

Universal Design Strategies for Inclusion

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HillelU

Center for Engagement & Wellness



Goals

- Understand what universal design is and what it could look like at your Hillel
- Brainstorm ways you can be applying universal design strategies in your work
- Feel empowered to play an active role in making Hillel even more inclusive and accessible

Redefining Engagement

Engagement is the act of reaching people, getting to know them, and connecting them to something larger than themselves on the basis of their interests, ambitions, and passions.

For our work as Hillel professionals, engagement is the means by which Jewish students are invited to become Jewish adults on their own terms. Engagement done right ensures that *all* feel welcome in Jewish space and time, and all feel responsible for building community and connection in their own way. It is also the means by which we understand and connect with one another more deeply.

What is Universal Design?

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

- Ron Mace, Center for Universal Design

Who is it for? *EVERYONE*

For example, at Hillel...

- **People with disabilities**
- **People of Color**
- **LGBTQ People**
- **People of all origins, interests, backgrounds, etc.**

Who Benefits?

Curb Cuts: designed to provide access for people using wheelchairs

People using crutches or a cane

People pushing strollers or walkers

People pulling wheeled luggage or a cart filled with materials for a Hillel table

Who Benefits?

1. Closed captioning
2. Large print name tags with pronouns included
3. Leaving space in a circle of chairs

Inclusion Strategies

- **Ask about accessibility needs on all forms to ensure organizers design an experience for all.**
- Follow accessibility standards for web content such as using alt text descriptions for images and naming links
- **Use inclusive language that does not make assumptions about the people in the room**
- Caption all videos
- **Provide multiple modalities in meetings and learning experiences**
 - ✓ Discussion
 - ✓ Play music / Draw / Write
 - ✓ Powerpoint
 - ✓ Printed materials
 - ✓ Videos
- Use only accessible spaces for large gatherings, board meetings and events

More Inclusion Strategies

- **Have fidgets available as a tool of adult learning**
- Make sure people with disabilities included in your diversity or welcoming statement, if applicable
- **Include a cross-section of your population in the planning process (i.e. people with disabilities, LGBTQ, students of color, etc)**
- Indicate pronouns in introductions, signatures and name tags
- Indicate access being provided
- **Label all food**
- Prep outside presenters in your inclusion best practices

Brainstorm

- Has your Hillel utilized universal design strategy before (*whether you've known it or not*)? If so, how?
- What's one way in which you and/or your Hillel could use universal design for inclusion in the future?

Universal Design as an Engagement Strategy

- Invite students with disabilities to be a part of a focus group or think tank, or to participate in leadership.
- Ask students what they need and about the ways they want to engage at Hillel (also known as Engagement 101).
- Be conscious of intersectional identities and encourage and celebrate students bringing their whole authentic selves to Hillel.

Listen to and Learn from the Students!

"It's okay to learn from them [students] and have them know more than you do. I felt a bit embarrassed for not being more aware of some of my own students' needs, or issues that surround disability inclusion at large, or simply not knowing the 'correct' language to use. Empower your students...to teach you what they know so that you can be the change as well. I have gained so much from being a part of their journey on our campus."

- Alex Brizel
Ruderman Inclusion Supervisor, Hofstra Hillel

Questions?




Continue the Learning on The Hub!

Page

Engagement > Pages > Engaging the 'Every' Diversity & Inclusion

Universal Design Resources

Hannah Henschel [Following](#) 1 Files attached



'Everyone is Welcome'

Every day we engage with universal design whether we know it or not. Curb cuts are built into sidewalks to provide access for people in wheelchairs and yet, the benefits extend broadly – people pushing walkers or strollers, using crutches or pulling wheeled luggage or carts full of supplies for Hillel events across campus. This is universal design at work!

Universal Design (UD) is an approach that seeks to optimize experiences for all participants by considering a diverse range of needs, learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. The goal is to design with universal access in mind, removing barriers to full participation and engagement.

Explore some great resources:

- [Inclusion is Not a Program](#) by Lisa Friedman
- TEDtalks
 - [How architecture can create dignity for all](#)
 - [When we design for disability, we all benefit](#)
- [Best Practices for Inclusive Workshops](#)(see attached)

Files & attachments

Closing: *Inclusion is Not a Program*

“To be truly inclusive, we should be looking at and figuring out how everything, *every single thing*, we organize can be fully accessible and inclusive of people of varying abilities.”

- Lisa Friedman, UJA Federation of New York's Synagogue Inclusion Project