Guide to Accessible Workplace Events

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This guide will assist you to host events that are accessible and welcoming of LGBTI+ staff with disability. Ensuring that the events you host are inclusive is vital to ensuring LGBTI+ people with disability feel like an accepted part of the team and organisation and can reap the personal and professional benefits of attending events. When organising any kind of workplace event, whether it's a conference, presentation, performance, meeting, team-building activity, networking event, or team celebrations, it is important to make sure that the event can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone who would like to attend.

Workplace events allow for teams to strengthen, networks to expand, and individual working relationships to develop. If you do not consider accessibility prior to hosting a workplace event, you and your colleagues could miss out on building a stronger relationship with an employee with disability, engaging with a stakeholder with disability, connecting with a potential client with disability, or meeting a new addition to your team who has disability.

Not being able to attend inaccessible workplace events can feel isolating for your employees with disability. This is especially important for events hosted by LGBTI+ organisations or events with an LGBTI+ focus as many LGBTI+ people with disability experience feeling excluded from the LGBTI+ community.

Workplace events allow for teams to strengthen, networks to expand, and friendships to develop.

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"I found I had a really interesting experience in a workplace that I was in, where there are lots of LGBTIQ+ people. Because I am blind and I was the only person with a disability in that workplace for ages, they could not believe that I might have a different sexuality, let alone be somebody that might want to have sex, or think about sex. So, it was really difficult to get in on those social team building activities. There would be a work activity and you'd get thrown in a taxi and everybody else would go out and party and do clubs and I didn't actually get to be a part of a lot of the social activities and get to meet other people that might have been more diverse than I would have normally met. Because "blind people aren't interested in going dancing, blind people aren't interested in meeting people," I must be going back to the convent at the end of the work, you know?"

IN-PERSON WORKPLACE EVENTS:

When organising an in-person workplace event, it is important to consider the physical environment of where the event will be hosted. Without taking the physical environment of your event into consideration, you may prevent your staff with disability from being able to attend your event.

It would be helpful to consider the following before hosting a workplace event to ensure LGBTI+ people with disability feel welcome:

- It is important to ask your presenters and attendees if they have any access requirements prior to the event. You could include a line in your event invitations that says, "please let the event organiser know if you have any access requirements."

- Use plain English and a font that is easy to read in a large size for your invitations and promotional material. Additionally, check that your digitally distributed invitations and promotional materials are formatted to be accessible to screen reading and screen magnifying technology.

- Provide your presenters and attendees with information about how to access the event venue, including details about where accessible and general parking is located, venue drop-off points, and what public transport is available.

- Choose a venue that is suitable for people with sensory access requirements. Although sensory access requirements are diverse, be considerate of the lighting, background noise, temperature, amount of space, and foot traffic of the event venue.

- Offer 'sensory retreat' spaces or rooms for people with sensory disability and/or psychosocial disability to decompress in if they feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable. These spaces should be free of distracting visual and auditory stimuli and away from high traffic areas such as the lunchroom or conference hall.

- Check that the entrances and corridors of the event venue are accessible to wheelchair users and that lifts are available to use if the venue has multiple levels.

- To support accessibility for staff who are deaf or hard of hearing, provide an Auslan interpreter and use captioning to accompany PowerPoint or video presentations. Additionally, it is good practice to provide an Auslan interpreter to assist the team to network and socialise during the event.

- Take the initiative to make your event accessible to people who are blind or have low vision by providing audio description to accompany the event.

- Make sure accessible and gender-neutral bathrooms are available at the venue where you are hosting your event.

- Provide presenters and attendees with badges that display their names and pronouns.

- Display LGBTI+ pride flags at your event venue to show LGBTI+ people that they are welcome and accepted.

- Record and stream presentations, talks, and performances so that they can be accessed online by people who were unable to attend the event physically.

For more advice about hosting accessible events, see the **Australian Network on Disability's Event Accessibility Checklist.**

For more information about accommodating access requirements, see our Index of Access Requirements.

EMPLOYABLE

Access Requirements and Workplace Adjustments
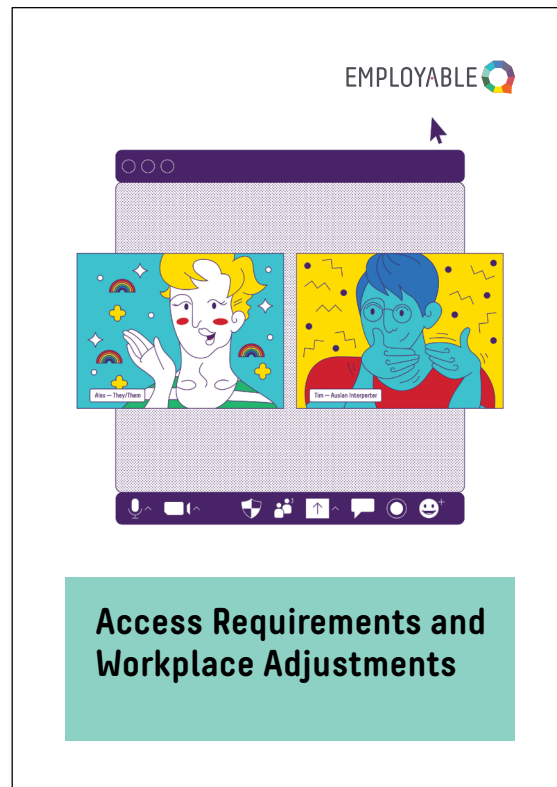
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> "That social aspect is one of the points I raised because inviting the whole team to drinks or something at a non-accessible place, that's team building exercises that you're excluded from. So, it is something that I think is important because when you're working in a team, you don't want to be the only one out. You're already having to request accommodations to be able to be in that workplace. You don't want to be othered if you don't have to, with social stuff as well."
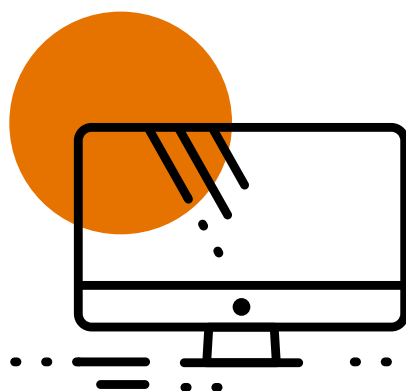
Online events can be a great way to connect and network with people without geographical barriers.

ONLINE WORKPLACE EVENTS:

Online events can be a great way to connect and network with people without geographical barriers. Although they can be attended from anywhere that has a stable internet connection, it is still important to consider the access requirements of your attendees in a virtual setting.

You should consider the following before hosting an online workplace event to make LGBTI+ people with disability feel welcome:

- Always ask your presenters and attendees if they have any access requirements prior to the event. You could include a line in your event invitations that says, "please let the event organiser know if you have any access requirements".

- Use Plain English and a Sans Serif font in a large size when communicating with your presenters and attendees.

- Check that your communication is accessible to screen reading and screen magnifying technology. Always provide both a Microsoft Word and PDF version of any documents you send to presenters and attendees.

- Provide your presenters and attendees with instructions about how to access the online platform you are using to host your virtual event. This should include a weblink to the event, login requirements, how to turn the camera and mic on and off, how to use the 'hand up' function, and how to use the chat box.

- Give your attendees the option to turn their camera and mic off whilst attending the event. Allow for attendees to use the chat box instead and have the presenters offer to read aloud any questions or comments submitted through the chat box.

- Encourage your presenters and attendees to put their pronouns next to their names if they feel comfortable to do so.

- Take the initiative to make your online event accessible to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing by providing an Auslan interpreter and using captioning.

- Take the initiative to make your online event accessible to people who are blind or have low vision by providing audio description to accompany the event.

- Send written and visual materials to your presenters and attendees in advance so they know what to expect and can prepare for the event. If you are sending any images to your presenters or attendees, make sure you include image descriptions and alternative text so they can be accessed by people who are blind or have low vision.

- Consider the duration of the event as it can be quite exhausting for some people to participate in an online event for a long duration of time. If the event is over an hour, you should allow for the attendees to take a 10-minute break after every hour.

- After the event has concluded, offer your attendees the opportunity to provide you with feedback about the event, including how accessible it was. Hosting accessible events is a learning process and you can use this feedback to make your next event even more accessible.

Take the initiative to make your online event accessible to people who are blind or have low vision by providing audio description to accompany the event.

For more advice about hosting accessible online events, see **Rooted in Rights' Guide to Accessible Virtual Meetings and Events.**

For more information about accommodating access requirements, see our **Index of Access Requirements.**

Access Requirements and Workplace Adjustments
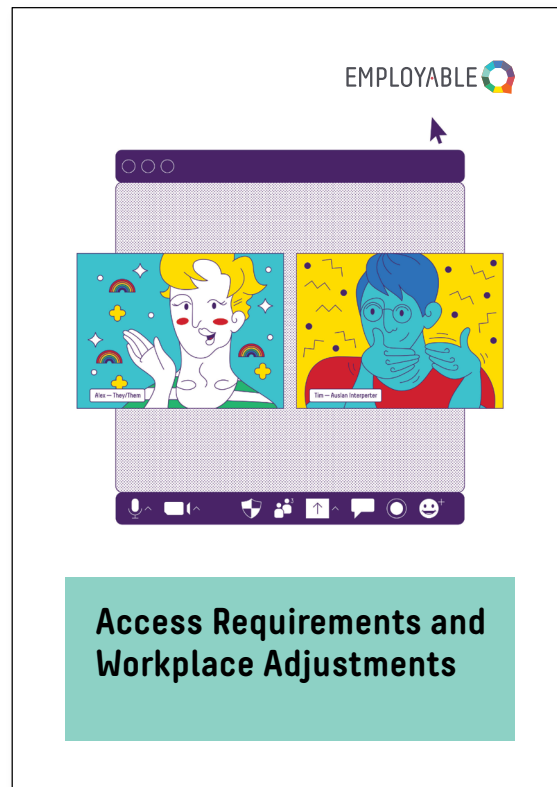
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>
> "I feel like that's very important not just for LGBTI organisations, but generally speaking, that people with disability are provided with social events that are accessible to people with disability more broadly."