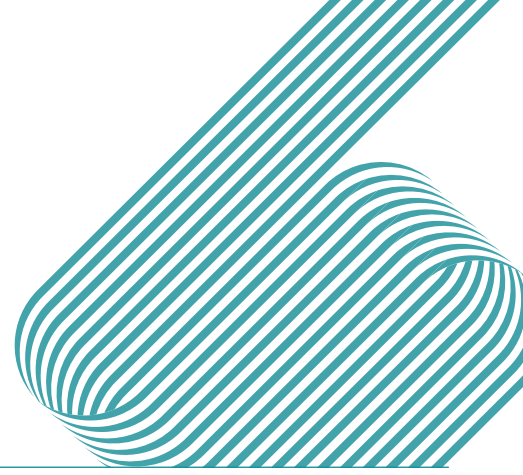


ACCESSIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

NAVIGATOR TOPIC GUIDE

Brandy Duhon, DVM (she, her)



What is accessibility in the workplace?

Accessibility is the design of products, devices, services, curriculums, vehicles, or environments so that they can be used by people of all abilities.

A 15-minute meeting?

The Journey for Teams educational modules are designed for a 15-minute block because veterinary workplaces are busy! We recognize that more than 15 minutes is needed to discuss accessibility in the workplace in depth. After the meeting, we hope the team will be inspired to explore this topic further as a team or individually. Check out Dr. Duhon’s resources at the end of this guide.

Let’s begin!

Refer to the [Navigator Handbook 1.0](#) and the steps below to help you lead and facilitate discussion about pathway development.

1 To begin the meeting, welcome everyone to the room by name.

2 Remind the group that the culture of a Journey for Teams meeting embodies engagement, open-mindedness, respect, and compassion.



ENGAGED



OPEN-MINDED



RESPECTFUL



COMPASSIONATE

3  Play the “Accessibility in the Workplace” video.

4 Read aloud the 3 take-home messages from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide:

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Learn what is required by law to provide accessibility in your workplace.**
- **Universal design aims to create environments, services, and systems that are useful to people with diverse abilities. Most of us benefit from universal design every day.**
- **If someone does something differently from you, it does not mean that they are doing it the wrong way. Be open to alternative methods if the outcome is the same.**

5 Ask for 1-2 comments on the take-home messages. Try to keep it brief to respect the 15-minute time commitment.

6 Read aloud the 2 questions from the 3-2-1 Discussion Guide.

Question for the team:

How can we apply the concept of universal design to our building, services, and website to improve accessibility for colleagues and clients?

Spend a maximum of 5 minutes discussing the team question.

Question for individual self-reflection:

No need to share answers or thoughts with anyone.

In the past, has my language been derogatory, such as asking someone jokingly, “Can’t you see” or “Are you deaf”? How can I be more mindful of using respectful language about people with disabilities and avoid outdated terms like “psycho,” “lame,” “imbecile,” or “crazy”?

The most important part of the meeting

7 As a team, decide on **1 actionable and measurable behavior change** to implement in your workplace. Consider 1 from the list below, or come up with your own idea.

- Use this quick reference to help you assess and fix the most common accessibility issues in your workplace.
<https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/blog/accessibility-in-the-workplace-a-practical-guide/>
- Plan an audit of your website to improve accessibility features.
<https://www.ada.gov/resources/web-guidance/>
- Agree to commit to using positive and supportive language in the workplace by avoiding words that present a disability in a negative way or as a means to insult someone. Use this disability language guide for helpful examples of do's and don'ts:
https://disability.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj26391/files/media/file/disability-language-guide-stanford_1.pdf

Our actionable idea

8 Invite the team to self-reflect. Team members may consider and commit to **1 personal behavior change** (no need to share them with anyone).

- Embrace universal design! Brainstorm with a friend or colleague new ways to do things that work better for and benefit everyone.
- If you see a person with a disability struggling with a poorly designed space, ask if you can assist them. Take it a step further by informing someone responsible for the space of the problem you observed and suggest a change.

9 Thank everyone for contributing, and congratulate yourselves on how much you accomplished in 15 minutes!

RESOURCES

Americans with Disabilities Act. (n.d.). U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division.
<https://www.ada.gov/>

Gleeson, M. (2020, May 18). *Veterinary schools rethink standards for students with physical disabilities*. Insight Into Diversity.
<https://www.insightintodiversity.com/veterinary-schools-rethink-standards-for-students-with-physical-disabilities/>

DiGioia, P. (2012, October 1). *Veterinarians with disabilities: Practicing a full life*. VIN News Service.
<https://news.vin.com/default.aspx?pid=210&catId=638&id=5545971>

The inclusion of resources by this author does not imply or constitute an endorsement by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the Veterinary Medical Association Executives.