Disability Inclusive Volunteer Management Guide

Contents

Preface:

Voluntering SA&NT (VSA&NT) is proud to partner with JFA Purple Orange in developing the Disability Inclusive Volunteer Management Guide.

As a peak body for volunteering, VSA&NT aims to support the volunteering ecosystem be a space where everyone has the opportunity to meaningfully volunteer.

This guide will be a valubale resource for leaders of volunteers to reflect on and grow their organisational inclusive volunteer practices.

Funding is provided by the Australian Government Department of Social Sevices through the Volunteer Management Activity.

About JFA Purple Orange:

JFA Purple Orange is a social profit organisation that works to improve the life chances of people with disability. They do this through policy advocacy and creating projects that connect people with disability and their families to valuable information and to each other.

JFA Purple Orange believes that all people with disability should be in control of their own lives and be valued and active citizens of the community.

All of JFA Purple Orange's work is driven by a commitment to rights-based inclusion.

Co-design:

The guide is based on workshop content created through a process of co-design.

- Co-design is best practice when creating new projects, policies and documents.
- This content was co-designed by people with diverse disability and broad life experience, as well as people responsible for hiring at their organisation and who are able to identify recruitment barriers for people with disability.
- More information on co-design can be found in the guide.

Language choice:

Person-first language of 'People with disability' is the language of choice for this document as this aligns with JFA Purple Orange's preference.

There is more information about language in the guide.

Aims of this guide:

- Explore ableism, unconscious bias and conscious bias.

- Consider the impact attitudinal barriers may have on people with disability in volunteering opportunities.

- Learn about the concept of 'citizenhood'.

- Understand barriers to volunteering.

- Provide guidance and advice on disability inclusive volunteer recruitment and management.

Why is Disability Inclusive Volunteer Management important?

Volunteers are an integral part of the way many organisations run. They play a vital role in shaping communities.

There are many benefits and barriers to inclusive volunteer management. Some examples are:

Benefits to inclusive volunteer management:	Barriers to inclusive volunteer management:
For the organisation: • Access to a wider range of volunteers • More approachable and appealing to wider audience. • Stronger culture • Learning and growth thanks to diverse volunteers • Sense of community	For the organisation: • People with disability are often excluded from volunteer organisations (as well as paid work) • Barriers to volunteering aren't always obvious • Outdated policies and procedures • Attitudes and prejudice
For community/individuals: • Pathways to employment • Meaningful connections • Pride, purpose, belonging • Stability and routine	For community/individuals: • Isolation • Lack of awareness around volunteer opportunities • Access needs not being met

Including people with disability does not cost any more than employing people without disability, in fact employees with disability often have:

• Lower absenteeism.
• Lower turn-over.
• Low incidence of workplace injury.

While increasing the disability representation in your workplace might seem like an intimidating undertaking, there are a lot of simple ways to increase your inclusivity.

"Research shows that diverse perspectives drive better business outcomes, and that when people feel a sense of belonging at work, they are healthier and more engaged."

- Karyn Twaronite, EY Global Vice Chair: Diversity & Inclusiveness

Access vs Inclusion:

Inclusion is the goal, and access is a way in which to get there.

It's vital to remember that while access is important, it is different to inclusion.

For example:

Access can be viewed as providing physical, sensory or informational elements that enable participation such as:

- Ramps.
- Quiet areas.
- Easy English documents.

However, **Inclusion** is an act – it ensures that people are actually taking steps to put these elements into practice by making sure people are and feel accepted and included. For example, also making sure that people are welcoming and understanding, that the culture is supportive, that quiet areas are not noisy environments, and that all access measures work together in harmony.

Due to a history of exclusion that has stemmed from **environmental barriers** (no accessible toilets, lack of accessible parks, stairs to offices), **negative attitudes** ("You can't volunteer here because and it'll be too expensive and hard to figure out"), **uncomfortable or painful social interactions** ("We didn't think people *like you* would come here..."), people with disability can be apprehensive about whether volunteering is welcoming and safe for them.

This exclusion has occurred not just because people with disability have been unable to access the places in which volunteering occurs, but also because people have failed to see the **strengths, skills,** and **value** that people with disability bring to a role.

Therefore, it's important to consider providing access - and being inclusive - as two equally crucial pieces of work that complement each other and work alongside our other inclusive measures.

Disability in your organisation

There are likely to already be people with disability in your organisation:

- In 2019, 25.7% of people with disability volunteered for an organisation, compared to 31.1% of people with no disability.

- People with disability make up nearly 24% (one in four) of all people volunteering for an organisation.

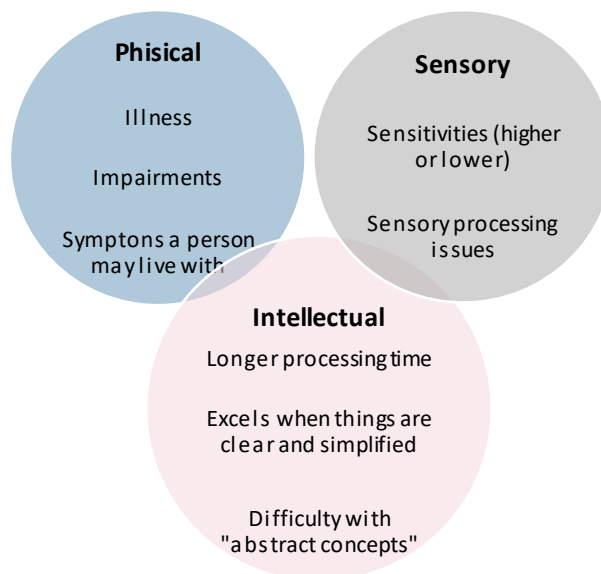(Source: Key Volunteering Statistics, Volunteer Australia, 2021)

These statistics show that people with disability are already contributing to organisations. Committing to ongoing access and inclusion signifies to the volunteers who are already engaged, volunteers who may acquire disability, and potential future volunteers, that they are welcome and valued.

Understanding disability

Overview of disability

The disability community is incredibly diverse and bigger than people might expect.

There are many different experiences of disability, including:

Phisical

Illness

Impairments

Symptons a person may live with

Sensory

Sensitivities (higher or lower)

Sensory processing issues

Intellectual

Longer processing time

Excels when things are clear and simplified

Difficulty with "abstract concepts"

Not all disabilities are immediately apparent, and regardless of how people look and behave, we should not make assumptions about people's abilities. Everyone's experience of disability also comes with different stereotypes, and incidents of discrimination.

Disability is also created by exclusion and inaccessibility; there are many different and varied requirements for safety, access and inclusion.

It is everyone's responsibility to remove barriers to participation in order to minimise the experience of disability on individuals.

Examples of 'disabling' a person:

- A wheelchair user may need a step-free route, and lifts or ramps to access higher stories.
    - Older buildings are often not accessible due to being built when standards were different.
- Someone who is sensitive to flickering lights or experiences epilepsy may struggle with offices fitted with fluorescent lights (which can be prone to flickering).
- Complicated, jargonistic, and convoluted language can exclude people with intellectual disability, people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD), or people who understand simple English better.

Language around disability

'Person First' and 'Identity First' language
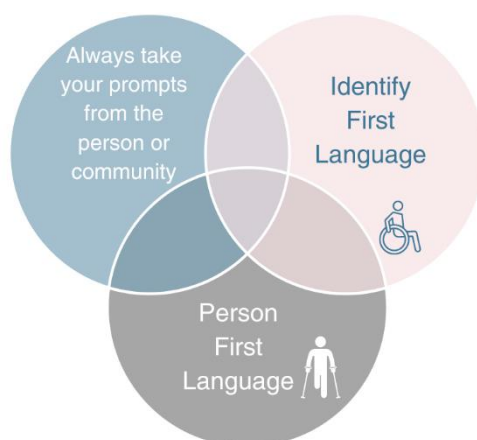
| Person first language

is the phrasing of identifying someone's 'personhood' before their disability/illness/impairment. | Identify first language

is the practice of "claiming" disability with pride as a part of one's identity. |
|---|---|
| Indicating:
• Their experience is secondary to who they are as a person. | Indicating:
• Disability is intrinsically part of who they are as a person, and that to separate the two is to 'dismiss' disability or ignore a large part of who they are. |
| Commonly preferred among:
• Disability services sector.
• People living with intellectual disability as historically their personhood has often been denied. | Commonly preferred among:
• Deaf community.
• Blind community.
• Autistic community.
• Disability activism and advocacy. |
| • "Person living with disability".
• "Person with intellectual disability".
• "People with disability". | • "Disabled person".
• "Deaf Community".
• "Autistic person". |
| **There is no 'one size fits all' solution.**
Being aware, deliberate, and transparent about your choices is the most important thing to do.
Always check which language is preferred with individuals or communities with whom you're talking to or about. ||

Reframing how we think about barriers:

A 'model' of disability → Is a lens in which we view disability
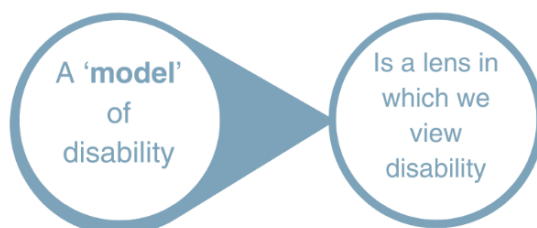
A '*model of disability*' is a framework that influences how we think about disability, and therefore how we address barriers.

There are many models of disability, but there are two very prominent ones: the medical model and the social model. Others include the charitable model, the human rights model, the identity model, and the economic model, and so on.

Each model of disability brings a different lens to how we see the cause of disability, and the key issues to be addressed. The two most significant to the disability community, however, are the medical model and the social model of disability. This is because the medical model has been used (intentionally and unintentionally) throughout history and has only been surpassed by the social model in the last half century. The social model is now what most policies, practices, and supports are centred on (with various levels of implementation and realisation). Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which says (paraphrased) that the barriers people experience are created by society, and the responsibility of removing those barriers is everybody's.

The medical model:

This traditional view sees disability as caused by physical, sensory, and mental barriers which create impairment. The individual is seen as impaired and the problem, and the focus of the medical profession is on a 'cure' to 'alleviate the effect' of the 'impairment'.

The social model:

The social model of disability is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is the model followed by the NDIS and many other government initiatives.

This view sees social 'barriers' as the cause of disability, identifying inaccessible environments such as buildings, services, language, and communication as causes and contributors. Attitudinal barriers include prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. Organisation barriers include inflexible and inaccessible policies, procedures, and practices.

The medical model is outdated and was created by non-disabled people, as opposed to the social model.

Scenario examples:

Disability/experience:	Medical Model response:	Social Model response:
Sensory example High sensory environments (bright lights, loud noises, strong smells, etc.) can be very difficult for autistic people. Concerts for example, are difficult due to the 'high sensory input' (lots of things going on that can result in overwhelm, overstimulation, and meltdowns).	Medical model would look at how to 'cure' autism in order to have the individual attend concerts. Another medical model solution would be teaching autistic people to 'mask' (hide) their feelings and learn how to suppress their overwhelm in order to attend.	Social model would look at how to make the concert venues more accessible: • Less flickering and flashing lights. • Light and noise warnings. • Having ear plugs available. • 'Quiet' or 'break out' space. • Odourless chemicals and fragrances in toilets. • Paper towel as an option in toilets so hand dryers aren't a necessity (loud noise). • LED's instead of fluorescent lighting.
Physical example A wheelchair user needs to get to a class which is located on the second storey of a building.	Medical model would look at how to 'fix' the person so they were able to walk up the stairs.	Social model would make stair climbing unnecessary in order to get to the second storey and may install a mix of stairs, lifts, and ramps.
Intellectual example Someone with intellectual disability is having trouble reading and understanding the policies and procedures manual at work.	Medical model would look at how to 'fix' intellectual disability or teach the individual better English skills.	Social model would look at how to communicate and share information in an easier way. • Do they need someone to talk through it? • Does it need to be simplified - easy English? • Should it include more photos, images, and diagrams? • Can it be broken down further into step-by-step instructions? • How does the person learn and understand best, and how can we support that? •

Disability/experience:	Medical Model response:	Social Model response:
Deaf example Person is hard of hearing and is trying to follow along with what is being said at an meeting.	Medical model would look at how to 'cure' their 'impairment'. May consider cochlear implants or hearing aids.	Social model would look at how to involve the person: - What do they need to be included? - Are they seated close enough to lip read? - Do they use Auslan or interpreters? - Would live captioning or other assistive technology help?

Each person is the expert in their own access needs. Working with people to remove and navigate barriers will support the best outcomes for individuals and organisations.

It's also important to consider that people may have competing access needs. As an example, while one person may require announcements to be made loudly in order to hear them, another person may need quiet announcements to process the information. Flexibility, out-of-the-box thinking, and strong communication will help with navigating these challenges.

How we as individuals view disability:

Where we often start:		Challenging our thinking:
Where we often start: • Society's understanding of disability is shaped by messaging in media and popular culture. • Assumptions are made based on life experiences. One bad experience with a person with disability can result in an incorrect lasting assumption/impression. • Disability has historically been seen as a deficit, and therefore disability inclusion is a major barrier for employees, managers, and other people in hiring positions.		Challenging our thinking: • By building understanding of disability through listening to lived experience of disability and considering a strengths-based perspective, individuals can reframe the perception of disability. This impacts positively on business decisions. • A 'strengths-based perspective' means considering the positive skills and insights that life with disability will bring to the workforce. For example, wheelchair users are often required to be good at planning as they have to know which routes, buildings, and bathrooms are accessible. They may be good communicators as they have to ask about what access is provided or communicate their access needs. They might be strong problem solvers, great at thinking under pressure, and good at being adaptive because they come up against unexpected barriers regularly.

What is Ableism?

• Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disability (or people that are thought to have disability).

• Ableism refers to non-disabled, able-bodied and neurotypical people being seen as 'better' or 'superior' and people with disability as 'inferior'.

• Ableism is rooted in the assumption that people with disability require 'fixing' or 'eradication'.

• Ableism is a social justice issue equal to that of sexism, racism and other marginalisation.

Intersectional Experience:
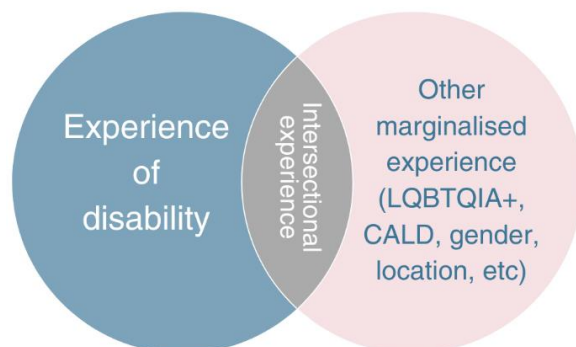
While we know that people with disability have been excluded from and experienced discrimination in multiple environments, including employment and volunteering settings, these experiences are magnified when the person with disability also belongs to another marginalised group.

Intersectionality recognises that the experience of discrimination can be different, and often compounded, when belonging to multiple groups.

For example: a person from a culturally and linguistically diverse background will have a different experience of disability as opposed to a person from a Caucasian, English speaking background because of dealing with both racism and disability - both separately and compounded together.

Quite often the measures taken to address racism, homophobia, sexism etc. fail to address that people with disability also exist within other marginalised groups. An intersectional approach is needed to make improvements for those with intersecting identities.

For example: some pride events have been inaccessible, meaning those wanting to celebrate their queer identity were not included due to also being disabled.

Data and feedback collected from VSA&NT lived experience advisory groups about intersectionality:

- The language relating to volunteering may be reconsidered, as many new arrival communities don't have a term for 'volunteering' or 'volunteer' in their own language.
- There is stigma attached to disability in the new arrival community, with many having a hidden (invisible) disability that is not talked about. For this reason, people aren't supported to volunteer.
- Processes and jargon make volunteering inaccessible.
- The timeframe from application to getting a response may be too long.
- There are concerns around privacy and disclosure of disability or other identities, it takes time to build trust to disclose.
- There is a relatively high number of people with disability in regional locations, barriers are compounded by other socioeconomic issues.

What is 'Citizenhood'?

"Many of the things everyone wants from life involve taking up active social and economic roles in a family, friendship group and community.

Each of us decides what that looks like based on our experiences, the things we care about, and our personal goals. There are goals that we're likely to have in common with each other, like having friends, having family, being well, having enough money to do the things we want to do, having a place of our own, and learning and growing.

Roles of citizenhood can include but are not limited to: being a friend, a parent, a son, an auntie, a partner, a wage earner, customer, traveller, volunteer, a student, and a sports fan.

When we take up these roles, we have valued membership in community life. Purple Orange call this 'citizenhood'. Life is more likely to be fulfilling if we have multiple roles of citizenhood.

People with disability have had less opportunity to take up roles of citizenhood. Usually because they have been burdened by the low expectations of others. Segregation and ableism have made it much harder for a person living with disability to take up social and economic roles, and to become valued members of our communities.

Citizenhood is not the same as citizenship, which is about being a member of a country, and having legal rights and obligations. Citizenhood is much more dynamic. It takes effort and time to grow, and it can be lost."

- Purple Orange 'Model of Citizenhood', Robbi Williams CEO, JFA Purple Orange

Volunteering can be a significant part of people's Citizenhood and should be understood for its ability to keep people safe, engaged and valued.

Volunteering can contribute to a person's citizenhood by providing:

- A sense of belonging.
- A sense of pride in achievement.
- A sense of community connection and opportunity to build friendships.
- A valued role within the community.
- Safeguarding when people are noticed to be missing from routines.
- More people looking out for each other within their network.
- Skills that can be utilised and built upon.

Barriers to volunteering

Barriers can include:

- Recruitment strategies and advertisements for volunteer roles not in accessible formats.

- Travel expenses and costs associated with travel – especially in the instance of access taxis – this is particularly the case in regional areas.

- General physical barriers to opportunities.

- The nature of the organisation and the activities may need to be adapted to suit the individual.

- Limited funding and supports to make the 'workplace' accessible (unable to access government schemes available to those in employment).

- Relying solely on digital processes (applying online, induction online) can be a barrier for people without or who can't use computers, smart devices, or have reliable internet connection.

- Attitudinal barriers, welcoming vs actively unwelcoming.

- Checks and clearances can be difficult due to the type of identification documents needed, e.g. many people with certain types of disability do not have a driver's licence.

- Uncertainty of who to contact or connect with to find volunteer roles.

- Organisations can be apprehensive about engaging a volunteer with disability if they haven't done so previously.

- Uncertainty about whether an organisation is inclusive and reasonable adjustments to the role need to be made.

- Volunteering regularly or for long periods of time can be difficult due to a person's support needs, physical or mental capacities, availability, or transport options.

Challenging Attitudes:

- Flexibility and accommodations are not disability specific. Everyone benefits from flexibility.

    o caring role such as parents, who may have competing schedule needs.

- Flexibility is afforded to many people in most roles but can be perceived negatively when required for disability access needs.

- The need for a physically accessible workplace is not always difficult, intrusive or expensive, and changes can benefit everyone.

    o This is the concept of universal design.

Attitudes and Unconscious Bias

"People shouldn't be afraid of addressing their own biases when it comes to disability. Most of us grew up with this notion that to look at a disabled person is to look at someone who is lesser than you, that a disability is something to be pitied because that person isn't able to do what a non-disabled person can do. We need to shed that as a society. We all have limitations and we all bring different strengths to the table. If we look at disability from the perspective of someone who's living with a disability, who doesn't see themselves as lesser, who doesn't see themselves as a super-human or charity case, we'll actually be able to have some of these difficult conversations about what accessibility and inclusion means for people with disability in the 21st century."

- Ing Wong-Ward, disabled activist

Attitudinal Barrier Types and Examples:

Attitudinal Barrier	What is it?	Example	Why is it a barrier?
Pity	Feeling sorry for someone with disability or looking down on them.	Including someone because you feel sorry for them. Giving unnecessary amounts of sympathy.	The person isn't being seen as an equal. Therefore, they may not be considered for leadership roles. Empathy instead of sympathy is important.
Hero/inspiration worship	Being inspired by people with disability <u>for doing ordinary things</u>.	Catching a train would not be inspirational if a non-disabled person did it, so it's not appropriate to call a disabled person inspirational for also doing it. Becoming an astronaut is inspirational if someone does it without disability, so it IS appropriate to be inspired by someone with disability doing it too.	Does not address and remove the barriers that specific people were able to 'overcome'. We should not be inspired by something someone did only because they did it with disability.
Stereotypes	Assumption of knowing disability based on miseducation or misrepresentation of its experience.	Thinking an autistic person will only be good in a volunteer role involving numbers because the understanding of	Putting people in boxes and not understanding the complexity of their individuality prevents them from expressing and experiencing

		autism is based off the movie "Rain Man".	things to their potential.
Ignorance	Not having exposure to disability which creates a limited understanding of it or choosing to believe things based on preference.	Telling a person "You're not disabled, you're just differently abled!" when they've expressed their preference of identity first language (disabled person).	Learning is a part of life and being open to it means there is opportunity for change. Ignorance keeps the world in the past.
Backlash	A negative consequence on an individual or societal level.	A person with invisible disability disclosing their disability, only to be treated differently by people moving forward and being told their access needs aren't 'reasonable accommodations'.	It creates fear of advocating or asking to have needs met. For example, the backlash of the NDIS being painted as a 'burden on taxpayers' has created hostility towards the disability community.
Denial of disability	Avoiding disability as a subject or a part of someone's identity, ignoring access needs, and hiding the negative side of the history of oppression and discrimination.	"I don't see you as disabled!" "I don't even notice your wheelchair".	It disregards access needs, paints disability as something 'shameful' or 'embarrassing' and does not recognise disability pride and disability culture.
Fear	Anxiety around doing or saying the 'wrong' thing.	Not hiring a person due to the fear of doing accessibility wrong.	Segregation, avoidance, isolation, and other issues can occur.
Assumption of 'normality'	The idea that everyone would choose to be non-disabled if given the opportunity.	Seen regularly in films and novels where a person with disability "would give anything to be 'normal'".	Leaves no room for disability culture and disability pride, creates a black cloud over disability and generates fear. Creates focus on medical model.

Strategies for inclusive recruitment

Consider volunteering recruitment processes from start to finish and all the opportunities for inclusivity.

1. Advertisement:
▫ Where.
▫ When.
▫ How.

2. Interview process:
▫ Providing options.
▫ Supporting access needs.

3. Onboarding:
▫ Inclusive induction.
▫ Access needs provided for.

4. Staff Management:
▫ Ongoing support.
▫ Upskilling.
▫ Development and leadership opportunities
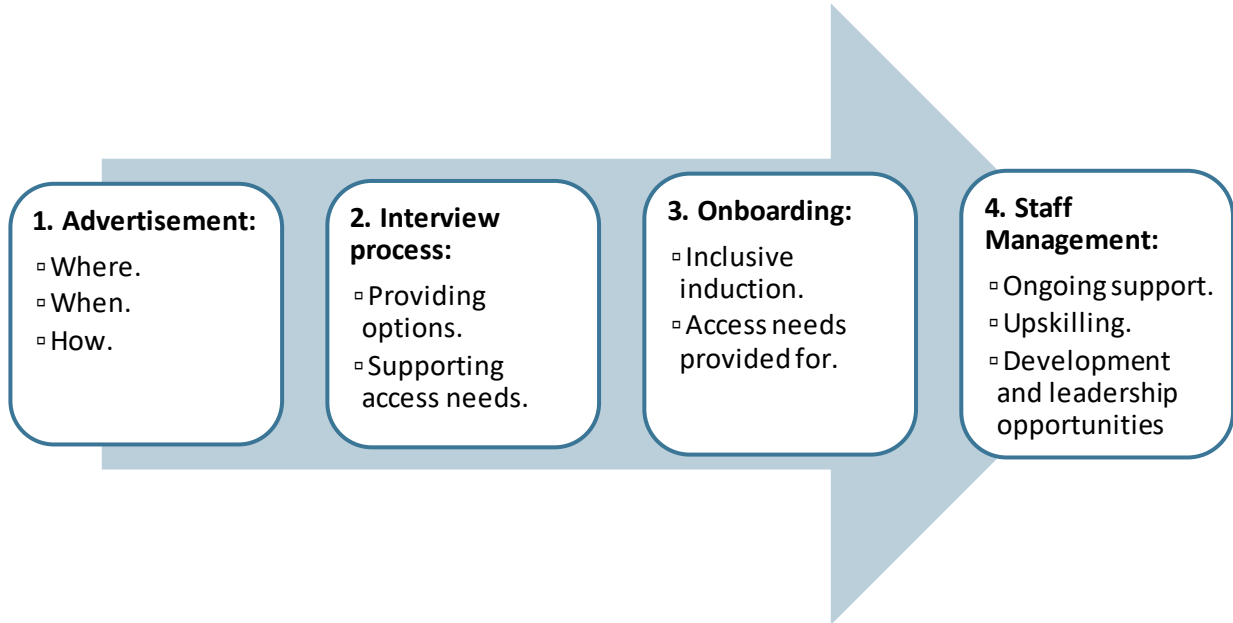
Job advertisements:

Fast first steps:

- Optional question on application form about if applicant has support requirements.
  - People can be apprehensive about disclosing disability at early stages due to experiences of discrimination.
  - Questions around access needs are more likely to be answered than questions about disability.
- It is unnecessary to know everything at the application stage, establish rapport and trust first.
- Use welcoming and inclusive language, for example 'people with disability are encouraged to apply'.
- Consider where you place your advertisements – traditional platforms and algorithms may disadvantage people with disability.
- Remove unnecessary requirements, such as the requirement for a driver's licence.
- Highlight volunteer role flexibility (tasks, time) and be willing to discuss and make changes.
- State clearly that you encourage applications from people living with disability and follow it up with a statement of support that commits to flexibility, providing accommodations and a culture of inclusion.
- Provide multiple ways for people to contact you, e.g. phone call, email, as some forms of communication may not be accessible.
- Having a third-party as part of the process to help "break the ice" between the person with disability and the organisation/staff/other volunteers, facilitate introductions, provide information, and answer questions can be helpful for some people.

Short-medium term goals:

- Demonstrate a willingness to make changes and be inclusive for genuine engagement, for example 'our organisation wants to be more inclusive, if you have lived experience with disability please join us to help us frame an organisation where you would like to volunteer'.
    - Form available in other languages and formats, like 'Easy Read'.
- Be respectful and have equitable processes in place.
- Recruit people with disability for all roles – not just positions relating to disability.
- More flexibility and less rigidity in volunteer roles.
    - Roles can be broken into smaller tasks so an individual can do what they are interested in and what they feel comfortable to do.
- Be open to develop a new volunteer role, let them direct what their role might be to suit them, and provide some options if they're not sure, including visual images.
- Make application forms inclusive and brief, in various formats and offer support to complete.
    - Application form available in various modes, for example hard copy, online, word document.
    - Font style is sans serif and minimum size 12 for hard copy form.
    - Language is clear and simple.
    - Include symbols where relevant, for example phone symbol.
- Regional volunteering roles can be more easily found through word of mouth and are more accessible due to closer proximity, although regional volunteer role choices are limited.

Disability Inclusive Job Advertisements

A few tips for when writing and sharing job advertisements

Purple Orange — R2E PARTNER – COMMITTED TO DISABILITY INCLUSION — JFA

We're Hiring:

Pink Lemon is committed to ensuring appointments represent the diversity of the community we work with. Women, Indigenous people, people with disability, young people, LGBTIQ+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

We demonstrate this commitment by offering flexibility for the right candidate. This can include flexi hours, hybrid or work from home arrangements, or adaptations to the position it's self.

Applicants can request access or adjustments at any stage during the recruitment process by getting in touch with Pam on 08 8104 1044 or emailing pam@pinklemon.com

Include a diversity statement that encourages applications from people with diverse backgrounds, including people with disability and why it matters to you.

Encourage applicants to request reasonable adjustments if required to assist them through the application and recruitment process

Consider Where you share the ads. Disability specific job sites like toozly.com.au or thefield.jobs can be a good start

Include multiple contact options as access barriers can differ

Remove non-essential requirements in the position description (e.g. requirement for a drivers licence) if it is not a core part of the role.

Offer flexibility where possible and specify what options you're willing to provide to employees.

Commit to customising or adapting the role for the right candidate

Utilize your connections and share the ad with anyone in your networks with direct connections to the disability community.

Inclusive interviews

Inclusive recruitment practices should always include interviews. However, interviews can pose a significant hurdle to people with disability because of a history of barriers and exclusion.

These tips will set you up for successful, inclusive processes and should be extended to all candidates successful at securing an interview to ensure fair and equal opportunities.

Before an interview:

- **State** your commitment to diversity and inclusion. This may encourage people to disclose disability or request adjustments if they need them.
- **Send** all attendees accessibility information about the venue (be flexible with the place where possible).
  - Online.
  - Recordings.
  - Phone.
  - Face-to-face.
  - Wheelchair access?
  - Interpreters?
- **Send** questions a day ahead of interview to relieve unnecessary pressure on candidates.
- **Ask** - Is there anything we need to know to give you the best opportunity in the interview?
- **Ask** - Is there anything you need from us in order to present your best self at the interview?
- **Ask** - Are there any adjustments we can make for the interview, so that we set you up for success?
- **Confirm** communication preference.
- Let the interviewee know they can have someone at the interview with them to help support them.

During an interview:

- **Reinforce** your commitment to diversity and inclusion and the positive impact of these activities on your employees and the culture.
- Asking questions directly about disability is intrusive, and inappropriate, but you can **ask** questions about their strengths, skills, experience and their capability to undertake the essential requirements of the role.
- **Ask** - Is there anything that we haven't mentioned so far that you would need in order to be successful in the role?
- **Talk** about what parts of a role a person is comfortable with and ask what they would like to do.

Inclusive information

It is important to think of accessibility in all areas - especially in how information is being shared. Creating a document outlining the accessibility of your venue/workplace can support people to know what to expect when visiting and/or volunteering. This also demonstrates commitment to inclusion through strong communication.

Questions to consider when creating a document highlighting accessibility:

Drop off & parking:
- Is there a safe drop off spot with a curb cut?
- Where is it?
- Is there designated accessible parking?
- Is it wide enough with space for a mobility aid to access the car?
- How far is it from the entrance?
- Is there other general parking?
- What is the closest accessible public transport?

Accessing the building:
- Is the entrance step-free?
- What type of door is it?
- Is it heavy or is there a turn handle?
- Is there an alternative entrance people should be aware of?
- What should they do when they get into the building?
- Is there an accessible reception area?

Office and meeting space:
- What is the lighting like?
- Can you control the temperature?
- Is there good circulation space for mobility aids?
- What are the noise levels like?
- Are there steps or trip hazards on the path to meeting rooms?
- Is there space to physically distance?

Bathrooms:
- How many bathrooms do you have, total?
- How many of those are accessible? Are the doors heavy?
- Is there enough space, free from clutter?
- Are there handrails or other access features?
- How close are they to meeting rooms?

Include any other access information you might have, including if requesting Auslan or captioning is an option and how to request it.

Example of JFA Purple Orange's office accessibility document:

Office Accessibility

Purple Orange. 104 Greenhill Road, Unley
08 8373 8388 - admin@purpleorange.org.au

Drop off & Parking:

Quick drop off is available at the main entrance on Greenhill Road, directly in front of the building.

There is a safer, more accessible drop off spot and some accessible parking at the back entrance of the building off Park Lane. Standard street parking is available in the area. The office is close to the Greenhill Road tram stop.

Accessing the Building:

The main entrance at the front is through automatic glass doors with step free access. Please check in at the reception area to the left, under the stairs. Access from the back entrance is also step free, automatic door - you can gain access by pressing the doorbell on the wall to the left.

Inside The Office & Meeting Spaces:

All spaces are lit with florescent lights. These can be switched off in meeting rooms as needed. Temperature can also be controlled. The majority of our spaces are quiet. General kitchen noise can sometimes be heard from some meeting rooms. The front of the building has traffic noise from Greenhill Road. There are no steps throughout the spaces, circulation space for mobility aids or walking with assistance animals is ample. Meeting rooms are varied in size so if you need circulation space or room to physical distance, please let us know.

We have a dog bed that can be used by assistance animals for lengthy meetings. Please ask at reception.

Bathrooms:

We have 4 bathrooms with different access options. Two are standard ambulant bathrooms, one is accessible with a right hand rail and the other is accessible with a left hand rail and a sling for lifting. Each of the accessible bathrooms has an automatic door. Bathrooms are close to most of the meeting spaces.

If a hearing loop, an interpreter, captioning or other options would make your meeting more accessible, please respond to the person who sent you this document and let them know as soon as practical.

Create a similar document for events located in new/different venues, so people are prepared and know what access they're going to encounter.

Once created, they can be easily updated with new information, or can be reused when rehiring venues and dispersed to attendees, volunteers, staff, etc.

Inclusive interactions

Feeling comfortable and confident in your interactions will help others to feel the same. The following are some tips for disability inclusive interactions:

- **Always address the person with disability directly – not a support worker, carer, companion or interpreter.**

    o People with disability are often talked over or ignored in interactions. Avoid this by communicating directly with the person even if:

        ▫ They are avoiding eye contact.

        ▫ They are responding through an AAC device.

        ▫ An interpreter or translator repeats their answers to you.

        ▫ You're having trouble understanding them (it's okay to ask them to repeat, or to find another form of communication that works for both of you).

- **Ask before you offer assistance and respect the reply – accepting if someone says no thank you.**

    o If they say yes to help, clarify how they would like assistance and listen to what they need.

    o A person has a right to independence and autonomy, they are allowed to say no and do the task if that's what they'd prefer.

    o If they have said no, it's okay to offer people with disability help in the future.

- **Treat and speak to people in a manner that is age appropriate.**

    o Only raise your voice if a person has asked you to (hard of hearing or for any other reasons).

    o Wheelchair users and people living with disability get spoken down to regularly (beware of tone and body language).

    o Simplifying your speech (speaking clearly, in concise sentences) is okay as long as it remains age appropriate.

- **Don't share someone else's story without their permission.**

    o Sharing information about a person's disability, medical history, backstory, etc. without their consent is inappropriate.

    o Sharing people's stories can contribute to taboo, especially in cases that are shared as 'tragic'. Refer to attitudes and unconscious bias section for more information.

- **Extend the same courtesy you would to any other person.**
    - This could include: offering to shake hands, to have a meeting out at a coffee shop, etc.
    - Be open to adapting the 'courtesy' to meet the needs of the person.
- **If someone lets you know you've used some incorrect language or gestures, thank them for letting you know and change for next time.**
    - Acknowledge the situation and then move along, remembering the lesson for the future.
    - Creating a scene can make the person feel uncomfortable and may inhibit their ability to speak up again in the future.
- **It's okay to ask questions and clarify, don't be afraid to say or do the wrong thing.**
    - Everyone makes mistakes and is constantly learning.
    - Keep yourself open to new learning/growth opportunities.
- **Language matters, ask and listen to how the person describes themselves and reflect the same language.**
    - For example: If someone says they prefer being referred to as a 'disabled person', best practice is to use that in the future for them, even if organisational policies say to refer to that person as a 'person with disability'.
    - Slurs are always unacceptable unless being used by an individual with disability who is 'claiming' that slur back (but it remains inappropriate for others to use that slur).

For more information language and communication, Purple Orange strongly recommends watching the following videos:

Language Matters (https://vimeo.com/477057789)

In the 'Language Matters' video, you'll learn why language matters when speaking about disability. Hear from the disability community as they share their experiences and provide advice on how you can make people living with disability feel included.

Demystifying Diverse Communication (https://vimeo.com/369237672)

In the 'Demystifying Diverse Communication' video, we interview six people with diverse communication needs about how they communicate and interact with the world.

This video is important because it lets us know how we can better connect with people who have diverse communication needs. It also lets us know some things we shouldn't do. Things that many people do without realising it is offensive.

Most importantly it gives a key message that diverse communication should not stop connection.

Inclusive Inductions

Going through induction processes can be an overwhelming time for everyone! Take the time to make people feel included and set them up for success within your organisation.

- **Offer** information in multiple formats and make sure people have access to the information after induction.

- **Ask** all inductees ahead of time if they need anything from you to make the induction process easier or smoother.

- **Use** multiple touchpoints to give people the chance to disclose disability as there are many reasons people may not disclose at early stages of engagement.

- **Surveys** that ask about people's identities are a great way to collect data to celebrate your organisation's diversity – but be clear about why you ask for information.

  o Constant surveys can give the impression of tokenistic 'tick boxing' and hitting diversity 'targets'.

  o Being transparent and genuine can help avoid that pitfall.

- **Create** clear and simple processes for new volunteers, make sure they are welcomed, assign a buddy to help them feel settled, and involve them in activities.

There are many further resources and support available – inclusion is an ongoing commitment and a journey with no end. Be prepared to work at it on an ongoing basis, and be clear and transparent about instances in which you are learning.

Successful inclusion builds a strong organisation.

To conclude, inclusive volunteering 'is all about community'. It is important to take time to get to know people in the community, discover peoples' skills and knowledge they can share, and provide the space for developing confidence, new skills, and expertise.

Inclusive Culture

An inclusive workplace proactively celebrates and values difference. Volunteers and employees don't need to hide their disability and can bring their whole selves to their role.

Commitments to creating an inclusive culture in the workplace need to be visible from decision makers and those at the top.

An inclusive culture is the foundation on which a broader inclusive organisation can be built.

Fast first steps:

- Consider a statement of commitment from leadership.

- Undertake disability awareness training.

- Don't wait until access is requested.

    o Consider accessibility with all changes and upgrades.

- Ensure accessible facilities as needed, for example a desk at the right height if using a wheelchair.
- Have images of people with disability in various volunteer roles to provide an idea of what type of roles are available.
- People with disability may be able to access NDIS funding to purchase items to support them to volunteer.
    o Note: any items gained via their NDIS funding goes with them when they leave the volunteer role/organisation.
- Existing volunteers need to be taken along on the inclusive volunteer journey, sometimes an established volunteer can be a barrier.
- Have a 'go to person' for volunteer role support, such as another volunteer as a mentor.

Discuss at your next meeting

1. Has your organisation developed an Inclusive Volunteer Action Plan?
2. Does your organisation promote roles to diverse organisations?
3. Have you developed an Inclusive Volunteer Statement?
4. Do you currently engage volunteers with diverse backgrounds and abilities?
5. Does your organisation have a volunteer reference group comprising people of all backgrounds and abilities?

Short-medium term goals:

- Embed inclusion and diversity in the culture or your organisation.

- Adapt current policies and processes.

- Volunteer reimbursement can make the difference in whether someone chooses to volunteer when transport cost is an issue for them.
- Flexibility with starting times.
  - For example, it makes it easier to be involved if people have a carer in the morning to assist them to get ready.
- Explore options through volunteer grants and the NDIS to accommodate adjustments.
  - Height adjustable desks.
  - Hands-free phones.
- Provide training to volunteers, including cultural understanding, disability awareness.
- Create simple step-by-step task instructions (e.g., written, visual).
- Utilise 'universal design' (more information below).
- Engage in co-design for future projects, policies, procedure changes, etc. (more information below).
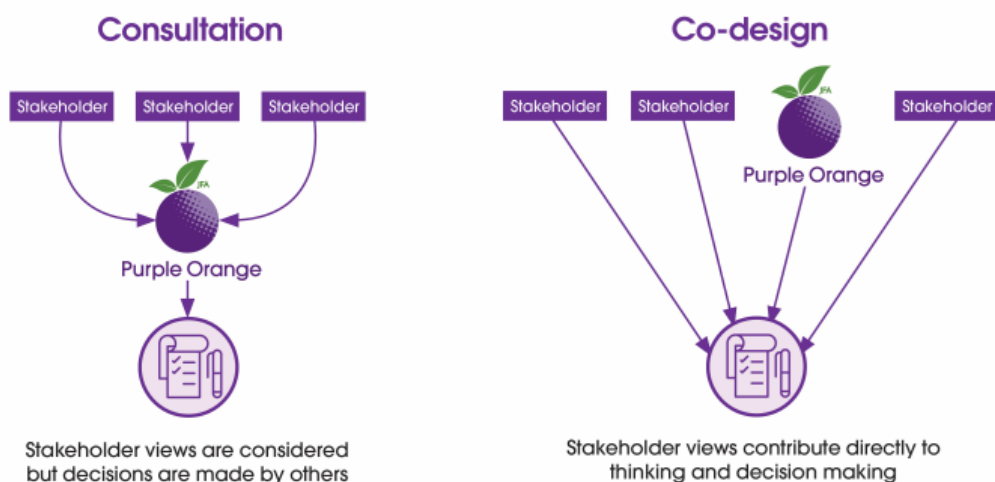
Culture of ongoing support:

- Regular check-ins to identify further support or training requirements.
- Implement support and training identified as soon as possible.
- Opportunity to develop new skills or skill-share with others.

Utilising universal design:

Universal design is the design and composition of an environment, building, product or service so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all regardless of their age, size, or ability. It includes the built environment, information finding and all other elements of how someone might experience what is being offered.

Implementing universal design in the development of physical spaces, projects, and documents should mean that there is less need for people to source alternative approaches or accommodations. For example, if everyone can enter a building through a wide, step-free door that's easy to open and is clearly signed, then it benefits the whole community. Universal design in its nature is usable, accessible and inclusive.

Utilising Co-design:

Consultation — Stakeholder views are considered but decisions are made by others

Co-design — Stakeholder views contribute directly to thinking and decision making

It is vital that people with disability are involved in making the decisions that affect their lives. Co-design is a simple, effective and mutually beneficial way of achieving this.

What is co-design?
Co-design is an inclusive, collaborative process whereby a diverse range of people with relevant skills, experience or interests come together to provide advice and make decisions on a project, policy, program or initiative.

- A meaningful co-design process will run throughout the life of a project – from the planning stage through to implementation and review.
- Co-design is used across a range of different sectors and is not disability specific.
- When used in the disability sector, it is important that the co-design group includes people with a range of different experiences of disability, in addition to other aspects of diversity (such as age, gender and sexual identity, location, cultural background and language). The remaining members of the co-design group will depend on the nature of the project but could include end-users, beneficiaries, representatives from the funding body (if relevant), affected stakeholders and/or subject matter experts.
- Co-design is used across a range of different sectors and is not disability specific.

Consultation vs Co-design	
- Consultation is a process whereby relevant stakeholder views are sought but the decisions are made by others. - Reaches a large group of people. - A wide range of voices are heard. - One-off process that seeks people's views.	- Co-design is a process whereby relevant stakeholder views contribute not only to the thinking but also the making of decisions. - Smaller, diverse group of people provide advice and make decisions. - Ongoing throughout the life of a project (planning through to implementation and review). - Includes people living with disability, beneficiaries/end users, and subject matter experts.

Access the full co-design guide created by Purple Orange via the following link: https://purpleorange.org.au/what-we-do/library-our-work/guide-co-design-people-living-disability

Keep moving forward

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan:

Similar to a Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Access and Inclusion Plans identify barriers and measurable actions to achieve accessible and inclusive workplaces for both employees and clients with disability. They include strong commitments to access and inclusion goals. Once completed, your Disability Access and Inclusion Plan can be lodged with the Human Rights Commission https://dhs.sa.gov.au/about-us/our-department/inclusion-engagement-and-safeguarding/dhs-diversity-and-inclusion/dhs-disability-access-and-inclusion-plan-daip

Mental Health:

Every year, one in five Australians experiences a mental health condition. Workplaces that promote mental health and wellbeing and create a supportive and inclusive culture are more likely to benefit from increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and higher job retention rates. Take a step towards managing and nurturing the mental health and wellbeing of your employees by sharing stories and letting them know where to access information and support.

Booking accessible communication:

If you need to book an Auslan interpreter, do this straight away, as there is limited supply.

Examples of organisations you can contact are:

- Deaf Connect: https://deafconnect.org.au/services/interpreting.
- National Auslan Booking Service https://www.nabs.org.au/
- National Interpreting and Communication Services https://www.nicss.org.au/

If you need to book live captioning, do this well in advance (at least 4 weeks).

Additional Resources

Benefits for business:

- https://includeability.gov.au/resources-employers/economic-and-business-benefits-employing-people-disability

Inclusive Recruitment:

- https://purpleorange.org.au/stories/elephant-interview
- https://purpleorange.org.au/what-we-do/our-current-projects/road-to-employment/employers/business-toolkits
- https://www.equalopportunity.sa.gov.au/documents/publications/Guideline-Disability-Employment-Practices.pdf
- Australian Network on Disability resources portal
  https://and.org.au/resources/
- Australian Human Rights Commission
  https://includeability.gov.au/resources-employers

Inclusive Workplaces:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9Q4pjkWOYE
- https://australiandisabilitynetwork.org.au/resources/access-and-inclusion-index/