


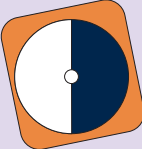

# Ways to Make Complex Information Simple

- Adaptations help every individual live their life in as normal a manner as possible by changing their environment to fit them, rather than changing them to fit the environment.

*Tina Ewing-Wilson*  
DDS-CAC Member

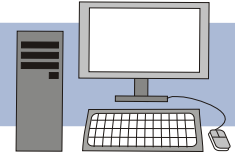
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**Working on a Project**

-  **Computer**
-  **Software**
-  **Stickers**

**Examples  
Instructions  
Resources**

## MAKING INFORMATION SIMPLE

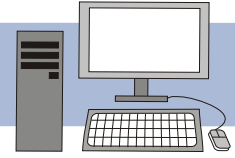


### MAKING ADAPTATIONS

#### Tools and Strategies

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# GENERAL ACCOMMODATIONS



## Good Solutions to Support People to be Included in Meetings.

### For reading:



- Provide pictures, symbols, or diagrams instead of words
- Use voice output on computer
- Use “line guide” to identify or hi-light one line of text at a time

### For writing:



- Provide templates that prompt information requested
- Allow verbal response instead of written response only
- Use voice input on computers
- Use spell-check on computers
- Provide ample space on forms requiring written response

### For remembering:



- Provide checklists
- Use instructions with picture guides on frequently-used materials
- Minimize clutter
- Color-code items or resources
- Organize large tasks into multiple smaller tasks

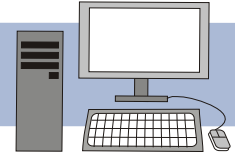
### For organizing:



- Label items or resources
- Use symbols instead of words
- Use printed labels instead of hand-written labels
- Provide written or symbolic reminders
- Use alarm watch or beeper
- Arrange materials in order of use
- Use task list with numbers or symbols
- Provide additional training as needed

Excerpted  
By Suzanne R. Gosden, MA,  
Job Accommodation Network

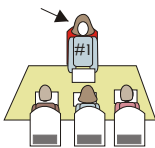
## TYPICAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR BOARD MEETINGS



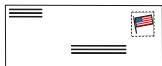
Create guiding questions for members to ask at meetings



Provide summaries of materials with plain words and pictures



Make the meeting environment-friendly (*seating arrangements, introductions of all people attending, time for discussion and comment*)



Send board packets 7-10 days before meeting

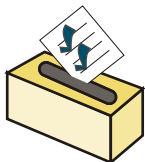
Organize the board packet so action items are easy to locate



Make board packets available in different ways by request (*audio tapes, computer disk using words with pictures, native languages*)

Use language that everyone understands during the meeting

Use plain language in all written materials



Provide instructions for voting on action items



Provide language translation during meeting

Provide support staff, also called “facilitators”



Use larger font size

## PREPARING DOCUMENTS



### Good Reminders

- Use few words on a page or handout. Don't be tempted to fill the page.
- Use good color contrast.
- Use plain typeface.
- Use lower case letters rather than all capitals.
- Use good spacing between sentences.
- Provide good color and tone contrast between text and background.
- Provide reasonable size. (No less than 14 point type)
- Use a clear font not *italics*.
- Use quality non-glossy paper that doesn't show printed text or graphics on the reverse side of the document.
- Do not print over a patterned background (eg. photos, logos or pictures).

### Large Print

Use a larger font, **14 point or bigger** that can be found on most word processors. Whenever possible, use a laser printer for greater resolution. Using large print will mean some documents will require more pages for print. A large print version will consist of about **three pages of large print** for every page of 12 point print. Many large print readers recommend printing text in **18-point type**. Although 14-point type is acceptable in regulations, such as the U.S. Postal Service.

Left-justify text so spacing between letters is consistent and easy to track. Use block style paragraphs whenever possible. If a paragraph must be indented, use two spaces.

One inch left and right margins are ideal.

Eliminate hyphenated words.

Do not center text.

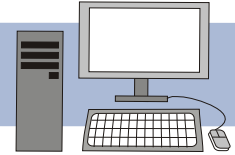
Set line spacing at 1.5 inches, do not double-space.

Graphs, diagrams, and pictures should be enlarged.

Column formatting should be removed.

**12 point**  
**14 point**  
**16 point**  
**18 point**

## WHAT IS PLAIN LANGUAGE



Plain language is communication to meet the needs of the intended audience, so people can understand information that is important to their lives. Plain language is understandable. What is clear, or what is plain to your intended audience, can only be decided by the audience. Most people expect a definition of plain language that describes writing of a certain style. **Plain language is more of a process** - it has been described as a means to an end.

*Richard Coe, a Simon Fraser University English professor, states:* Language that is "plain" to one set of readers may be incomprehensible for others. "Plain language" is a variable, not an absolute.

Plain language document process involves working out a plan for a writing project, preparing a draft under the plan, and verifying the effectiveness of your draft through evaluation methods using the intended audience.

An important feature of plain language is testing the writing to determine whether it conveys to the targeted reader the writer's intentions. This definition of plain language is "reader-based" and not "text-based".

### Planning Guidelines

- Analyze the task
- Identify the audience
- Clarify purpose
- Determine the parameters or constraints

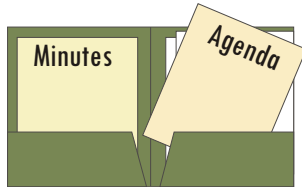
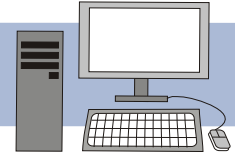
### Ask Yourself

- In what situation or environment will the document be used?
- Who will be the readers or users of the document?
- What is the reader to do after reading the document?

### Ask the following Questions

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

# WRITING WITH PLAIN LANGUAGE



## Planning

1. Determine purpose and identify the audience.
2. Gather information.
3. Organize information.
4. Visualize what the final product will look like.

## Writing

1. Create a draft.
2. Revise content.
3. Check for accuracy.
4. Edit for clarity and style.
5. Design lay-out and add graphics.

### Tips for Writing and Organizing Information:

1. Write with personal pronouns: you, we, I.
2. Be direct - cut information that is not essential to the purpose.
3. Prioritize information and put the most information at the beginning.
4. Use graphics and pictures to reinforce important facts and points.
5. Use a summary introductory paragraph.

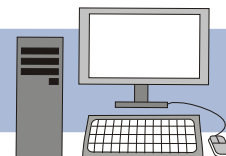
### Rewriting or Editing the Writing of Others

1. Keep subject and verb together at the beginning of the sentence.
2. Explain only one idea in each sentence - keep sentences short.
3. Use verbs instead of nouns for your action.
4. Use active voice: identify person and the action.
5. Use positive words and sentences.
6. Avoid negatives.
7. Simplify words; choose everyday language.
8. Cut jargon and avoid acronyms.

### Evaluate Your Own Work - Ask These Questions

1. Will people really use this document?
2. Is it attractive? Is it legible? Is it interesting?
3. Is the information accessible and well organized?
4. Is it clear? Is it concrete? Is it personal?

## USING PLAIN LANGUAGE



### **Use concrete, not abstract, language.**

For instance, saying that walking on thin ice on the river is dangerous - may not mean much to someone. Telling them that walking on thin ice may cause them to fall through and drown gives a clearer picture of the danger.

### **Use the active voice.**

It identifies the person taking the action. For instance, say “*the Liberals won the election*”, not “*the election was won by the Liberals*”.

### **Address your readers directly.**

For instance, use *you* and *I* or *we*, rather than *one* or *he/she*.

### **Don't change verbs into nouns.**

Using verbs keeps your sentences shorter. Try, “*you will hire and train employees*”, instead of “*you will work on the hiring and training of employees*”.

### **Avoid officialese/bureaucratese.**

This is a fatal combination of passive voice, needlessly long words, strings of nouns and euphemisms. Here is an example: “*Strict enforcement of the speed limit by the police will cause a reduction in traffic fatalities*”. Instead, you could say: “*Police will fine drivers who speed. That will cut down deaths on the roads*”.

### **Use correct terminology.**

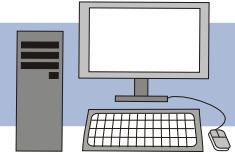
If you need to use a specific term, include a definition right beside the word. It doesn't help to stick the definition in a glossary at the end of the document. Few people think to look there. For example, *Counselor* (*that means someone who is trained to listen well and to help you work out your problems*).

### **Use gender-neutral language.**

You can avoid repetitious use of *he* or *she* or the hard-to-read *s/he* by using plurals in most places. Even if you have used *someone*, it is considered acceptable to follow it with *they*, as in this sentence: *If someone has a seizure, make sure they have space so they will not get hurt if they fall down.*

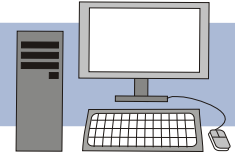


## PLAIN WORD EXAMPLES



Accompany	- go with
advise	- tell
assist	- help
choose/decide	- pick
colleague	- co-worker
confidential	- we will not tell anyone
consent	- agree
consult	- ask
demonstrate	- show
discuss	- talk about
economical	- cheap
eliminate	- cut out
expend	- pay out; use up
facilitate	- help; make easier
failed to	- did not
finances	- money; funds
in view of the fact	- because
interview	- talk to
it is necessary	- you need
legislation	- laws
limited number	- few
option	- something you can pick
perform an assessment	- test
permit	- let
Policy/regulation	- rule
prior to	- before
provide	- give
purchase	- buy
referral	- we can tell you where...
refuse	- say no
remuneration	- pay; wages
require	- need
residence	- home; where you live

## LAYING OUT YOUR WORK SO IT LOOKS GOOD



Page 1

Before we start to read something, we are either drawn to, or repelled by, the way it looks. Think of how quickly we turn away from an advertisement with many different fonts, or text that doesn't stand out from the background. We are discouraged by a paragraph of instructions that could have looked clearer as a list, with bullets.

When a document is easy to look at, it usually means it is easier to read. The steps listed below are as important as choosing plain words when creating materials for slower readers.

**Keep sentences short.** On average, they should be about 20 words. For slower readers, reduce to about 15 words and no more than two clauses.

**Use bullets or numbers for lists.** Use for a series of actions in a sequence. Special note: if you are using numbers to indicate a list is ordered from most to least important, use bullets.

**Keep paragraphs short.** Limit ideas to one per paragraph. It's OK to have a one-sentence paragraph! Use titles and headings. Titles should be short.

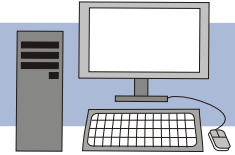
**Headings and subheadings.** Headings break up text and allow readers to pick out what is important. A question heading followed by an answer paragraph often works well. *Example, What is Diabetes?*

**Don't hyph-enate words.** A word split over two lines is much harder to read. You will be helping slower readers when words are complete since slower readers tend to pause at the end of each line.

**"Empty" space.** Use plenty of white space around text. Do not reduce space between lines even if you are looking for ways to save space. An absence of text is not emptiness, but contrast to make the text stand out. If the document becomes long, cut words, or see if you should be making two documents instead.

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## LAYING OUT YOUR WORK SO IT LOOKS GOOD



Page 2

**Fonts.** There are two basic types of font, serif and sans serif. Serif fonts have little tails on the letters, **like this**. People create documents for the average reader using a serif font because it is supposed to lead the eye across the page. A plain sans serif font without little tails are easier for slower readers. If you look at school text books, you'll often see a sans serif font. Arial is a typical type and is excellent for people with visual impairments. Another commonly used font is Twentieth Century or Zapf Humanist. Experiment with fonts to see which one seems easiest for your intended reader.

**Left justify.** With full justification, spaces between letters and words are stretched or squeezed, which makes reading harder.

**Upper and lower case.** Use upper case letters judiciously, they are OK for short headings. Lower case letters vary in their position on the line with some rising above the line and others hang down below the line. This makes them easier to identify.

**Tables of contents.** In longer documents, number pages and put in a table of contents. Make it as easy as possible for readers to find their way around.

**Documents for different audiences.** Consider having different versions or make an easy-to-read executive summary.

**Contrast between print and paper.** Standard black print on white paper is fine, especially if you make photocopies. Any dark print on light colored paper is OK. Yellow or pastel colors on white or pale paper is hard to see. Avoid blocks of pale print on a dark background. It is tiring to the eyes.

**Spell and grammar check.** Computer spell checks cannot distinguish between “there and their”, or any of the various alternatives for “to”. The grammar check can be useful for basic information only. It can count how many times you have used the passive voice. Try to find a volunteer to read your work before you consider it completed.

**Add pictures.** Insert pictures that are clear, easily understood and applicable to the text. They lighten up a document and give readers a clue to the written content.

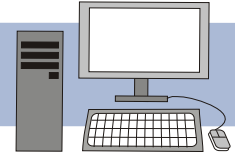
Adapted from: Rehabilitation Review, monthly publication

VRRRI Research Department

[www.vrri.org](http://www.vrri.org)

Page 9

# MAKING TEXT LEGIBLE



## Impaired vision often makes reading difficult by:

Reducing the amount of light that enters the eye therefore blurring an image. Blurring reduces contrast of the text and retinal damage impairs the ability to see small print and to make eye movements that are crucial to reading.

## Suggestions to make your documents legible

HIGH CONTRAST



LOW CONTRAST



### 1. COLOR

**Contrast** is the difference between the lightest and the darkest color.

**Value or tone** is the lightness or darkness of a color.

**Tint** is adding white to a color.

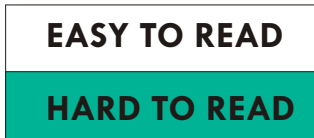
**Shade** is adding black to a color.

ABC ABC



**Text** should be printed with the highest possible contrast. Many readers who are older or partially sighted, light (white or light yellow) letters on a dark (black) background are more readable than dark letters on a light background.

EASY TO READ



HARD TO READ

This text is 14 point Twentieth Century with normal leading.

This is the same type size and font with 30% extra leading.

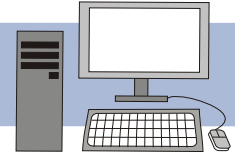
### 2. Font Color:

Printed material is most readable with black ink on white paper. Different colors are important for design reasons, but limit use for larger or highlighted words only.

### 3. Leading:

Leading, the spacing between lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30 percent of the letter height. Because many people have difficulty finding the beginning of the next line while reading.

## MAKING TEXT LEGIBLE



Roman or serifed typefaces are effective.

San-serif typefaces are effective.

### 4. Font:

Avoid complicated, decorative or cursive fonts. These fonts should be used for emphasis only. Sans-serif fonts are more legible when type size is small.

This letter spacing is effective.

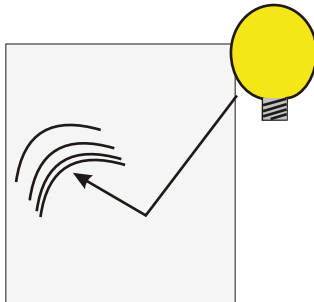
This letter spacing is effective.

This letterspacing is not as effective.

This letterspacing is not as effective.

### 5. Letter Spacing:

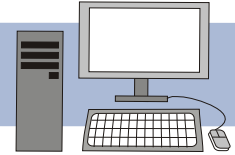
Words with close letter spacing present difficulties for readers with limited vision. Where possible, spacing should be wide. Monospaced fonts rather than proportionally spaced fonts seem to be more legible.



### 6. Paper Finish:

Paper with a glossy finish lessens legibility. Light bounces off glossy paper and creates a glare that makes reading text harder to see.

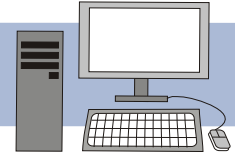
## EVENT ACCOMMODATIONS



### Planing Events That Everybody Can Attend

- Arrange meetings and events at accessible locations where people can participate without assistance, or with minimal help.
- Conduct an on-site visit to evaluate the facility's restaurant, bedrooms, bathrooms, meeting rooms, signs (both Braille and tactile), as well as parking options.
- Check all facilities even though they comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to eliminate last minute surprises.
- Offer materials and presentations in alternate formats, such as Braille, tapes, computer disk, closed caption, and large print. If requested, provide sign language interpreters. Inquire about preferred format in your registration material.
- Make modifications to the physical environment, such as placement of furniture and seating and hearing needs.
- The facility should ensure that doors are a 32” minimum width to allow a wheelchair to pass. If not, the facility can widen doors or install offset (swing-clear) hinges.
- There should also be 18” of clear wall space on the pull side of a door, next to the handle. If not, the facility can relocate furniture or remove obstructions.
- Check seating options so people with disabilities are not limited to the back or front of the room.

## MEETING ROOM MODIFICATION



Page 1

Typical meeting room layout situations can be difficult. People with disabilities may require adaptations to typical seating arrangements and lighting. People with visual impairments will require more light to read or look at material during a PowerPoint presentation.

### **Some challenges for people with disabilities can include:**

- Meeting in dimly lit rooms
- Short or no breaks
- Extended time sitting at a table
- One person talking for a long time without discussion
- People presenting without pictorial visuals
- Full day meetings
- Large rooms with speakers at the front without microphones
- Learning sessions after lunch
- Seating that is far from each other

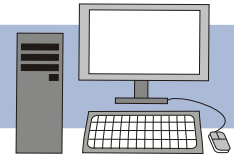
We recently learned about many of these challenges at our committee meeting. We never talk about it and when we brought up some of the problems, we learned many of us were having difficulties in the meeting and had good ideas to make improvements. Until this point we didn't speak up because we were trying to adapt to each other without talking about it.

For years we have been meeting in darkened rooms without microphones because of one of our member's specific needs. At our next meeting we are going to propose changes that can accommodate her needs and other committee members too. The next page will show how the room was and what we will propose.

Kim Rucker Gunches and Tina Ewing-Wilson  
DDS CAC Members, 2005

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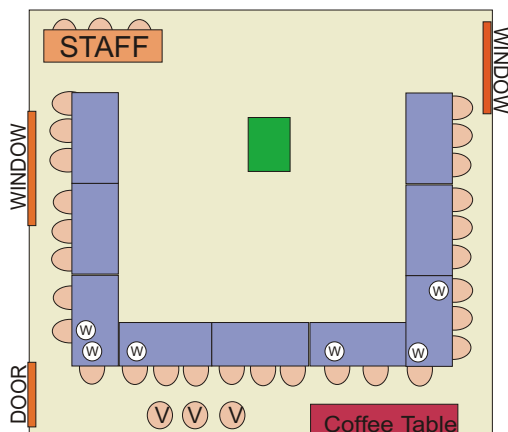
# MEETING ROOM MODIFICATION



Page 2

## Situation:

The Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) meets quarterly in a hotel conference room. At each meeting there are 15 CAC members, their facilitators, 3 staff and 2 meeting trainer/ facilitators.

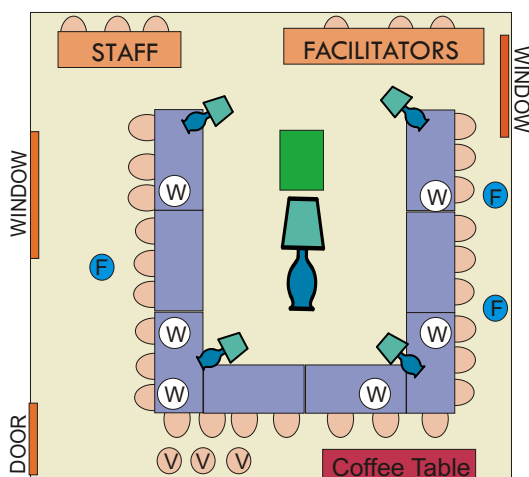


Ⓥ Visitor Ⓜ Wheelchair

All speakers and PowerPoint presentations are given from the front of the long room, without the use of microphones. Some members also need the presentation material available on paper in front of them so that they can see it.

## Current set-up:

There are 9 tables that can seat 3 people per table, 1 staff table and 1 coffee table. People who use wheelchairs sit by the exterior door for easy access. Additionally, members who need better lighting sit by the exit. There is little room to move wheelchairs around the room or at the room exit due to expansive spacing of the tables. Fluorescent tube lighting is turned off to accommodate one member.



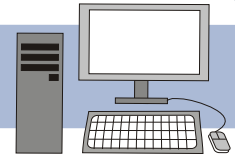
Ⓥ Visitor Ⓜ Wheelchair Ⓧ Facilitators

## Proposed Set-Up:

Remove one table from the back of the room and have the CAC Officers and their facilitators sit there. Move the exterior long tables closer so there is room for wheelchairs to move safely. Ask non-members to sit at tables away from the committee to reduce the amount of seating required at the long table. Provide table lamps, and individual reading lights by request, to provide more light in the room.



## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Assistive technology can be a computer or a low tech adapted spoon handle, non-tipping drinking cups, and Velcro fasteners. It's often best to start with No Tech solutions that make use of procedures, services, and existing conditions in the environment that do not involve the use of devices or equipment.

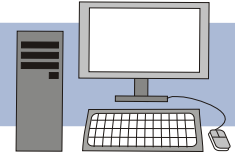
People with disabilities often experience difficulties coping with the demands that are placed upon them from the environment. For example people with severe visual impairments may encounter problems in traveling from place to place. Those with hearing loss may have difficulty understanding information presented on television. Adults with severe learning disabilities may not be able to read printed materials required for them to perform their jobs. It is possible to use a variety of devices and services to respond to needs such as the ones just described. Some devices help people with disabilities perform a given task.

Assistive technology means any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities.

There is a tendency to start at the upper end of the technology continuum when it's better to start at a lower point. For example, when making decisions about a person whose handwriting is difficult to recognize, it's not uncommon to hear about recommendations that a laptop computer should be provided at a cost of \$1,000 - \$4,500. In reality, an electronic keyboard with memory that can be downloaded into a desktop computer may be more appropriate (cost: less than \$250). The person in this example could eventually require a laptop computer and the electronic keyboard may be a better place to start.

The terms, **assistive device** and **adaptive device**, are frequently used as a single phrase when discussing the general topic. Many people use them interchangeably. The evolving trend is to use the term, **assistive technology**, to encompass both types of devices, plus services associated with their use.

## DIGITAL VIDEO



### Adaptation using a Digital Video

A critical factor in any learning situation is attention. It is easy to blame the learner for a lack of attention, but in reality it is the instructional material that must sustain attention.

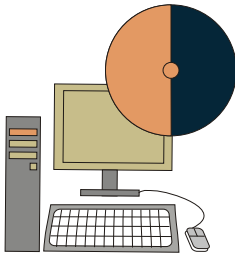
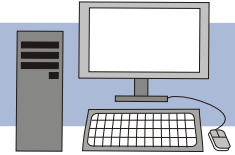
Computers help create accessible environments for people with disabilities, as does Digital Video (DV). Digital Video allows the audience to interact with the video beyond VCR controls (play, stop, pause, forward and rewind).

Digital Video allows people to jump to and play any frame in a video that has been linked with a “button”. The user can control the direction and outcome of the video content. Digital video is relatively inexpensive to produce and typically is more expensive than creating hard copies. It provides a level of realism that only being in an actual experience can beat.

It is easy to adapt Digital Video to the needs of its audience. Closed-captions, voice-overs, sound, and graphic enhancements can be used to increase access to the content by activating senses the brain uses to process information.

Digital video can easily be adapted for the Internet. Video produced for DVD can then be created in a format appropriate for use on the Web. Video clips can also be taken from the DVD and integrated into a website.

## USING CD-ROM AND DVD



Determine what you want to include on your CD or DVD, keeping in mind that it's more flexible and can accommodate different formats (pictures, video, documents) than a diskette.

If the CD or DVD is going to be shared and used by people with diverse abilities it must be produced in an accessible format that allows the user to operate it.

Provide symbols, icons, graphics, tables, pictorials with alternate text options;

- convert columns to continuous text;
- indicate new paragraphs with the use of one tab;
- eliminate extra blank lines in your text; and
- eliminate the use of stylistic designs such as bold type, underlining, and special symbols.

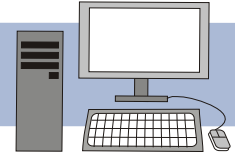
Graphics that are included on your CD or DVD should have descriptive text (and/or audio) portions to relay information conveyed through the graphic or picture.

You may need scripts for audio and video pieces, captions, or other adaptations to make information accessible to a wider audience.

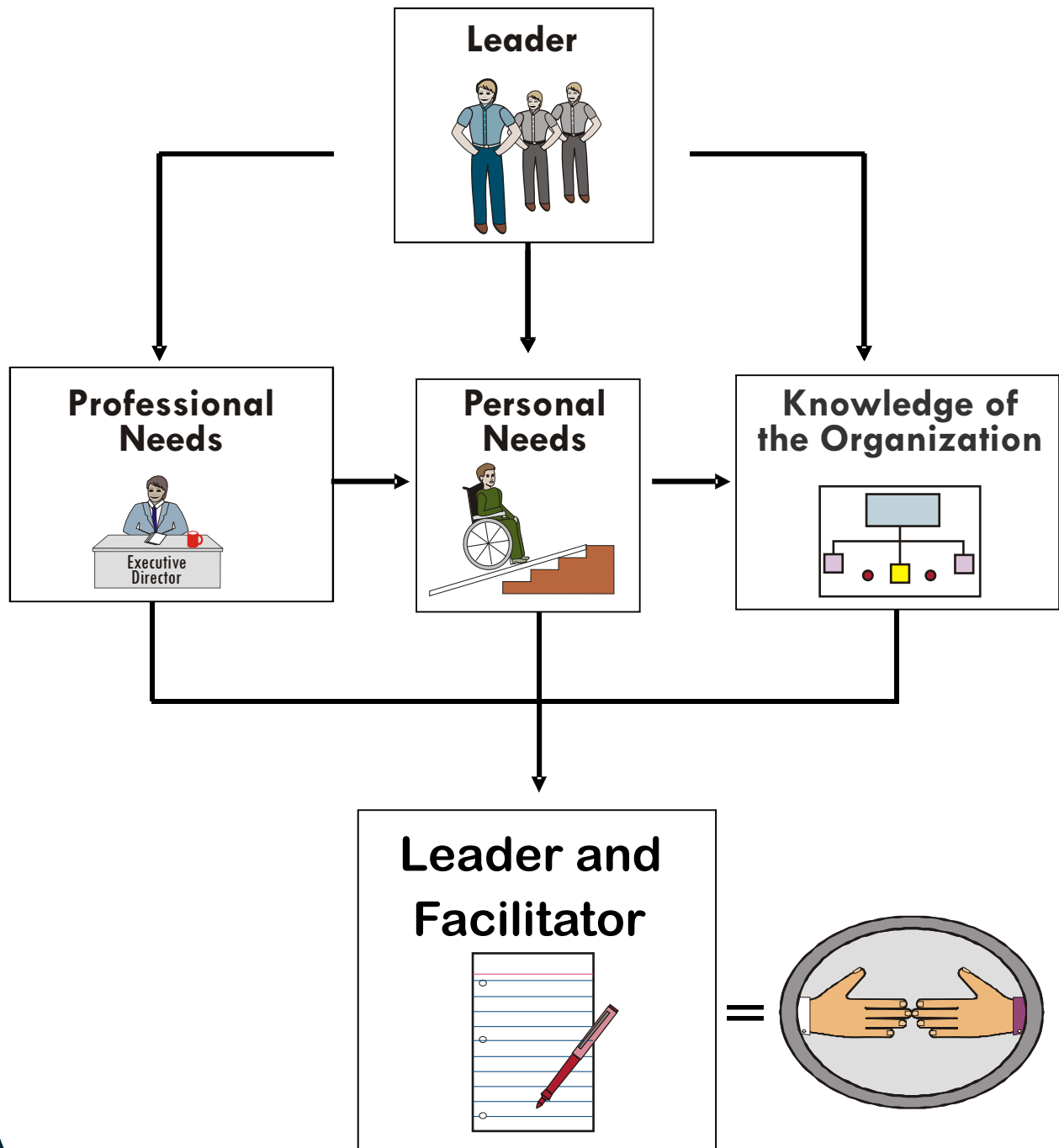
**Note:**

The greater memory capacity of the CD and DVD allow for different alternate audio and visual tracks that can be recorded and available to specific audiences.

# MEETING FACILITATION



## Graphic Overview of Leader - Facilitator Relationship



## FACILITATION SUPPORT



Meetings Page 1

**A facilitator is a person that helps a board or committee member understand written material, discussion issues, and the rules of the Board**

Facilitation practice assists diverse boards and groups ensuring that all members can participate equally. Numerous community groups, boards of directors and committees have created a mentoring culture, while others provide supports, called “facilitation”, to assist board members. These boards find that providing facilitation services is a helpful way to build an inclusive board.

A facilitator is a person that helps a board member understand written material, discussion issues, and the rules of the board. They help the member ask questions, express opinions and can also provide technical assistance to the board, making recommendations on how it can become more inclusive.

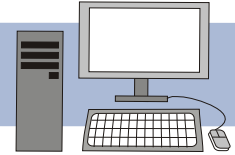
Facilitation supports are currently used with boards of disability service organizations. Many state-funded agencies are now required to appoint people with disabilities served by the agency to governing boards.

A board in Wisconsin developed a list of basic core values used to create a mentoring and supportive culture.

### **A Consumer Friendly Approach to Governance**

1. Allow more board time to discuss issues or decisions, and less on organizational maintenance.
2. Discuss issues once, and then give people some time to think about them. Revisit the issues at the next meeting before closure.
3. Be more flexible regarding what is and is not “on point”.
4. To encourage full participation, promote an atmosphere of peer responsibility and peer accountability among all board members.
5. Mentoring is a positive dynamic for all board members.

# FACILITATION SUPPORT



Meetings Page 2

**Successful Facilitation:  
Develop a job  
description that will  
guide the facilitator in  
their work with the  
person.**

## Questions to Ask

- What adaptations does the person need and prefer?
- What adaptations (if any) does the person use at work, at home and/or at meetings?
- Is the facilitator on the board's mailing list?

## Preparing for the Meeting

How does the person review the packet? (e.g. *can read themselves, need to have it read to him or her, need the highlights pointed out at a preparation meeting, etc.*)

How does the person need to prepare their position or discussion remarks on action items? (e.g. *determine them on their own, need impartial assistance to identify pros and cons of each item to make decisions, etc.*)

How does the person speak to other self-advocates or self-advocacy groups to present a position that reflects their voice?

How will the person present their position at the meeting? (e.g. *need it written down in a way that helps them remember during the meeting, need to meet with you just before the meeting to remind him or her of opinions, etc.*)

## Assistance during the meeting

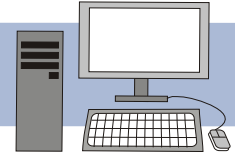
How do we sit at the meeting? (*facilitator at the person's side, in the audience, etc.*)

What cues are requested during the meeting? (*physical, pointing, verbal*)

How does the person prefer clarification during the meeting?

When do we review important board or action items that need to be completed by members? (*E.g. after the meeting, following week, etc.*)

## FACILITATION SUPPORT



Meetings Page 3

### **Possible strategies for the person**

Help the person attend an orientation and/or read and understand the orientation packet.

Assist the person in meeting with the organization's officers, executive director, or other members to learn about the most important issues currently being discussed and facing the organization.

Attend a Board or Committee meeting with the person before their term of office begins. Watch and discuss how the meeting operates to help the person fit in at board meetings.

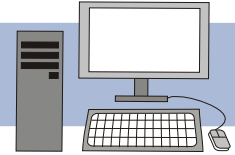
### **Preparation work with the Board:**

- With the person's permission, orient the Board.
- Clarify that the facilitator's role is to assist, not to speak for the person.
- Review adaptations needed by the person.
- Discuss inclusion attitudes and actions: the person is to be treated like anyone else.

### **Facilitator's observation of the person at board meetings:**

- The number of times the person speaks on their own during meetings?
- The number of times the person speaks off-topic at meetings?
- The amount of time it takes the person to make their statement at meetings?
- Voting behavior matches what the person was prepared to do before the meeting?

## A MENTOR IS A GUIDE



### To The Mentee:

A Mentor should feel like an advisor, someone on your side; loyal, interested, trusted and experienced in areas that you may not be. A Mentor can almost be seen as an experienced friend. A Mentor leads by example and is a role model. A Mentor can help you see the big picture and understand the politics of the organization you need help with.

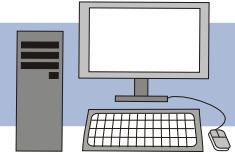
Few important things that will help you make the most of your Mentor.

1. Meet with them on a regular basis
  - a. Set clear objectives
  - b. Rely on them for guidance, not answers
  - c. Be honest
2. Using a Mentor is one of the best ways to develop yourself and not go it alone. A good Mentor will provide motivation and inspiration.
3. A Mentor can help you find ways to deal with immediate difficulties as well as help plan a long-term strategy.
4. A Mentor is a trusted guide; a tutor; a coach.
5. Board Mentors volunteer time to provide support to new members or members who need extra assistance. When Mentors are used with members with disabilities who need support, the relationship can encourage social acceptance and quality information sharing among board members.

The mutual help process provides an opportunity of increased communication between members outside of regular meetings. The experienced board member can share ways of adjusting to the demands of board participation and can prevent a new member from feeling overwhelmed and isolated. It's best when there is a group of Mentors available, so there are opportunities for relationships to develop.



# SUCCESSFUL MENTORING



## 1. Identify personal boundaries and set ground rules

The board or committee sets realistic time commitments for the mentoring job.

When the mentor and mentee plan their time together, they should consider when and how often mentoring sessions happen, whether they happen by phone and/or meetings.

Mentors and mentees should interview each other to make sure that they would like to work together.

## 2. Define the learning goals of the relationship

Mentors can help mentees identify their learning goals that will support them at meetings. The more exact the goals, greater the chance of completion.

Agree on an Action Plan for each mentoring session.

## 3. Set up an evaluation for success

### For Mentors

- Provide coaching and advice
- Share experience and knowledge
- Help with creative and independent thinking
- Listen, reflect, explore and explain - give positive advice
- Help be a connection for getting to know other board members
- Believe that the mentee can be successful
- Encourage ideas of success

### For Mentees

- Are open to coaching and advice
- Share ideas and concerns
- Listen and ask questions to understand
- Know how to ask for what is needed
- Look for challenges
- Are interested in new experiences and learning
- Watch others and learn from their successes and experience
- Take responsibility for personal growth and development
- Clearly identify personal goals