



L.E.A.D.
Teaching School Hub
Lincolnshire

Neurodiversity Accessibility Guidelines

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Introduction

This document provides a list of guidelines that can be used to provide accessible learning environments/material that is supportive of neurodivergent learners.

The aim of this document is to provide colleagues with key guidelines to follow, when displaying information or providing a learning event whether in person or virtually, which may include neurodiverse participants.

The list of suggested guidelines is not exhaustive and recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' model. The guidelines are designed to cover the majority of areas that will support a wide range of neurodivergent participants. Additional guidelines may be added in the future to improve accessibility further.

Displaying Text

The guidelines below relate to presenting information in either presentation or document form.

- Use of Century Gothic as a font as it appears less crowded (others such as Calibri or Arial can be used)
- Font size should be 12 - 16 (16 used here as the preferred)
- Heading size should be at least **20% larger** and **bold**
- Letter spacing is at around 35% of the average letter size to support tracking (set to 1 in character spacing)
- Information should be shared on a non-white background for paper, computer and visual aids such as whiteboards. White can appear too dazzling. Some dyslexic people will have their own colour preference
- Use of background colours that have contrast. In the example below, a blue background with black text.

You can check the colour contrast via the **Webaim Contrast Checker**
If you want to know more about contrast you can read the Webaim
'How to create contrast effectively' .

- Add extra space around headings and between paragraphs
- Ensure hyperlinks look different from headings and normal text
- Hyperlinks should explain the link not just state click here.
- Refrain from using yellow
- Avoid using all capital letters and uppercase letters for continuous text. Lower case letters are easier to read
- Avoid underlining and italics as this can make the text appear to run together and cause crowding. Underlining can be used to emphasise a link. Use bold for emphasis
- Use formatting tools for text alignment, justification, indents, lists, line and paragraph spacing to support assistive technology users
- Left align text, without justification. This makes it easier to find the start and finish of each line and ensures even spacing between words.
- Write short simple sentences: 60 to 70 characters is optimal
- Intersperse your slides with images. Visual links helps to support and bring in the structure, routine and sequence that most neurodivergent individuals require
- Do not use too many images or superimpose text over them as it causes confusion
- Neurodivergent individuals need a clear visual hierarchy to aid comprehension. Ideally, they should be able to recognise the top three most vital elements of content in a slide from their colour, shape and position alone.

Inclusive Learning Environments (Face-to-Face Sessions)

The guidelines below are to be used in conjunction with displaying text guidelines when a face-to-face/in person event is being provided.

Prior to the Event

- During the onboarding process and before sessions, explain what adjustments/ supports can be made if required to raise awareness of what is available. This includes an open invitation for participants to request adjustments/support. For instance, some may request for information to be printed on a certain colour, to be sent slides in advance or to not be chosen to speak in front of the group.
- Send slides in advance, so that those who need extra time to read/ process can do so. This allows them to pay more attention to the facilitator on the day, rather than trying to keep up with reading too.
- Clear and timely communication about changes to an event.
- When communicating via emails, ensure that key times, dates are in **bold** and instructions are broken down into bullet points.
- Clear instructions about accessing a learning event, such as directions and timings to an F2F event.
- Creation of a calm environment in which to learn.

During the Event

- Provide a printout presentation for the day, so participants can write notes and have something to take away
- Facilitators should be aware of speaking clearly and not too fast
- Using different colours for texts/backgrounds helps to chunk/ emphasise words and phrases
- Bullet points and numbered lists are helpful
- Recapping and repeating information is useful
- If applicable, practical activities to reinforce learning
- Real-life examples to exemplify learning
- Additional processing time/not moving too quickly through slides
- Not overloading slides with written information (e. g. use of bullet points)
- Providing written summaries of learning to take away for the participants who need it
- Avoidance of unnecessary jargon, including abbreviations. Use of an abbreviation description sheet
- Explanations and modelling of necessary jargon/technical terms/ abbreviations, etc
- Using specific and direct language
- Clear structure and timings, which are kept to
- Consideration of sensory factors in the environment, including noise from other areas/ electronic equipment noise. Smells which may include food provided at lunch, coffee/ tea. Light levels particularly above the display board being too bright and inhibits clarity of presentation on IWB/screen
- Clear and engaging manner of speech
- Suitable breaks, e.g., after 1. 5 hours maximum
- Where possible - the provision of a quieter break room for people to go to during specified breaks/lunch
- Not putting participants unnecessarily 'on the spot' and being conscious about the social demands/potential anxiety of giving a personal introduction, for example
- Clarification about expectations, e.g. freedom to take additional breaks, where to sit, what will be covered, etc.

Inclusive Learning Environments (Virtual Event)

The guidelines below are to be used in conjunction with displaying text guidelines when a virtual/online event is being provided.

Prior to the Event

- During the onboarding process and before sessions, explain what adjustments/ supports can be made if required to raise awareness of what is available. This includes an open invitation for participants to request adjustments/support. For instance, some may request for information to be printed on a certain colour, to be sent slides in advance or to not be chosen to speak in front of the group.
- Send slides in advance, so that those who need extra time to read/ process can do so. This allows them to pay more attention to the facilitator on the day, rather than trying to keep up with reading too.
- Clear and timely communication about changes to an event where possible.
- When communicating via emails, ensure that key times, dates are in **bold** and instructions are broken down into bullet points.
- Clear instructions about accessing a virtual/online event, such as joining links or directions and timings.
- Creation of a calm and organised environment in which to learn. All technology to be used has been checked prior to start and is working. This includes video links and applications such as poll etc.

During the Event

- During the onboarding process and before sessions, explain what adjustments/ supports can be made if required to raise awareness of what is available. This includes an open invitation for participants to request adjustments/support. For instance, some may request for information to be printed on a certain colour, to be sent slides in advance or to not be chosen to speak in front of the group.
- Send slides in advance, so that those who need extra time to read/ process can do so. This allows them to pay more attention to the speaker on the day, rather than trying to keep up with reading too.
- Use PowerPoint Live to support participants accessing the material at their own pace and to allow them access to a range of inclusive tools. This includes high contrast, size increase and screen reader use.
- Facilitators should be aware of speaking clearly through the microphone and directly to the camera.
- Using different colours for texts helps to chunk/emphasise words and phrases.
- Bullet points and numbered lists are helpful.
- Recapping and repeating information is useful.
- Real-life examples to exemplify learning.
- Additional processing time/not moving too quickly through slides.
- Not overloading slides with written information (e. g., using bullet points).
- Providing summaries of learning to take away for the participants who need it through recordings and transcripts avoidance of unnecessary jargon, including abbreviations, use of an abbreviation description sheet.
- Explanations and modelling of necessary jargon/technical terms/ abbreviations, etc.
- Using specific and direct language.
- Clear structure and timings, which are kept to.
- Clear and engaging manner of speech.
- Suitable breaks which are adhered to.
- Where possible – participants are allowed to have their camera and microphone turned off during facilitator input.
- Not putting participants unnecessarily 'on the spot' and being conscious about the social demands/potential anxiety of giving a personal introduction, for example. Use of feedback apps such as Slido supports this.
- Clarification about expectations, e.g., freedom to take breaks, interaction, camera and mic use, what will be covered, etc.

When using Microsoft Teams

- Blur background or use one of L.E.A.D. Teaching School Hub's backgrounds throughout the session
- Use PowerPoint live to allow participants to follow at their own speed and access a range of options that will make the session more accessible
- Enable live captions
- Record session and the associated transcript. This will allow participants to review the material at their own pace both during and after the event.

