

Making Heathen Events Accessible

Heathens with disabilities naturally want to participate in in-person events. Just like any other heathen.

The heathen community could easily take steps to welcome this group of people as well. People with disabilities have a lot to offer their heathen community, given the chance! Think of the life experience, inventiveness and creativity that people with disabilities develop. Just like the unique talents that every person (with or without a disability) has anyway.

Making an event accessible is much easier and cheaper than people often think. It is mainly a matter of **will**. An accessible event is much more pleasant for *all* participants!

1. Physical accessibility

When thinking of “accessibility” people often think of wheelchair users. That is a good first step, but there are other considerations too.

- ✓ Choose a location that is wheelchair accessible. Check personally: door widths, thresholds & steps, stairs & lifts, and accessible toilet.
- ✓ Provide guides for the blind and partially sighted.
- ✓ Provide amplification, so that everyone can understand.

2. Clear communication

Good accessibility starts with clear communication about the event and location. People with disabilities like to know what to expect, in order to avoid unpleasant surprises.

- ✓ Be clear in advance about What, When, Where, Who, How, Costs and Accessibility.
- ✓ Stick to the schedule: monitor the time during the event.
- ✓ Designate people whom those who need it may contact.

3. Breaks & rest

Many people with disabilities have less energy to spend, in part because of the inaccessibility of our society. Some people are hypersensitive to stimuli, such as light, sound, smell and groups of people.

- ✓ Plan enough short and/or long rest breaks.
- ✓ Provide a quiet rest area where people who need it can retreat.
- ✓ Provide a warning in advance about loud noises, bright lights and strong smells (such as incense).

4. Food & drinks

Food and drink are often an important part of heathen events. When eating and drinking together, it is essential to take into account the most common diets.

- ✓ Provide gluten-free options.
- ✓ Provide lactose-free alternatives.
- ✓ Provide nut- and peanut-free variants.
- ✓ Provide non-alcoholic drinks. (Also during rituals!)

5. Clear info about accessibility

Be clear **in advance** about the accessibility of an event! A good announcement provides information about What, When, Where, Who, How, Costs and Accessibility.

- ✓ Provide clear info in the announcement and/or invitation about what has been arranged. And what has not.
- ✓ Don't assume that details "speak for themselves".
- ✓ Specify a contact person for further questions.

Like to know more?

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