



MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

Everyone is Welcome

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INSTRUCTORS



Belonging Begins Before Movement Starts

HAVE YOU EVER ENTERED A SPACE AND IMMEDIATELY FELT COMFORTABLE?

Maybe someone greeted you. Maybe the room was easy to navigate. Maybe you knew where to go and what to do. Maybe you felt free to participate in your own way without pressure. Or perhaps you have experienced the opposite. You were unsure where to sit. The instructions were unclear. The activity felt intimidating. You wondered: "Do I belong here?"

Movement accessibility is about helping more people answer: "Yes, I belong here."

Accessibility is often misunderstood as something that only applies to people with disabilities. In reality, accessibility benefits everyone.

A welcoming environment can support:

- someone trying a new activity
- someone joining a team
- someone attending a class for the first time
- someone recovering from injury
- someone experiencing changes in mobility
- someone who feels nervous, shy, tired, or uncertain

Accessibility is not just about ramps, doors, and equipment. It is also about attitudes.

It is about creating spaces where people feel:

- welcomed
- respected
- supported
- included
- free to participate at their own level



Belonging Begins Before Movement Starts

HAVE YOU EVER ENTERED A SPACE AND IMMEDIATELY FELT COMFORTABLE?

Sometimes accessibility means offering more choices. Sometimes it means reducing barriers. Sometimes it means helping people understand that there is no single "right" way to participate.

As one participant in our InterActive for Life research shared:

I feel that we gain fitness as a team. It's the team spirit and the camaraderie of coming together to do an activity we like.

For this participant, accessibility was not only about physical access. It was about feeling welcomed into a shared experience.

Another participant described it this way:

What helped me the most was knowing I could join in my own way. Nobody expected everyone to do the exact same thing. Once I realized that, I felt more confident participating

For this participant, belonging began when pressure disappeared.

InterActive for Life Reflection

An accessible movement environment is one where people feel:

- **I can come as I am.**
- **I can participate in my own way.**
- **I belong here.**

Challenge

The next time you participate in a movement activity, ask yourself:

"What helped me feel welcome?"

And:

"How can I help someone else feel welcome?"



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

1

See the Space Through New Eyes

Imagine arriving for the first time.

Ask yourself:

- Where do people enter?
- Is the space easy to navigate?
- Is it obvious what to do?
- Are expectations clear?
- Would a newcomer feel welcome?

Challenge

Walk through the experience as if you have never been there before.
What works well? What would you adjust?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

2 The "Come As You Are" Audit

Observe your activity.

Ask:

- Can participants participate at different levels?
- Are adaptations available?
- Are rest breaks normalized?
- Are movement choices verbalized and visible?

Reflection

What are three signs that participants feel comfortable doing more, less, or something different?

Instructor Activities

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3 Count the Choices

During your next session, count how many choices participants are offered.

Examples:

- seated or standing
- larger or smaller movements
- more support or less support
- slower or faster pacing

Challenge

Can every participant find a way to be successful?



Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

4

Welcome, Include, and Notice

People often decide whether they belong within the first few minutes of arriving.

Challenge

Create a welcoming environment through both your words and your actions by:

- greeting participants and explaining choices in a neutral way
- making space for different ways of participating
- arranging equipment, chairs, and supports so people can participate comfortably
- noticing who may need encouragement, support, or connection
- using body language that communicates welcome (eye contact, smiles, open posture, making space, slowing down, or adjusting the activity so others can join)

Notice What You Praise

Recognize not only effort and participation, but also:

- making space for others
- choosing options that work for an individual's needs
- helping newcomers feel comfortable
- paying attention to group needs
- contributing through quiet actions
- supporting participation and belonging

Examples:

"I'm glad you're here."

"Thank you for helping create a welcoming space."

"I appreciate the different ways people are participating."

"That was a thoughtful way to support the group."

"Everyone is contributing in their own way today."

Reflection

What helped people feel welcomed today?

Instructor Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

5 The Inclusion Audit

Observe your next session.

Ask

- Who appears comfortable?
- Who appears uncertain?
- Who participates fully?
- Who remains at the edges?
- Who may need more support?

Reflection

What small changes could help more people feel they belong?

6 Build a Shared Goal

Create activities where success is shared.

Examples:

- group achievements
- collective challenges
- team goals
- shared celebrations

Reflection

How can participants feel part of something bigger than themselves while still moving in their own way?



Instructor Tips

FOR MOVEMENT ACCESSIBILITY

Tip #1: Accessibility Begins Before Movement

People often decide whether they belong before the activity starts.

Tip #2: Choice Creates Inclusion

The more ways people can participate, the more likely they are to find success.

Tip #3: Belonging Is a Feeling

Accessibility is not only about physical access.
It is also about helping people feel welcomed and respected.

Tip #4: Different Ways of Participating Should Be Equally Valued

Avoid communicating that one movement option is better than another.

Tip #5: Accessibility Benefits Everyone

Inclusive environments help people of all ages, abilities, and experience levels.

InterActive For Life

REMINDER

Accessibility is not about making everyone move the same way.

It is about making sure everyone has a way to participate.

A welcoming space.

A supportive choice.

A friendly greeting.

An open attitude.

These are all movements toward inclusion.

Key Takeaway

Accessibility is not just about entering a space.

It is about feeling you belong in that space.

When people feel welcomed, respected, and supported, movement becomes something they are more likely to enjoy and return to.

Congratulations!

You have explored ways to:

- ✓ Recognize what helps people feel welcome
- ✓ Participate in ways that work for you
- ✓ Support accessibility for others
- ✓ Reduce barriers to participation
- ✓ Create more inclusive movement environments
- ✓ Build belonging through movement

InterActive for Life Reminder

WELCOME. INCLUDE. BELONG.

Come as you are.

Move your way.

Make space for others.

Celebrate different ways of participating.

Help everyone feel they belong.

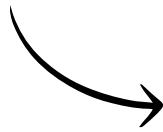
Everyone is welcome.





Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity participants](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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