers from	Person who has...
Lame	Limited mobility
Confined to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair
Deaf and dumb, or deaf mute	Person who is deaf or Person who is hard of hearing
Victim of a traffic accident	Person who sustained . . .
Normal person	Able-bodied
Retarded	Person who has an intellectual disability
Spastic	Person who has cerebral palsy
Deformed person	Person born with . . .
Physically challenged	Person with a disability
Disabled group	Disability community /or community of people with disabilities

The terms paraplegic, quadriplegia and amputee are used and accepted by persons with those disabilities. By referring to an individual as a "person with a disability" the focus becomes the person rather than the disability.

Victim is a loaded term in the disability community. In the medical system, persons with disabilities have historically been considered "victims" of their disabilities, as in Tom is a "victim" of polio. The term reinforces an already existing negative stereotype, because it conjures up images of worthlessness, helplessness, and dependency. As a result, for a person with a disability, admitting victimization is often experienced as a setback.

The community at large needs to be sensitive to the reactions of persons with disabilities to terms such as "He is a victim", "She suffers from polio", or "He is confined to a wheelchair".

Simply ask the person the words he or she prefers - phrases like "survivor of rape," or a "person who has polio," or a "person who uses a wheelchair" - are generally more appropriate.

"There was a strong team (steering committee) which had many people with personal experiences with different disabilities and types of barriers. Their guidance and advice was instrumental in removing barriers and supporting access." (ILRC – NFLD)

ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION & CHECK LIST

It is essential that you make a commitment to hold your consultations where everyone can attend – full inclusion and full participation.

This section will help you to:

- Determine the needs of people attending.
- Choose an accessible venue.
- Set up meeting rooms and registration to accommodate everyone.
- Prepare speakers to present information in a way that everyone can understand.
- Ensure that all conference materials and the speakers presentation is offered in alternate formats.
- Address the accessibility issues necessary when making overnight hotel accommodations and restaurant reservations.

Determining Individual Needs

Specific information needs to be obtained from your participants well in advance of your public forum or focus group so you can plan your space, materials, and meals accordingly.

In addition to obtaining personal information (name, address, phone, etc.), you should get information about the materials and services that registrants need.

The following two registration forms are examples and can be used to acquire accommodation information from the participants:

Sample Registration Form #1

I will need the following accommodations in order to participate:

- Interpreter
- Note taker
- Assistive listening device
- Open captioning

- Large print
- Braille
- Audio cassette
- Diskette. List format: _____
- Wheelchair access
- Orientation to facility
- Special diet. List: _____
- An assistant will be accompanying me.

Yes

No

When setting registration fees, your committee should have decided whether or not personal care attendants would have to pay. If they are expected to pay, the registration form needs to state this, and a separate registration form needs to be completed by the attendant. If they are not expected to pay, you still will need to have attendants register, so you can have an accurate meal and attendance count.

Sample Registration Form #2

Please indicate your requirements by checking beside the accommodations that you require. Please use the extra space to be more specific if necessary. This will help us plan an event that meets your accommodation and inclusion needs.

Mobility requirements:

	Physical accessibility (specify)
--	----------------------------------

Language requirements:

	Simultaneous interpretation
	American Sign Language (ASL)
	Langage des signes du Québec (LSQ)

Service requirements:

	Oral interpreter
	Assistive listening system
	Intervener
	Real time captioning

Alternative media requirements:

	Large print
	Audiocassette
	Braille
	Diskette
	Captioned videos
	Descriptive videos

Other requirements - Please specify:

	Dietary
	Evacuation needs
	Overnight accommodations
	Name of attendant/coach accompanying me to event (first name, last name):

An alternative to consider when requesting accommodation information in the planning stages is to forward an invitation to participants containing the following text:

If you require alternative formats to ensure access to materials prepared in conventional print, or have any accommodation or dietary needs to ensure your full participation, please inform us of your specific requirements so we can make any necessary arrangements in advance. In addition, please identify any assistance you may require in the event of an emergency evacuation.

For more detailed information, contact _____

by telephone at _____

Cell phone: if available at _____

.

Choosing an Accessible Venue

The location of any consultation meeting or event should be accessible to people with a range of impairments. Again, although it is impossible to provide an exhaustive checklist, some examples include that:

- There should be step-free access to and within the venue through the main door.
- The entrance should be wide enough for a wheelchair user (both manual and electric) and should not have heavy doors - preferably automatic door openers.
- Ramps should not be steep.
- There should be sufficient parking at the venue and this should be close to the entrance.
- Consideration needs to be given to the surfaces, contrast and obstacles for people with visual impairments.
- Good lighting is important for visually impaired people and for interpreters and lip speakers.
- The height of reception desks, lift buttons, telephones, etc. should be suitable for use by wheelchair users.
- The toilets and lifts should be appropriate for disabled people, and alarms should be provided.
- There should be verbal and Braille indications in the lifts.
- There should be appropriate and sufficient signage and staff should be prepared to provide assistance, if requested.
- The distance between rooms/areas should be short, as distance may be difficult for people with mobility impairments.
- Different types of chair (e.g. with and without arms) should be provided.
- There should be suitable fire alarms for hearing impaired people (or staff available to assist).

Other more specific considerations will be determined once you receive your completed registration forms back from your participants.

Meeting Room and Registration Set-up

Setting up the rooms is easy after you get the information about your attendees and your speakers.

A helpful rule to follow when determining room size is to plan for 20-30 percent additional space to accommodate people with disabilities, especially those with mobility devices.

Meeting room tables should have a 34-inch clearance between the floor and the lowest point of the table.

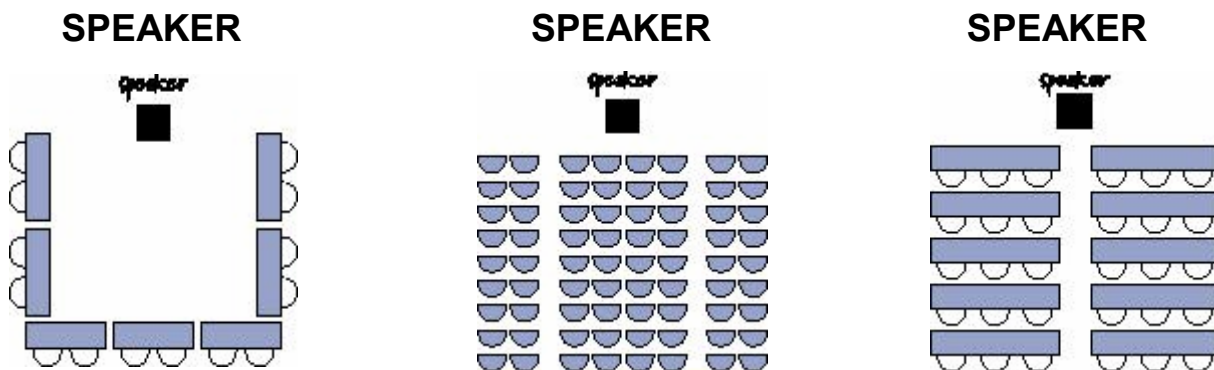
Aisles and entrances should be at least 36 inches wide. Provide ample space between chairs and tables to enable people with mobility devices to maneuver. Do not provide disability seating only in one area, as people should be able to sit where they choose and with whomever they choose.

Provide an area for refreshments of your choice. Have items placed so that they can be accessed from a wheelchair. Have trays available for people who have difficulty transporting their refreshments.

Setting up a room will largely depend on your group size, the type of presentation, what type of disabilities your participants have, and the activity of the audience. Basic styles include:

- Theater style
- Classroom style
- Round table style
- Circular seating
- Hollow/closed square/ rectangle seating

Generally it is helpful to have tables for guests to lay their materials, take notes, and set coffee cups.



If using a speaker's platform and any of your presenters needs a ramp, make sure the facility provides a safe ramp.

Microphones

All speakers should use a microphone, no matter the size of the meeting room. Lapel microphones are most convenient but if the facility does not offer this, request those that are cordless. Request table top stands for speakers who will be sitting to speak and cannot hold a mic easily, and floor stands for those who will stand to speak.

Encourage the use of microphones in the audience if there is a question/answer portion of the presentation. Not only is it courteous to others to be able to hear the question, it also helps people using assistive listening devices hear the question.

Registration

If the registration desk is higher than 36", provide lap pillows, clip boards, or a separate table for wheelchair access. Pens and paper should be available to use to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Have TTY available and facility staff should know how to use it.

Preparing Speakers

Please refer to Roles of Key People for information about making their presentation accessible

Alternate Formatting

Communication is key to sharing ideas, developing strategies, and working together toward common goals. Event organizers, chairpersons, and presenters help set the tone of a meeting and their influence is critical to the success of accessible and inclusive communication. If participants require their materials and speakers' presentation available in alternate formats, here is where to start:

Interpreter and Intervener Services

Sign language interpreter assignments often require two interpreters to allow them a break every 15 to 20 minute intervals. If sign language interpretation is required in both official languages (ASL and LSQ), allow for minimum seating of four interpreters. Schedule interpreters to facilitate information sharing during breaks, mealtimes, and receptions.

Interpreters, interveners, captionists, and/or note-takers will require hands-free earphones to process the information in their language of work when simultaneous interpretation services are provided.

Real Time Captioning and Note-Taker Services

Real time captioning can enhance communications for people who have experienced hearing loss, people who have certain types of learning disabilities, and people whose first language is neither English nor French. It also has the added benefit of providing an electronic record of the event's proceedings.

The delay between the speech and the appearance of the written text is typically less than two seconds, allowing readers to participate fully in the proceedings. Two separate captionists along with their related equipment will be required if both Anglophone and Francophone participants who require real time captioning are present.

The captionist's text output may be transferred to a monitor or projected onto a screen. The size of the monitor or projection screen will be determined by the size of the room and, occasionally, by the number of people requiring the service. A laptop computer may suffice for one-on-one meetings, while larger gatherings may require a projection screen.

Consult local associations for persons who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing for contact names of real time captionists and note-takers.

Alternatives to Print Formats

Persons who are blind and persons who are visually impaired may rely on alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audiocassette, and diskette. Persons with learning disabilities may also rely on alternative formats such as audiocassette or large print to ensure ease of access to printed material through an alternative medium.

Written materials are most accessible when printed using upper and lower case, Arial, or Times New Roman fonts and high contrasts (black on white and white on black).

If alternative formats cannot be made available in a timely manner, other means of conveying the information to participants should be sought. For example, sending printed material to persons who are visually impaired before the event gives them the opportunity to review the materials.

Captioned Material

Videos and film clips used during meetings and conferences should be captioned to ensure participants who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing can access the information presented. Captioned material is available in open captioning and closed captioning.

Open-captioned products can be viewed with a standard television. However, viewing closed-captioned material requires a television with a captioning microchip to decode the captioned material. Usually, televisions manufactured after 1993 that have monitors 13 inches (32.5 cm) or larger have built-in captioning microchips. The television menu or closed caption (CC) button on the remote control provides access to the captioning.

Older televisions require a decoder to view closed captioning. Contact local associations for persons who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing for information on renting or purchasing decoders.

Assistive Listening Devices

People who use hearing aids may need an assistive listening device to amplify sound. For these systems to work effectively, amplification systems need to be utilized. During roundtable discussions and meetings that have been set up with table seating, microphones should be located at each table. Larger gatherings require hands-free microphones in addition to the traditional podium microphone.

The permanent installation of an amplification system in boardrooms can benefit both employees who are hard of hearing and clients who may attend meetings on site.

Local associations for persons who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing can provide information on where clients can rent or purchase amplification systems. Some telecommunications or audiovisual companies can also advise meeting planners on the specific auditory requirements of an event.

Hotel and Restaurant Accommodations

It may be necessary to make hotel and restaurant accommodations if your participants are required to spend the night in order to attend your consultation.

Accessible hotel rooms should include:

- Door handles, sinks, faucets and other accessories that are easy to use for participants with limited dexterity.
- Easy access and exit to the bedroom and a wheelchair accessible washroom equipped with a roll in shower or bath bench.
- Flashing alarm system to ensure safety, as well as access to a TTY to ensure telephone service for persons who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing.
- Building access standards are usually minimal standards and may not necessarily reflect the degree of access required to accommodate individual needs. Therefore, innovative solutions may be required. When a barrier is identified within a facility, advise the facilities manager. The manager may be in a position to remove the barrier.
- When in doubt, consult the person with a disability in the initial planning stages to ensure the access standard meets the individual's accommodation requirements. Consultation with persons with disabilities can sometimes lead to creative solutions, based on past experiences with similar situations.
- Make sure that the restaurant is in an accessible area. If there are any special dietary requests, confirm ahead of time that these can be accommodated. Most restaurants are prepared to do what it takes to make their customers happy.

CHECK-LIST

This check-list will help you ensure that you have everything in place prior to your meeting.

1. Budget	Yes	Comments
Conversion of print to alternative formats		
Note-taker services		
Real time captioning		
Audio systems		
Adaptive technologies		
Assistive listening devices		
Dietary requirements		

2. Scheduling Considerations	Yes	Comments
Notify participants a few days in advance to facilitate scheduling of accessible transportation, attendant services and other personalized services required		
Provide presenters and organizers with reference sheets advising them of what is required to ensure accessible communication		
Prepare agenda with adequate meal breaks and health breaks		
Arrange for service providers such as sign language interpreters, note-takers, captionists, etc. well in advance		
Allow one to two weeks for conversion of printed material to alternate formats or plain language		
Allow time to arrange for rental of audio and assistive listening systems		
Allow time on the day of the event for set up and testing of audio and assistive listening system		

3. Getting to the Event	Yes	Comments
Accessible routes to the event (e.g. no construction barricades en route, snow removed)		
Accessible parking available in proximity to facility		
Accessible public transportation available		
Audio system at road intersections indicate light changes for persons who are visually impaired		

4. Meeting Facility	Yes	Comments
Facility entrance equipped with automatic door		
Accessibility features operational (e.g. doors, platform lifts)		
Floor surface stable, firm, slip resistant		
Tactile signage (characters or symbols) on a glare-free finish, mounted on contrasting background approximately three meters (three yards) above floor		
Volunteers in place to greet and assist participants with finding their way if signage not available		
Public elevators that can accommodate persons using wheelchairs and motorized scooters (e.g. accessible control panel, large buttons)		
Public elevators equipped with audio floor indicators		
Accessible washrooms available in close proximity to meeting room (e.g. cubicle with accessible secured grab bar, sink, toilet, soap and towels)		
Accessible water fountain		
Eating facilities fully accessible (e.g. includes accessible washrooms)		
Braille and/or large print menus in eating facilities		
Washroom equipped with a visual alarm system (flashing light in the event of an emergency)		
Hearing aid compatible public telephones, with volume controls		
Public telephone equipped with TTY capability		
Public telephones at accessible height		
Designated area available nearby to relieve and walk guide/service dogs		

5. Meeting Rooms	Yes	Comments
Spacious room to accommodate a translation booth, captioning equipment, etc.		
Space for table setup to accommodate documents, food, Refreshments, etc.		
Accessible meeting room entrance		
Room setup allows freedom of movement using mobility aids (e.g. guide dogs, wheelchairs, motorized scooters)		
Reserved seating for persons using wheelchairs and motorized scooters, persons accompanied by guide/service dogs		
Tables at accessible height for wheelchairs, motorized scooters, etc.		
Space for sign language interpretation and/or simultaneous interpreter service providers		
Seating reserved for persons who are hearing impaired		
Background noise not excessive in meeting room		
Assistive listening devices available		
Scent-free meeting room (e.g. cologne as well as strong odors caused by newly installed carpet or fresh paint)		

6. Alternative Formats	Yes	Comments
Documents written in plain language		
Printed material available in Braille, large print, audio-tape and diskette		
Videotape presentations accessible through use of descriptive narration and/or captioning		

7. Hotel Rooms	Yes	Comments
Fully accessible adjoining washroom		
Freedom of movement throughout room for person using a wheelchair or motorized scooter		
Telephone adjacent to bed		
Telephone equipped with a voice amplification system		
Telephone equipped with TTY capability		
Television features closed captioning		
Rooms equipped with visual alarm system		

8. Safety and Evacuation	Yes	Comments
Stairwells free of debris		
Detailed evacuation plan in place		
List of participants with evacuation needs provided to facility manager		
Designated person to assist with evacuation of participants with needs		

9. Event Registration	Yes	Comments
Registration form sent to participants confirming accommodation needs		
Sign language interpreters		
Oral interpreters		
Assistive listening devices		
Real time captioning		
Dietary requirements		
Overnight accommodations		
Request that participants identify specific evacuation needs		
Request that participants respect scent-free environment		
Others		
10. Volunteers	Yes	Comments
Volunteers available to assist participants at the meeting		
Volunteers assigned specific tasks		
Volunteers sensitized to the needs of persons with disabilities		
Volunteers identifiable (name tags)		
Use a buddy system		

SAMPLE SUPPLY LIST

- flipchart stand and flipchart paper
- pens, pencils, and highlighters
- lined paper
- Labels
- Scissors
- Notepads
- white-out
- file caddy or file cabinet
- file folders-legal or letter
- Laminator
- paper shredder
- brochure and business cards
- Nametags
- one or three hole punch
- extension cords or power bars
- cleaning supplies-paper towels, cleaner, broom, garbage bags
- coloured stickers
- 3 ring binders
- stapler and staplesmarkers-dry erase or permanent (non scented)
- tape-masking, duct, and scotch
- paper clips-variety of sizes

- 3.5 inch floppy discs and cd's
- envelopes-variety of sizes
- post-it notes
- calendars
- camera and film

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- Consultant and/ or Staff Wages
- Meeting Room Rental
- Communication costs - phone service, long distance calls, internet hook up, courier charges, fax services, TTY, etc.
- Accessibility considerations: see Appendices
 - Alternative formats - large print, Braille, etc.
 - Interpreter for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Supplies - flipcharts, flipchart paper, pens and pencils, lined paper, etc. (Please refer to Sample Supply List for more suggestions)
- Hospitality - meals, beverages, snacks, dishes, glasses, and cutlery, table-clothes
- Transportation costs
 - Mileage for participants, volunteers, and staff
 - Accessible transportation
 - Vehicle Liability Insurance
- Equipment Rental - overhead projector, TV/VCR, photocopier
- Honorarium for facilitators or volunteers

Liability Insurance

- Printing costs - ink cartridges and paper
- Photocopying costs
- Promotions
 - Advertising - newspaper, radio, TV
 - Printing of brochures and business cards
- Postage for survey mail outs
- Information resources - manuals and workbooks
- Computer, Printer, Software, Scanner, Headphones, Keyboard and Mouse