**Inclusive Art Vermont**

**Art Access Summit**

**March 28, 2023**

**Considerations for Accessible Programming**

**KAT REDNISS:** For those of you that don't know, we were a team of six, right now we're a team of five, doing our ED search, so we're doing a lot of multi-roles today, and just so grateful for all of, you know, we say humans first, and we mean it both internally and externally. We expect that from ourselves and for you all just to show up as you can.

So, yeah, we are here for the final kind of structured session of the day, although this is relatively loose, as well, because a lot of this is being based on your input, and we're going to share, Jeff's going to share, some work specifically around trauma informed practices and some of his thinking around this topic. But we're going to get started. And you know all of us. It's me, Jeff, and Heidi. We've all been with you before. And, so, we're going to get started. Heidi, do you want to get us started off?

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** Yeah. Thanks everybody for being here, coming and going and joining. I'm hearing a few people pop back in. Jeff, thanks for being willing and interested in being in this part of the conversation, as well.

What we decided somewhere in our planning, thinking, imagining, dreaming, is the sessions up until now have been us presenting to you. We really want to hear from people what's in your mind and arts around considerations for accessibility. So, we reached out for questions in a number of ways, on registration, on social media. And today, if you have questions, if there's things percolating from some of the earlier presentations or conversations, this might be a chance to ask them or share some resources.

And as a framework, sort of, you know, the best practices, I'm putting my hands up for air quotes in terms of bests, because I think like so many things, there's tips and tricks and there's things that you want to learn and that's absolutely true, and there's checklists, and they are amazing, and our team has got a few resources that we'll share and we'll share all this after. But I think best of all there's a few approaches we want to name right now. One is learning about accessibility and inclusion is a lifelong process. And, you know, we've talked in places before and it came up today, you know, ableism, anti-ableism, there are anti-oppression, there's systems inside of us that we will spend the rest of our time here if we want to to unlearn. We say that because we want to just name that it's not pointing a finger, not you, me, or the other person, there's no judgment. It's really just about being in a space we can learn about accessibility and inclusion. And we'll get to this later with one of the questions and maybe kind of step aside from the rigidity of expecting perfection.

The second one is that context is really important. So, accessible considerations for classroom might be different than for a public one-time-only performance event. So, we're going to again be talking in broad terms. We have specific questions, but just know if you're thinking of that one situation where this wouldn't work, we get it. It's not a cookie cutter. Looking at my notes, bear with me. The last piece  this is large print, I don't always see it.

**KAT REDNISS:** The third one, third piece you had, there are elements of accessibility that take place before, during, and after the event. So, it's important to build those accessible practices in from the beginning, from conception. So, to be considering them when you're thinking about a program, when you're thinking about an event, when thinking about a curriculum, that it isn't an afterthought. What an afterthought means is that you're coming at that approach without centering a person with disabilities' experience, so you're figuring out, okay, I've designed this for a totally different group, now how can I add a couple things here or there. So, we're going to talk about things that are in all of those processes, the beginning, middle, and end of those processes. Yeah.

**HEIDI SWEVENS**: Thanks, Kat. My memory today is not as aligned. So, part of the accessibility for me was saying please help if I forget. So, thank you for that.

So, do you want to go ahead and get started with the other pieces, Kat? And Jeff, just for the audience, the community, we've kind of organized a timeline as best we can. So, Jeff, you have sort of this block of time that we've designated, but I want to invite you to jump in at any point you're like, oh, please... please jump in. The structure is to be something that we can plan for spontaneity and maybe regenerative process.

**JEFF KASPER:** Wonderful.

**MEGAN:** This is Megan. Jeff gave you a thumbs up.

**KAT REDNISS:** Great, thank you, Megan. All the questions that we're going to go from are all folks who are either on this call or who registered for this event.

So, we're going to start with the question how do you overcome imperfection and embracing the arts for folks who are rigid in their expectations of results?

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** This is an end of the day kind of  I love this, and I think the workshop  the reason I love this question is because there's some societal constructs that are just sort of prevalent in so many contexts. And recently Inclusive Arts Vermont has started to talk about sort of challenging some white supremacy culture characteristics, including perfectionism, sense of urgency, and all those things in the arts. And the workshop that Melissa and Alexandra just held on inclusive teaching practice was process focused. It's such a different point of view in art making and in our world. And one of the things we were considering as we were responding to this perfectionism thing, I think maybe I wanted to read, and I hope this isn't misreading, a little deeper into it. It's been my experience in talking with some folks in workshops where when you want to provide accommodations or just learning about accessibility and it feels really overwhelming because there's all of these things and words to use or not use or what to capitalize and not capitalize, there can be this inherent... and I think it comes from a place of care, at least in many cases it comes from a place of care where you don't want to make a mistake, don't want to do it wrong. That sense of there's this perfect kind of inclusion or kind of access. I want to name this. Show of hands, anybody here been afraid of making a mistake?

**KAT REDNISS:** Jeff and I are both, yes, multiple hands up.

**MEGAN:** This is Megan, there's hands all over the gallery view, too, up in the air.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** Anyone here ever not made a mistake? I'm not trying to be flip about this. I'm just trying to be real. You know, some of the workshops we do around communications and language, you know, we talk about the nuances, but then we're like and you're going to make a mistake. You know, I'm not going to say that some mistakes don't have harmful consequences, but also understanding this is lifelong and hearing somebody's experience and how it's impacting them will make changes that go on into the future. So, I guess we're all the group of we've made mistakes, so yeah for that community space. When it comes to the arts access piece and process, I would encourage the teaching methods piece, and really invite us all to think about accessibility as a creative process. Accessibility inclusion is a beautifully creative process that as artists and educators, humans, there's something that we can contribute to and there will always be more to learn and likely more to unlearn, but the relationship part of that is also really important. I'm aware of time. That's my monologue, I'm done.

**KAT REDNISS:** I want to offer something, and I know this isn't the direct question, but I know that this came up as we were with our artists panel, which is talking about grant writing and funding. Because I think results can come a lot when you're thinking about grant reporting. A lot of folks want results, and you have to kind of prove what you did. I think that rethinking how we think about our metrics of measurement is also a huge piece, because I think that we know that sometimes  almost all the time capitalism is the antithesis of accessibility and also time and efficiency can get in the way of accessibility. Also sometimes if you're being pushed to increase your numbers for something, that might not be the accessible practice, is to increase the amount of participants you have.

So, we use results based accountability, which allows us to say, yeah, here's how much we did, here's how well we did it, and also here's who's better off from what we did. So, it's data, but it's also anecdotes, storytelling, first-person accounts of what that meant to people in their world and in their lives and how that impact is going to move them forward in their creative journey, educational journey, belonging in a community. So, I think that is something I want to encourage people to think this is both in your own processes, but also we are beholden to systems. And I have to write grants for us. We don't exist without grants, but how can I employ some of these practices to shift those systems from within, and how can I change the way we're thinking about impact and telling the stories of impact. So, that's just something I want to share for that piece.

**ALEXANDRA TURNER:** Can I jump in here, too, this is Alexandra. You know, I think this comes up for my teaching artists, when we're in schools a lot of times teachers have this expectation of what the student should make and see it as a reflection of what they, the teachers, are doing. I want a pretty picture I can hang in the hallway so the principal thinks I'm doing a good job. That's almost a direct quote I've gotten from teachers. And we use that same kind of noticing, observation, and storytelling with the teachers. Yes, and also look what your students are doing. Look what they are creating. And look what they've, I don't know, whatever, we point out the stories to them, because it's doing the systems change bit by bit, day by day in the trenches in the schools.

**KAT REDNISS**: Great. Heidi, I wanted to go back to one piece. This is kind of when we say you're thinking about accessible programming and all of that, we talk about how there is if you're going to do one single thing, Heidi, what is it?

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** I laugh, because it's one thing. Jeff, I'm going to ask you either now or later if you have one thing.

**KAT REDNISS:** True.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** So, I encourage people advocate to include the question mark accessibility symbol with contact information, so if you're doing an event, public event, any event, who can somebody call, contact, email, if they have an accommodation request. And I think we have a [tip sheet](https://www.inclusiveartsvermont.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Question-Mark-Symbol-Tip-Sheet.pdf), at Inclusive Arts Vermont there's some practices around it. We suggest a name of a human if you can do that, you know, rather than some info or, you know, sort of just general email. And then two ways to communicate, which, again, is about not assuming that people communicate in the same way. Sometimes it's helpful to have a deadline, because in the before, during, and after planning, some accommodations take time to coordinate and plan for, different than being in the moment. And the access symbol is a question mark, I think there's a visual on the screen now. I'm going to say one more thing and let you describe it. In social media that it doesn't always translate really well, the graphics, some sort of technical thing. So a work around is to put in all-capital letters "accessibility" and a colon, so people with disabilities know where to look. For me that uses visual description and other things, seeing the question mark symbol and contact symbol is so rare that it stands out for me now, and I would love it to be a standard practice, we're thinking about accommodations. We're not going to offer this  we want to meet you halfway if you will, and if you need something, this is who to call. We want to take away that emotional labor that many people with disabilities have to think about before they show up for something, are my needs going to be met. So, yeah.

**KAT REDNISS:** Great. What I'm showing on the screen is basically the flyer for this event, which it's the flyer, mural on the top, and at the bottom left corner says for access needs contact Heidi, Heidi's email, or a phone number. It also has the access symbol, says we'll be doing verbal description, says we'll have open captioning, and ASL, and has the symbols for those. Sometimes if we don't know ahead of time what we're going to need, we won't put those, but we'll put the access symbol we are willing, able, and wanting to provide access for folks that are attending. So, great.

So that's our one thing. Jeff, if you're going to do one thing, do it?

**JEFF KASPER:** Yeah, yeah. What I would add to what you both said is, you know, also be up front about the limits that you have as an organization or as a venue or even as an individual hosting public-facing engagements or programs. You know, not as an excuse, but more so as like being transparent. A lot of times institutions will say  you can say, oh, we actually are not  we do not have an accessible bathroom, or we only have a gendered bathrooms, or, you know, we are unable to provide ASL in this event. Just to be transparent, because we're dealing with people. We need to be transparent. That's what I would say. Even when, yeah, things aren't necessarily as accessible as we would like them to be transparent about that, as well. And that, you know, practice of keeping ourselves accountable.

**KAT REDNISS:** Awesome, thank you, Jeff. Also while we're talking, feel free to put anything in the chat, questions coming up for you.

Okay, this is going to be funny, because we're going to totally change directions. So, this is if you have an event, especially a digital event, what's the recommended length for break times?

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** Yeah, I love this question, and I think it varies. We do five to ten minutes, depending on the total amount. I think the question from the registrant was 90 minutes. You know, so, for today we have ten minutes, half hour in between, wiggle that a little bit, but that's just for respect for all the participants here.

**KAT REDNISS:** Sorry, the person who asked this question is saying this would be for a 90minute to a two-hour session, specifically.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** Yeah, I think five to ten minutes is great, but I also think it's something that depending on the kind of group it is, you can ask people. So, you can plan for a break, and then, again, depending how interactive, you might guess from my asking you questions and moving my hands kind of style, I want to be interactive with people. But, you know, give a thumbs up, anybody need a break, how are we doing. If it's a performance or presentation, or something different, I would err on the side of ten minutes, just because how much time do you need, and maybe add a little bit on to that. Yeah, that's what I would suggest, but experiment with it.

Colleague and I were doing a workshop series and we send evaluations out after because we really value people's experience. The feedback, we need longer breaks, different breaks, we adjusted that and used that moving forward. Again, not that things are cookie cutter, except for cookies, but we were as responsive as we could be to the people in the room.

**KAT REDNISS:** Caroline, just seeing that, too, the other thing, too, and we had this on the registration for this. If on your registration we always encourage you, one, to have an access contact like we talked about, but also you can have an open field that says are there anything you'd like us to consider, any access needs you'd like us to consider, and you can almost prompt people. You know, elongated break times, give folks the option to advocate. And then, again, they are aware that you know that might be something that they need. What Caroline is saying, somebody with mobility needs that may need to transfer out of a chair into a wheelchair and then move to the bathroom and then transfer. Also encouraging things, it's okay to have your camera off, leave your volume on, mute yourself, put your camera off, feel free to listen, you know, if we're going to do a break and you're not back yet. I think encouraging human pieces of this about taking care of yourself and all of that. But if you know that information ahead of time, maybe you could extend the break a little bit and extend the session because you know that.

All right, we're going to move on, we're going rapid fire. We have a lot of questions. If we don't get to any of them, we'll make sure. This is specific about alt text, which is describing a visual. So, it is associated with a picture, so the screen reader can read it. So, this is what's the best way to write out numbers in alt text for screen readers as full words or actual numbers? How should we type out time stamps? I often have to include info verbatim in an alt text for a poster for an event time, something like a 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., what's the best way to do that?

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** Yeah, and this is Heidi again. I'm noticing I'm going fast, mindful of time, I'm going to try to slow my voice down, catching myself on that one. I think this will be the last thing we respond to before we turn it over to Jeff. Is that the timing we have, Kat?

**KAT REDNISS:** We can maybe do the second one, just because it's attached to this, then move to Jeff and some of the additional questions we have, yeah.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** So, I really appreciate this question, because what I'm hearing behind the detail or sensing behind it is the real desire to have the access feature that you're working with be something that's usable on the other end. And that for me is just really, really important to name and note. And I also wonder and sense, we were talking about social media and how the question mark symbol doesn't always translate well into certain formats. There's something that happens with hash tags for screen readers, it's called camelcase. If you don't capitalize the first letter of every word, there's no spaces in a hash tag. So, screen readers, essentially what screen readers do is reads things on text with a speech software for someone with blindness, low vision, or learning disabilities can access the information through sound. But the screen readers try to interpret what they are seeing, and spaces generally indicate different words. That doesn't happen in hash tags, so that long word is gobbledygook, like Dr. Seuss, if I can use that. It's hard to understand, hard to recreate and spell without a cut and paste. The practice is if you capitalize the first letter of the word in a hash tag, screen readers have been programmed to discern that capitalization as a word starter. That might be a lot of gobbledygook and more than you're asking, but what I'm saying is the short answer for the alt text is screen readers and alt text read numbers just fine. Time stamps will be read aloud. It's a little different in social media with the camel case with hash tags. And the other really important thing to say is assistive technology is always changing. It feels to me, this is not a professional opinion, this is my experience, it's always catching up. Something around the assistive tech software that reads the alt text has to adjust to things. Even if you do everything, do the numbers, something might happen with the assistive technology that might not be on you. But the assistive technology also has settings. If I'm somebody who wants to have it go really fast, I can turn it up. If I want to hear punctuation, if I'm editing something, I can turn on the punctuation, so people that are not screen reader users, there's variables, there's agency within the software to make some changes, so it can be more of a fit for the person using the software. So, circling back to your question. Reads numbers just fine, numbers spelled out as letters, so kind of go with that. Then there's that one sort of side note for the social media hash tags capitalizing the first letter of each word.

**KAT REDNISS:** Specifically asking about with like a colon, they'll understand the colon, if it says 8:30, it will read that.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** It will translate 8 o'clock. Unless the person set it for something different.

**KAT REDNISS:** Wonderful.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** One more thing, I want to circle back around what I think is... there's a lot of talking. Really what I'm hearing is that your intent and your hope is it's usable and accessible for people, and I think that starting place is a great, you know, even as you learn and unlearn, that's a really important starting place, so thank you for that detail.

**KAT REDNISS:** Caroline said that was helpful, so wonderful. We're going to pass it over to Jeff. Jeff is going to do a brief segment on just his specialty in working with inclusive and accessible programs. So, Jeff, take it away and then we'll come back and answer more of your questions. If anything comes up while we're doing this, feel free to put it in the chat.

**JEFF KASPER:** Folks, feel free to jump in. I'm going to share my screen. Jeff here. I am so excited to share. I have to say I'm so excited I have probably more to share than we probably have time for, but I will  the slides are available, I'll probably miss some things, but I want to share as much as I can in this time block, and we can get going. Let's go here.

I'm going to navigate the screen share here. Hold on one moment. I can get into the presenter mode. This would be the time that would be great if you have a theme song or something. Hi, everyone. Just a little bit of background about me. So, I'm an artist and educator, and I teach at UMass Amherst, as well. I'm a part of a bunch of research groups, including the Institute of Diversity Sciences and their health equity group. I'm the only artist in that group, for the record. The second group I'm part of at UMass is the Public Interest Technology group. I want to share a bit about my work, and I will give as best of an image description as I can. So, I work across media, some that is experiential or participatory learning, I create social spaces, as well as design learning objects and games and objects for play. On our screen here today is different images from my "Give and Take Care and Wrestling Embrace." Two individuals standing on a soft mat I designed with different activity prompts. Space is lowly lit, purple and blue. You can see they are playing a card game. And the card game, there's another image on the side of the screen that show a bit of the types of, you know, kinds of creative prompts that I offer in my social spaces and workshops. They all resolve around proximity and distance. So, just a quick bit says, you know, hold a distance of no more than four feet. Listen actively to your emotions, physical sensations, and always return to your intentions.

Above that image is a sort of close up of my wrestling mat, wrestling embrace, which has different circles, and there are different texts that say things like remember to feel, and navigate by touching. So, in addition to kind of embodied work, I also focus on visual arts. So, I move in between design practice and participatory practice, and this is... there's a collage on the screen here of many different snippets of my recent project designing safe spaces which was in Cleveland, the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art. I want to consciously slow down. We can see different images of individuals creating and designing their own supportive space in an isometric drawing, sort of perspective room drawing. I offer different creative prompts and materials for folks and families, strangers, to participate together, to design, engage, and reflect on how they create safety in their lives collectively, as well as sort of reflecting individually.

I just want to say that my work is grounded in trauma informed pedagogy. I'm a continuous learner of this topic. I come from a space of peer support. I'm not an art therapist and also not a counselor of any sort. Create projects about community building and education and demystify the silos that we often can't access, such as the field of psychology, which is often very opaque for many.

On the screen is a definition of trauma that I just want to, you know, briefly read, which is my definition, but there are many definitions, and these things will change. There are many arguments around how to define trauma, but as it relates to my work, trauma is described as an event or series of events that are stressful enough to leave a person feeling overwhelmed, helpless, and profoundly unsafe. How an even affects an individual depends on many factors, including the characteristics of the individual, the type of event, developmental processes, the meaning of the trauma, and, you know, social and cultural factors, as well. I'm going to pull up different aspects of my work, along a framework of trauma informed care. On the screen are more than six words, but six topics, that are adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration guidelines for trauma informed care. What I'm doing in my research and art practice is looking to sort of bake this into arts engagements. And also translate this trauma informed care for visual arts, because there are some aspects that don't align fully. So, on the screen we see the word safety, we see the phrase trust plus transparency. Peer support. Collaboration and mutuality. Identity affirmation. And empowerment.

I will talk briefly about how these different kind of bigger picture or frameworks or concepts can embed themselves into arts engagements. So, we're going to start with safety. So, we can do a lot in our arts facilitation and organizational practices to support. A lot of this we've been talking about today, which I'm so excited about, so I want to explicitly go over some points that might be helpful for folks.

You know, when we're thinking about centering support, we want to offer predictability, consistency, and ritual. We want to offer clear expectations and offer a clear structure or pathway to achieving expectations. We want to give participants or students or audiences control and opportunities for choice making. Offer low risk participation options or multiple entry points. Consider the pace, don't speak as quickly as I am right now, I know. And, you know, really consider the strength of allowing participants to process and engage in dialogue on their own terms. And we must be affirming participation in all of its parts.

There's so much that I want to share, but if I could share one thing about sort of engaging in a trauma-informed sort of session or, you know, working in a trauma-informed way is really to consider how we structure our engagements themselves and considering the beginning and end to an engagement. So, on the screen here is a diagram of, you know, how to go through an arts engagement session from beginning to end. And it describes what a window of tolerance is, which is a term used to describe the kind of zone of arousal when someone is actually the most able or effective to participate in a learning environment or in an art experience.

So, often the window of tolerance is the opportunity to really go into more of the maybe tougher topics and more of the expressive topics, but we really should be thinking about kind of bookmarking the window of tolerance, bookmarking our, you know, workshop or event, with low impact activities or topics. So, I like to think about, you know, gradually ascending, like hi, hey, how are you, let's, you know, how was your day? Like what is, you know, what's going on in the space? How are we feeling, you know, what are the things we want to share? Maybe free drawing activities. Sort of increasing emotional intensity. And then having a period of time where we may be getting into tougher topics. And then sort of gradually descending into emotional intensity. So, we want to begin with low impact topics and end with low impact topics.

So, this may be... say we have an hour for a workshop or an hour for an event, right, that window of tolerance may only be ten minutes, and that's okay, right. So, we need to be able to on ramp and off ramp big feelings. I don't know about anyone else, but, you know, sometimes we walk into a classroom, an art space, and not so great things have happened or recently happen, and we carry that with us to the space, which impacts our participation to the space. So, building in opportunities to acknowledge that and sort of have opportunities to move through that is really important.

So, I really recommend having multiple means for fidgeting and grounding in senses. In my  actually, in my college classroom, my students love that I always have fidget toys and pipe cleaners around.

**KAT REDNISS:** We love pipe cleaners, Jeff, we're obsessed.

**JEFF KASPER:** So, on the screen here is an image of a person holding a fidget spinner, which is a spinning toy. And on the other side of the image are brightly colored, soft pipe cleaners. So, these could be arts materials, but I'm really thinking about them as objects to ground in our senses and particularly when I'm in a class and we have critique, which could be a really, really troubling space, and that's a whole topic we could talk about, but I always have outlets for folks to be able to redirect energy. And that's super important.

You want to give alternative and concrete formats for participation. So, on the screen here are different prompts that I use in my creative work. On the lefthand side is a  I don't know, what do they use to call those, mad libs? And it says here's a script that will help you to get started. It says I feel... blank space, because... blank space... I want to know? So, especially if we were in sort of higher states or sort of almost in dysregulation, and we're in a learning environment, really concrete structures helps us be able to participate without having to make sort of meta-decisions. On the other end of the slide here are two playing towards from the designing safe space deck. It says these are two different options for basically the same request. So, for example, one part says imagine a place where you feel happy and relaxed. What does that space look and feel like. Another card has a similar request that says the same thing in a different way. Design a welcoming and relaxing space for someone else. Who is it for and what's that space look like? Why have these options? Well, we don't always have the capacity as participants or learners to engage with personal reflection. And often spaces of our art, you know, can also be ungrounding and we're not always ready to engage with things. So, sometimes thinking about how, you know, maybe moving into the speculative or thinking about, you know, occupying someone else's shoes is a more inclusive way to create from a prompt.

So, we talked about invitations. Interestingly, earlier, low impact creative invitations. The cards were an example of this. You want to offer different but equally authentic roles in the activity. You may want to also offer set of expectations and tangible tool to complete the activity. Big concepts around what would it be like if may be too big. Bring it down to concrete, how would you design this room? If you had these materials, how would you use them?

Places to opt out and hide. This is an example of my calm cube in one of my exhibitions, which is a big cube, there's an image of a person that's blurred moving into sort of a cube that is covered with kind of soft fabrics and pillows. Have a place in your spaces of learning or your arts engagements where people can be away or even hide, because participation looks different for different people, and sometimes we can be in public, but we don't want to be in the public eye.

Prioritize consent. I bake this into my work. When you are working in embodied practices where you are engaging with another individual, things like eye contact or physical touching, offer options for engagement that don't center those approaches. These things can be very difficult for many people, myself included. And you want to make sure that you're also prioritizing an individual's agency in how they participate in a situation, especially if you're working on collaborative or, you know, engagements that involve people working with each other, maybe who don't even know each other. Let me know if I'm going wildly over time.

**KAT REDNISS:** I'd say if you want to do  we're kind of at that end-ish, if you want to do a couple more, then go, and Heidi and I will hop into other questions, so great. Just for our interpreters, we have you both on, so feel free to switch whenever you're ready.

**JEFF KASPER:** So, we just got only through like one concept, which is safety, right. We also have trust and transparency. You want to offer content warnings. I won't go into the full, you know, description here, but I'll move into an example. You know, you want to give folks a sense of what they are going into and what kind of content you might be engaging with. I don't explicitly engage, even though my work involves working with other trauma survivors, we don't always go into the nitty-gritties of personal abuse or trauma, but if you are or you're showing artwork that is, to really be transparent about that. And offer resources for folks that might want to, who need to, help themselves in other ways. There's so much more to add. I should probably just end it there and we can look at the other slides on your own. Jeff’s presentation: <https://www.inclusiveartsvermont.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Arts-Access-Summit-Considerations-for-Accessible-Programs.pdf>

**KAT REDNISS:** Jeff, there is interest definitely in the chat that people would love to have access to that full slide. So, we'll make sure all of those go through. You're absolutely brilliant and hearing from you is amazing. Everybody is like, yes, yes, please, more from Jeff. Jeff, we're going to bring you on next time to do an entire day of learning with us, which is amazing.

Yeah, we will pause for a moment, but know that you will all get those resources from Jeff, those expansive resources.

**JEFF KASPER:** Told you I get excited.

**KAT REDNISS:** I know, we're excited, too. What, we have to talk? Yeah, because you're brilliant and all of those things. Jeff, you're here, feel free to participate in any of the other pieces we're going. A lot of these are what you're talking about, absolutely. And we do have some specific questions. So, I just want to go in and just share some more of the questions. The other thing I want to say, too, we'll take a quick break, but the session after this is an informal networking session, so some of these questions, if we don't get to them, we can explore during the session, so feel free to come to that. That's time to introduce yourself, but also talk about some of these things.

Okay, great. So, I think just because I think this carries over a lot from what Jeff was speaking about, I want to bring up just somebody talking about sensory sensitivity in arts participation. And I know, Jeff, you were already talking about their choice points, fidgets, things for grounding, you know, kind of a quiet spaces, break spaces, hiding spaces, I think those are all really resonant specifically with those with sensory sensitivities. Any other thoughts on that for anybody, you know, who's here, as ways to... I know one of the things we do, Alexandra and Melissa, this is one of the pieces they talked about, adaptive materials or art making supplies. If you're doing finger painting but somebody really doesn't like wet, you know, wetness on their hands or anything like that, offering different tools for them to utilize. Also some of those tools, sensory sensitivities, we have folks who are sensory avoiders, but some are sensory seekers. We did a program where we had a communal mural being made, all these things like toilet brushes, loofas, different types of devices. Some folks came and loved the sound the loofa made when it was against the canvas. Those techniques and tools can both make somebody safer and more comfortable creating art, but also can bring them into the art in a different way and open up access pathways for them. I think, again, like what Jeff said and like what Heidi said, there is the beginning piece I think especially for folks with sensory sensitivities, that opening piece, so, again, providing as much material ahead of time, so that you can create a sense of expectation, things like social stories, social narratives. You know, doing that with images, doing that with videos, offering, you know, I've even done when I've been in different programs doing sensory friendly programming, we've done informal visits ahead of an event so that somebody could come and check out the space when it's at lower stakes so they feel comfortable in that space. I think what Jeff said, too, also is, you know, providing agendas as much as possible, staying to the routines so that there is that sense of ritual and expectation. And that's met. And also being really transparent about when that's not going to be met.

I think this goes  somebody else brought up scent. I know this is a totally separate thing, but also really thinking about what stimuli you're bringing into the space, is there noise distraction, how can you either if you can't control it completely, how can you allow people to know about it ahead of time. Sometimes you can't control everything, but sometimes you can be transparent. We're going to be in a city, you know, on the first floor of a city building. There's going to be traffic noise as we're making art together. So, things like that. Any other thoughts on sensory sensitivity in the arts?

**WHITNEY:** I had something to add.

**KAT REDNISS:** Go for it.

**WHITNEY:** This is Whitney speaking. I was the person who put in a note about scent in spaces.

**KAT REDNISS:** Great, yeah.

**WHITNEY:** Just to piggyback off what you were saying. I'm thinking about how to navigate spaces in which you have people gathered, right, and the accessibility in that place depends on who's there that day, right. It's a living thing. How to navigate that when you have folks who get reactions, sensory reactions, difficulty breathing, that kind of thing, with scents. But the scents are often brought in by other participants in the space. So, it involves this cooperation of sorts sometimes or maybe the person who is fragrant sensitive just avoids the space all together. Just thinking about how to navigate spaces like that.

**ALEXANDRA TURNER:** Can I speak to this one? This is Alexandra. I have multiple chemical sensitivities and fragrance allergies, being that I deal with all the time in the pandemic was awesome, because I never had to go anywhere and get allergic reactions to everyone else's fragrances. Something we do is put out messages ahead of time that we're inviting people and asking people to avoid the kinds of fragrances that they can avoid. Understanding... I understand I can't change everybody, can't make everybody switch laundry detergents and hair products and lotions, but I can ask them not to apply additional fragrances. So we put that out ahead of time. Put that at the door. But, yeah, the other option is what you said, exclusion, which isn't awesome, you know, the other option is I don't get to go. That doesn't feel great to me. Thinking about how we can do that with that kind of know before you go stuff and Kat you want to say something. I have something else to say, but I'll come back to it.

**KAT REDNISS:** Somebody is talking about ventilation. I used to work in theater, as well. And again, like I said before, often capitalism and efficiency and profit are the enemy of accessibility. Because what I would suggest is as much as you can, if you're in a theater, build in buffer seats, build in areas where there are space between people. This is also really, really helpful for sensory friendly performances where you might have folks who need to get up and move around, might have folks where proximity is a sensory issue, so building in buffer seats. However, that's really hard and I think we aren't necessarily there yet as a culture and society, because empty seats means less profit. So, I think that it's a challenging thing, but if you're making accessibility your priority, if you can, think about maybe often we say, okay, we're doing a small workshop for ten people, so let's put us in a smaller space. Maybe you're looking at a larger studio, looking at larger spaces that allow, and this also comes out of the pandemic for folks who still need to maintain six foot distance and who are still masking, providing a larger space with the ability to have some distance between people and also if scent comes up or something like that, giving folks that distance, as well, can be really helpful.

I'm noticing we're already at the end of the session, because there's so many things. We have some stuff about filters in there. Also we have carbon filter masks, work for chemical sensitivities. Just a thank you to that. I'm going to go wild, because I think this is something I really care about. Somebody asked about representation of disabled people in media. And I'm sure we all have something to say about this, but I want to just... while it is evolving, of course, there's much more positive representation of ability in the media. I do our social media, we talk about what we put forward. One of the things I always want to encourage you to do when you're thinking of how you are sharing media or what media that you are putting forward to the world is thinking about who's the center of those stories and who's telling those stories, who's being put up as the protagonist or the inspiration in those stories. Because so often folks with disabilities are being use the as props for inspiration, props for, you know, feel good types of things or pity stories. And as much as we can avoid that, again, we don't want to perpetuate that idea of bias or stereotyping. So, we really look for this piece is written by a disabled artist, you know, they are speaking their own truth, we're going to use their language, because their language is coming from their own lived experience. And so as opposed to, you know, think about what a different story it would be if you saw the media that said, you know, high school quarterback invites girl with Down syndrome to the prom. Imagine if the story was, hey, I went to prom, let me tell you about it. That is a much different story and that's a much different experience.

Great. Oh, social media workshop coming up in there. I just want to respect our time. I'm going to give us a pause, because we have the networking moment starting at 5:00. And so we're going to carry this over into networking. So anybody who can stay past 5:00, come in, we're going to explore some more of these questions, explore your questions, get a chance to meet and greet. So, I'm going to pause us for a moment, thank Heidi and Jeff for being here, and hopefully if they want they'll carry over and be with me in the next session. But folks, come to the next session, that's a time you can introduce yourself. We'll chat more about these. And all of the questions that we didn't answer today we will answer in emails and all of that. I just want to thank if you're not coming with us for the rest of the day, thank you so much for being here, and, you know, we didn't even get to gallery considerations. There's so many things. But we're so appreciative of your time here. You'll be hearing from us, and we're going to take, you know, five, six-minute break and be back. It is the same link. Just stay on and we'll be here.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** I'm going to suggest a ten-minute break for captioners and ASL. I feel your enthusiasm and your passion, and I relate to that, I think for this point we'll come back and continue and have organic piece, but I would like to have ten minutes for all that. And I think we need to have another summit, you know.

**KAT REDNISS:** Yes.

**HEIDI SWEVENS:** So much to carry on, it feels really vibrant and engaging and it's, you know, near the end of the day and still this animated. So, feels really good, yeah.

**KAT REDNISS:** Excellent, great. We will see you in ten minutes. 5:05, back in this space.