

Inclusive Event Planning

Are you planning an event and want it to be inclusive?

This guide provides some key considerations to help ensure that your event is inclusive!

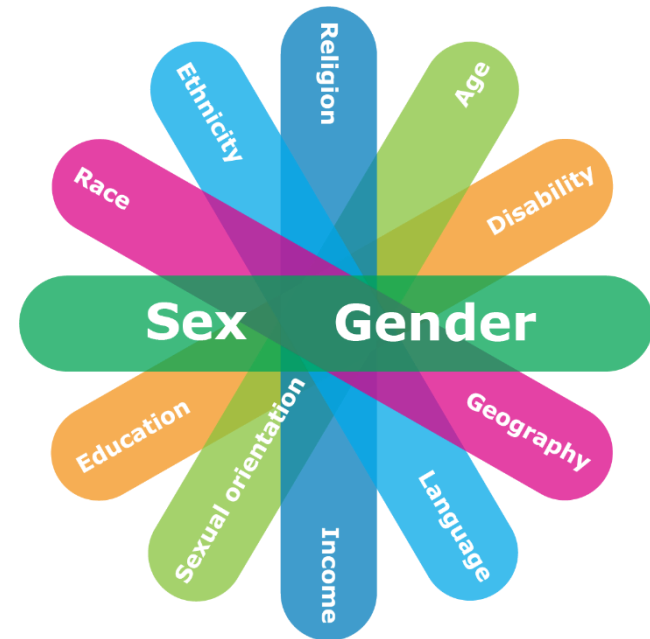
To have a successful event relies on having the “right” people in attendance and ensuring they are able to fully participate and contribute to the discussion. For instance, consider who has an interest or will be affected by the issues/topics to be discussed. One of the consequences of having a narrow representation is that only the interests of some people are addressed, without taking into consideration the ideas, knowledge, and experience of groups of people who may be impacted by the decisions at hand. Given the amount of time, effort and resources spent on planning an event, why not take an inclusive approach to ensure that every person can participate?

As an organizer, a facilitator or a presenter, keep in mind that groups of people are not homogenous, and can face a variety of barriers as a result of their multiple identity factors, some of which may not be visible.

This job aid is not exhaustive. This tool is meant to be a guide that can be adapted to meet the needs of your organization and event.

Don't forget to undertake a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) throughout the event planning process and not just at the starting point. GBA+ is an analytical tool and process developed by the Government of Canada. It is used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences.

For additional resources, see Employment and Social Development Canada's [Guide for Planning Inclusive Meetings](#), the Department for Women and Gender Equality's [Introduction to GBA+](#) online course and [Demystifying GBA+](#) Job Aid.



Tips for Planning an Inclusive Event



Engage senior management, including the GBA+ Champion in your organization, to garner support for your event.



Consider barriers to accessing the event (e.g. physical accessibility, travel costs) and participating in the event (e.g. simultaneous sign language, room accessibility).



Engage and consult internally and externally to amass diverse perspectives and inform the planning and delivery of your event.



Collaborate with the communications team in your organization.



Ensure the organizing team and/or advisory group represents diverse perspectives and experiences.



Engage highly-regarded speakers and subject matter experts who can link inclusivity and GBA+ to their field of expertise.



Ensure that the space and agenda consider participant health needs (e.g. health breaks, scent-free environment, food sensitivities).



Ensure equal representation of official languages in the event.



Advise participants of the services available (e.g., sign language interpretation, attendant care, note taking, captioning) at the start of the event.



Key Considerations for Planning an Inclusive Event

Planning an Inclusive Event	
Items	Key considerations
Learning outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Prior to deciding on the design and format of the event, determine what the key objectives are and the desired outcome of the event. ✦ What do you want participants to walk away with or go back and share with their organization? ✦ Consult the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Evaluation Model to help inform your desired learning outcomes.
Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ What are the key message(s) you want to relay throughout the event? ✦ Has your communications approach considered diverse audiences? ✦ How are you going to deliver your message(s)? Consider accessibility (e.g. a variety of formats), access to technology, primary and secondary languages. ✦ Use plain language, avoiding the use of jargon and acronyms. ✦ Tailor your message and delivery to your target audience. ✦ Is the oral and written text using non-binary, inclusive language? ✦ Are images and illustrations reflecting and valuing experiences of a diverse population? ✦ Ensure that written materials are using a sans serif fonts, high-contrast colours. Additional resources for accessible written materials include: CNID's Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines.
Target audience(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Who is your target audience? Do you have a secondary audience? ✦ What are the demographics of your target audience? ✦ Are you making assumptions about the uniformity of the learners? ✦ What type of gender and diversity disaggregated data are already in place in measure this? ✦ How will your research methods ensure the collection of gender and diversity disaggregated data? ✦ What other types of disaggregated data are needed to understand gender and other dimensions of the target audience? ✦ Would you like your primary (and/or secondary) audience(s) to share this information post-event? If so, with whom? ✦ Have you identified the accessibility needs of your audience(s)? ✦ Provide participants with the opportunity to identify their accommodation needs early in the planning process. This can be done by sending a “save-the-date” or invitation early on, which will support an inclusive environment from the outset.



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Items	Key considerations
Organizational challenges/limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + What challenges and/or limitations exist within your organization that you will need to address (e.g. resources, including capacity and/or funding)? + Do challenges and/or limitations exist with partner/collaborator organizations? + Now that you have identified potential challenges, what strategies can you employ to mitigate them? + Work with senior management to overcome challenges by presenting viable solutions. + Work with partner/collaborator organizations to overcome challenges.
Event format and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + What kind of event are you organizing? Is it an awareness-raising event, or learning event? Tailor the design of your event to reflect the kind of event you are organizing; event designs include panel, armchair, café learning, training, TedTalk and webinars. + What format will your event take? Is it a single, or one-time event, or is it a series of learning opportunities? Ensure that the design of your event corresponds to your identified learning outcomes. + Who has been consulted in development of the event? + What is the size of the event? + Consider webcasting the event to increase participation and accessibility, specifically for regional partners. + During the design process of your event, consider the diversity of your audience.
Internal collaborators/External collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Who will you be working with to organize, design, deliver and evaluate the event? + Are you collaborating with “typical” partners, or are you working reaching out to groups that are seldom heard? + What types of measures are needed to ensure equitable and diverse representation during consultation processes? + When possible, work with civil society organizations, specifically community-organizations, to facilitate broad engagement. Working with diverse groups provides alternative perspectives and valuable knowledge.
Budget for Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Is there a budget allotment for the event? + Have you provided honoraria beforehand (if applicable)? + Have you budgeted to ensure full-inclusion (e.g. childcare, cost for dietary restrictions)? + If you have limited financial resources, consider collaborating with internal/external partners who support the funding for the event. + Is there an opportunity to fund participants from civil society organizations to attend? Budget limitations to cover travel costs can be a barrier.



Planning an Inclusive Event	
Items	Key considerations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Include accommodation costs in your planning (e.g. fees for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and attendants, simultaneous translation). Your initial budget should include costs of accommodation services and/or products.
Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ What is the size of the venue, the cost of the space, accessibility and ease of transportation (e.g. is parking readily available? Is public transportation available?)? ✦ Undertake a thorough check of the physical site before booking the location. While facility owners or managers may list their site as accessible, understandings of accessibility vary. ✦ Does the venue have appropriate restroom facilities for all genders (ex. gender neutral restrooms)? ✦ Does the venue have a quiet space for reflection and/or sensory overload? ✦ Consider the accessibility needs feedback you received from participants, and visit the site to assess whether a facility will meet the needs of all participants.
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Do the event dates conflict with other key events in your department, or with partner-departments? ✦ Consider the timing of your event. For example, is there a public holiday (e.g. March break), a faith-based holiday or a general election at the same time? Note that conflicting dates may impact attendance and participation, and unintentionally exclude groups of people. ✦ Does the time of your event create a barrier for participation (ex. consider regional participation)?
Event delivery and facilitators/presenters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Who will you have presenting and/or facilitating the event? Will they be internal to your organization, or will you be contracting out? ✦ Is it critical for the facilitator to be a subject matter expert? ✦ Is the facilitator sensitive to diversity and aware of the specific gender and diversity issues affecting the event and learning environment? ✦ If you have not decided on a presenter/facilitator, who could you consult with to identify speakers? ✦ Prior to engaging a contractor, or committing colleagues to partake in the event, consider team, branch and departmental resource availability (i.e. capacity, budget). ✦ Consider your target audience – ensure that you are taking a diversity-sensitive approach by considering historical trauma, and avoiding tokenism. If the subject matter is traumatic, will there be support for participants (e.g. Elders)?



Planning an Inclusive Event

Items	Key considerations
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Have you altered the event to accommodate for the size of the audience to ensure maximum participation? ✦ Identify accessible telephones, restrooms, exits and fire escapes. ✦ Ensure directional signage in the location for floor numbers, level locations for parking (Canadian National Institute for the Blind standards for colours and contrasts) ✦ Consider the needs of various participants and their service providers. For example, keep in mind seat allocation nearest to the sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Are the demographics of participants being monitored? ✦ Is there a gender or other diversity imbalance among participants? ✦ What mechanisms are in place if trends in gender or other diversity discrepancy begin to appear? ✦ What indicators would you require to assess the success of diverse groups of people? ✦ Have baseline indicators been established to measure the effectiveness and success of the event, and are they conducive to assessing the impact on diverse groups? ✦ How are diverse groups involved in the management and monitoring of the event? ✦ Are there gaps in the quantitative or qualitative data needed to effectively measure the event's outcomes? If so, how could these gaps be filled? ✦ What data collection methods would be conducive to measuring outcomes for diverse groups?



Additional Key Considerations when Planning an Inclusive Event in the Canadian Context

Event design

- ✚ During the design process of your event, consider the diversity of your audience. For example, will the design and format of your event be well-received by Indigenous peoples?

Official Languages

- ✚ How are you going to deliver your message(s)? Consider accessibility (e.g. a variety of formats), access to technology, official languages.
- ✚ Will your messages be delivered in English and French?
- ✚ Is the use of one official language dominant in your event?
- ✚ If you have listed your event as being bilingual, are both official languages fully integrated throughout your event?
- ✚ Ensure that the organizing committee has both French and English-speaking members to ensure that both languages have a presence during the event.

Indigenous inclusion

- ✚ Does the venue allow smudging? If not inside, is there a space outside that could be made available?
- ✚ Have you included a land acknowledgement at the beginning of your event?
- ✚ Have you considered having an Elder open the event with a ceremony? If yes, have you ensured the proper supports (e.g., adequate time and space, gift for the Elder)?
- ✚ When collaborating and/or co-developing with Indigenous communities, consider integrating Indigenous communications approaches into the design and delivery of your event. See the [First Nations Communications Toolkit](#) for additional guidance.



Inclusivity Checklist for Event Planners¹

Inclusivity Checklist for Event Planners		
	Y/N	Comments
Pre-event Planning		
Registration form sent to participants confirming accommodation needs		
Ensure fees for all advisors (ASL interpreters, attendants) are included in the budget		
Provide honoraria beforehand (if applicable)		
List of participants with evacuation needs provided to facility manager		
Request that participants identify specific evacuation needs		
Request that participants respect scent-free environment		
Provide participants with release forms seeking permission to be photographed or video recorded		
Share logistical information well in advance		
Volunteers		
Reserve and provide time for training volunteers (e.g. sensitivity training)		
Offer travel compensation		
Have volunteers available to assist participants at the meeting		
Designate volunteers to specific tasks (e.g. to read for attendees as needed)		
Ensure that volunteers are identifiable with the use of name tags		
Designated person to help evacuate participants with specific needs		
Location Preparation		
Identify accessible telephones and accessible restrooms		
Ensure directional signage for floor numbers and parking		
Distributable Materials		
Provide agendas and bios ahead of time		
Create plain language material; allow several weeks for converting printed material to alternative formats or plain language		
Have material available in alternative formats		

¹ Adapted from ESDC's [Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings](#).



Inclusivity Checklist for Event Planners

	Y/N	Comments
Accessibility		
Ensure all information is accessible		
Ensure that emergency preparedness is included in written materials		
Ensure that web content conforms to WCAG 2.0 guidelines		
Troubleshoot potential issues ahead of time and develop solutions		
Provide alternative formats for print materials		
Employ note-taker services		
Engage Sign language interpretation (both ASL and LSQ or simultaneous translation)		
Provide adaptive technologies, including assistive listening devices		
Consider dietary requirements and restrictions (e.g. Halal, Kosher, gluten)		
Notify participants of location and available accommodations in advance so they can arrange for accessible transportation, attendant services and other personalized services		
Provide presenters and organizers with reference sheets advising them what is required to ensure accessible communication		
Prepare agenda with adequate meal breaks and health breaks and allow time for longer break periods for those with guide dogs or those with intellectual and learning disabilities		
Accessible public transportation available with schedules that work with planned meeting time		
Facility		
Facility entrance equipped with automatic door and sufficient room to manoeuvre all sizes of mobility aids		
Accessible parking available close to facility		
Accessibility features are operational (e.g., doors, platform lifts)		
Floor surfaces are slip-resistant		
Tactile signage (raised pictograms, lettering and dome Braille)		
Volunteers in place and assigned to greet and direct participants if signage is not available		
Accessible restrooms (e.g., cubicle with accessible grab bar)		



Inclusivity Checklist for Event Planners

	Y/N	Comments
Gender neutral and gender specific restrooms		
Hearing aid-compatible public telephones, with volume controls		
Reserve seating to accommodate participants not wanting be captured on camera so that they are not in the view of the camera(s). Participants could also be identified by wearing colour-coded badges		
Available space to accommodate a translation booth and captioning equipment		
Reserved seating for people who use wheelchairs and motorized scooters or who are accompanied by guide/service dogs		
Space for sign language interpreters and/or simultaneous interpreters		
Seating near the interpreters/captionists/note takers reserved for people who are hard of hearing		
Prayer space		



What is GBA+?

GBA+ (Gender-based Analysis Plus) is an analytical tool and process developed by the Government of Canada that is used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. The “plus” in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. We all have multiple identity factors that intersect to make us who we are; GBA+ also considers many other identity factors, like race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.

GBA+ and Gender Equality

In 1995, the Government of Canada committed to using GBA+ to advance gender equality in Canada, as part of the ratification of the [United Nations' Beijing Platform for Action](#).

Gender equality is enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which is part of the Constitution of Canada. Gender equality means that diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people are able to participate fully in all spheres of Canadian life, contributing to an inclusive and democratic society.

We often assume that our work or our policies apply to everyone equally and there are no gender or diversity issues to consider. GBA+ helps us recognize and move beyond our assumptions, uncover the realities of people’s lives, and find ways to address their needs.

GBA+ should be applied throughout an initiative’s process, from inception to implementation to evaluation to identify and mitigate potential challenges and barriers to ensure inclusivity for all people.

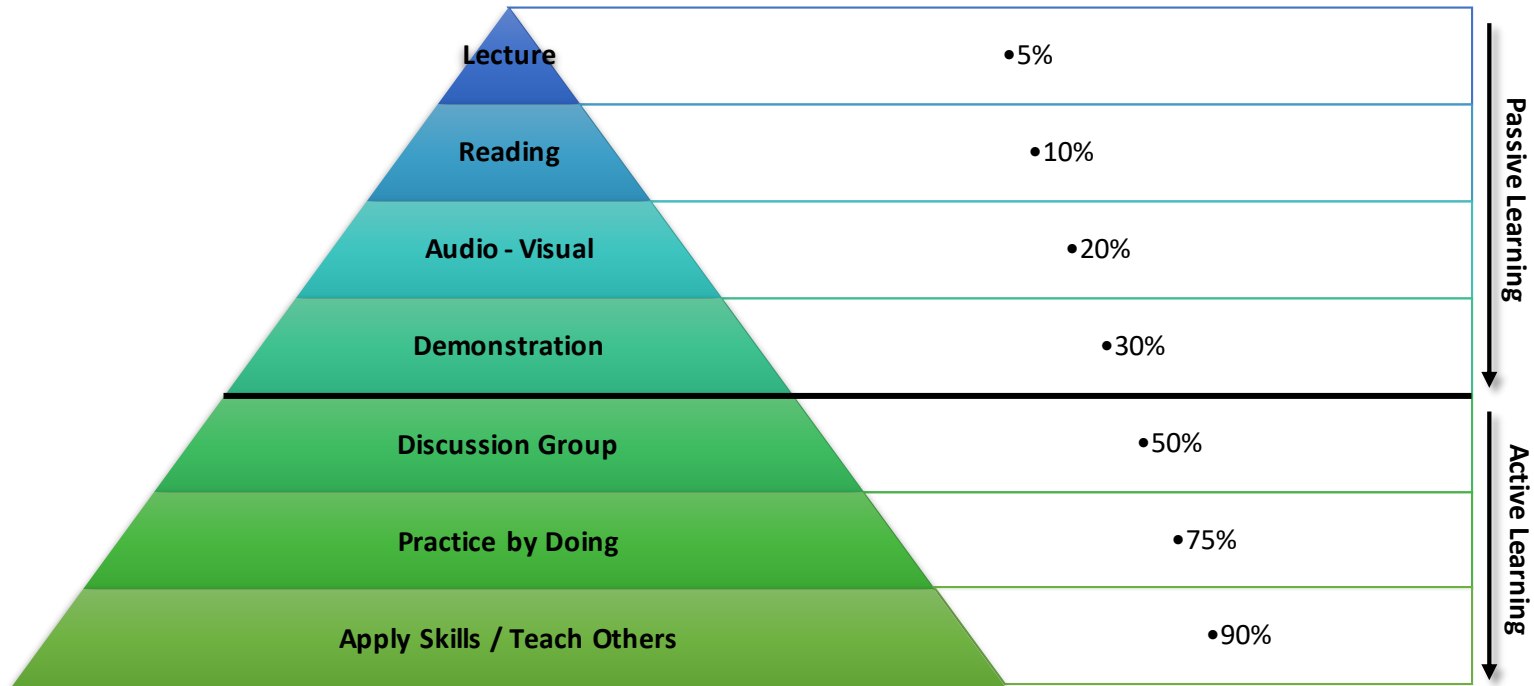


Watch the Department for Women and Gender Equality’s microlearning videos for examples of GBA+ impacts in Canada (available on the Department for Women and Gender Equality Canada’s [YouTube](#) channel).



The Learning Pyramid²

Average Learning Retention Rates



² National Training Laboratories for Applied Behavioral Sciences

Sources:

- ✚ Health Canada (Sex and Gender Unit): Event planning materials
- ✚ ESDC's [Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/inclusive-meetings.html): <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/inclusive-meetings.html>
- ✚ Department for Women and Gender Equality's [Demystifying GBA+ Job Aid](https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acscourse-cours-2017/assets/modules/Demystifying_GBA_job_aid_EN.pdf): https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-acscourse-cours-2017/assets/modules/Demystifying_GBA_job_aid_EN.pdf
- ✚ Department for Women and Gender Equality's [Integrating GBA+ into Instructional Design Job Aid](http://www.gcpeia.gc.ca/gcwiki/images/d/d9/SWC-CFC--171855-v17-POL_GBA_job_aid_for_integrating_GBA_into_instructional_design_EN.docx) (internal to Government of Canada): http://www.gcpeia.gc.ca/gcwiki/images/d/d9/SWC-CFC--171855-v17-POL_GBA_job_aid_for_integrating_GBA_into_instructional_design_EN.docx
- ✚ National Training Laboratories for Applied Behavioral Sciences

