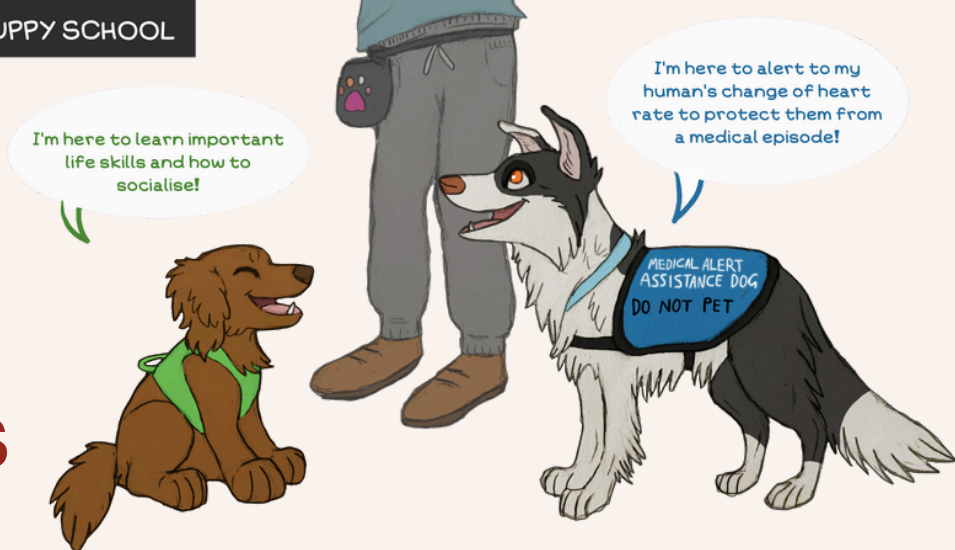# ABTC-DEI Checklist:
Events edition

Images showing a puppy looking up to the camera from the owner/caregiver's perspective, a horse facing the camera with the handler leaning in, a conference room with rows of chairs facing the stage, and a pile of notes and chalk with the words workshop on the top note.

ABTC

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR & TRAINING COUNCIL

PUPPY SCHOOL

I'm here to learn important life skills and how to socialise!

I'm here to alert to my human's change of heart rate to protect them from a medical episode!

MEDICAL ALERT ASSISTANCE DOG DO NOT PET

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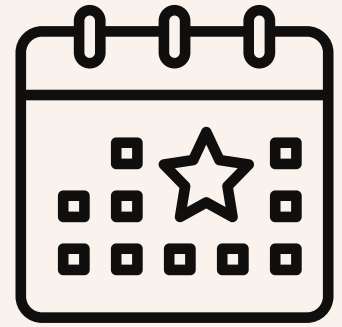
Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in events hosted by ABTC member organisations and practitioners is crucial for creating welcoming and supportive environments for all participants.

This Checklist: Events edition aims to provide you with practical guidance for selecting venues, as well as other considerations to make when you are organising events (such as group classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, and so on), to ensure that you cater to diverse needs and abilities.

This checklist builds upon the ABTC-DEI Inclusivity Guide that was sent out to all ABTC Member Organisations in January '24.

We hope you find this checklist helpful.

ABTC-DEI Working Group

02 Choosing your Venue

- Prioritise venues with wheelchair accessibility, including ramps, elevators, and designated parking spaces.
- Check the venue has gender-neutral toilets or accessible facilities for people of all genders.
- Look for venues with ample space for manoeuvring mobility aids, assistance animals, and emotional support animals, etc. Consider the car parking area's substrate; for example, gravel can be difficult to navigate when using mobility aids and wheelchairs.
- Verify that the venue is equipped with hearing loop systems or other assistive listening devices for participants with hearing impairments.
- Consider the availability of quiet spaces for attendees who may need a break or require sensory-friendly environments.
- Confirm the availability of prayer, multi-faith or meditation rooms or a space that you can adapt for your event, to cater for individuals who require religious accommodation.

O3 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups

O3.1 Inclusivity Training for helpers

- We recommend that any of your event staff, volunteers, or helpers (team) undergo inclusivity as well as Safeguarding training – learn more about this at www.sahsda.org. This training should cover the basics of accessibility as well as the more nuanced topics like unconscious bias and cultural competence.

- Provide training for your team on recognising and respecting diverse religious and cultural practices, including understanding the significance of religious attire and symbols, to ensure they can respond sensitively and appropriately to questions or situations that may arise, thereby preventing passive discrimination.

- Help your team know how to respond appropriately to gender-related issues and provide support to individuals who may experience discrimination or harassment.

- Understand that harassment and discrimination can take place in subtle ways, such as through microaggressions (a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalised group such as a racial or ethnic minority), so that you can be aware of and respond to it.

O3 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups
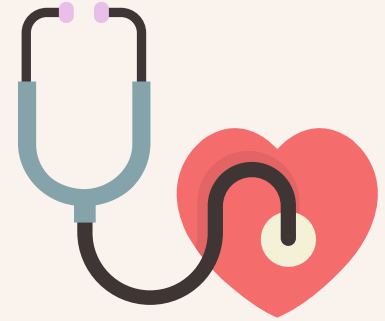
O3.2 Chronic Health Conditions Considerations

- Ensure there is thoughtful consideration of the venue's layout and its proximity to and accessibility of toilets so that attendees can access these at any time they need to. This includes optimising seating arrangements to accommodate attendees with chronic health conditions, helping to promote comfort and accessibility throughout the event

- Review the timings of your event/activities and adjust where possible to to meet diverse needs (eg where some individuals may struggle with morning tasks, high energy activities and so on).

O3 **Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups**

O3.3 Gender-Neutral Considerations

- Introduce yourself and any volunteers, staff or helpers by stating their pronouns to set an inclusive, welcoming environment where people feel comfortable to state their identities.
- Provide gender-neutral signage for toilets and changing facilities, ensuring all attendees feel comfortable and respected.
- Use inclusive language when addressing attendees, avoiding assumptions about gender identity or expression.
- Create inclusive registration forms that offer options beyond binary gender categories, such as allowing participants to specify their preferred pronouns.
- If you make a mistake regarding someone's name, pronouns or gender identity, apologise briefly, correct yourself and try to use the appropriate language in the future.

03 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups

03.4 Cultural Considerations

- It is important to include cultural inclusivity. Ensure there is cultural representation in your event's imagery and presentations, including speakers from different backgrounds and topics that reflect a range of traditions and views, and avoid imagery that promotes harmful narratives and stereotypes surrounding marginalised groups.
- Offer multi-lingual support where possible.
- Consider offering culturally relevant workshops or sessions that can provide deeper insights into different cultures.
- Check the date[s] you wish to hold your event to ensure this does not coincide with cultural or religious dates and, if it does, consider adjusting the schedule or even integrating these celebrations into the event if appropriate.

03 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups

03.4 Cultural Considerations continued...

- If you are providing catering for your event, aim to go beyond just listing ingredients and gathering participant information regarding allergies. Consider other dietary needs such as halal, kosher, vegan, and gluten-free options.

- Ensure food and drink items are clearly labelled and discuss with any staff, volunteers or helpers at the event, how to effectively communicate about these items and how these are being handled to help prevent cross-contamination.

- Establish in your event guidelines a clear code of conduct that includes anti-discrimination policies covering race, ethnicity, religion, culture, as well as anti-bullying, or any abuse towards others, and the consequences of not adhering to them.

O3 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups

O3.5 Assistance Animal Users Considerations

- Ensure that events are fully accessible and comfortable for both assistance animals and their handlers by implementing considerate measures such as adopting silent applause techniques (eg hand waving) to avoid disturbing resting animals.

- Provide readily accessible toileting areas for assistance dogs and arrange seating thoughtfully to accommodate the needs of handlers and their animals.

- If dogs are worked one at a time, ensure that assistance animal handlers have access to an area where they can remain with their assistance animal.

- Have awareness that some assistance animal handlers will have their assistance animal with them in addition to the dog(s)/other species enrolled in the class or event and ensure there is sufficient space and support to allow this. This may also include the use of visual barriers or designated side rooms to prevent interactions between curious, anxious dogs etc., and assistance animals, ensuring the safety and comfort of all attending animals without compromising their handlers' learning experience.

O3 Recommendations for promoting inclusivity across groups

O3.6 Environmental Considerations

- Consider the environmental impact of your event and strive for sustainability, such as providing recycling bins at the venue, using digital materials instead of paper where possible, and choosing suppliers who adhere to sustainable practices.

- Encourage car sharing among attendees to reduce carbon emissions, alleviate parking constraints, and promote networking. Perhaps this can be facilitated by providing a platform—such as a dedicated section on the event app or a private online forum—where delegates can connect, arrange travel, and discuss event-related topics.

- Ensure that environmental sensitivities and allergies are taken into account, such as using fragrance-free products, products that avoid palm oil, using recyclable goods, and providing clear information about recycling around the venue.

- You can also showcase your carbon footprint as a business and the event itself. There are a number of free calculators available online to help with this.

- Provide guidance on wearing masks, so those that wish to wear masks at events feel comfortable to do so.

- Ensure there are hand washing facilities and there are easy-to-access means to sanitise hands for participants.

04 Considerations for differing abilities
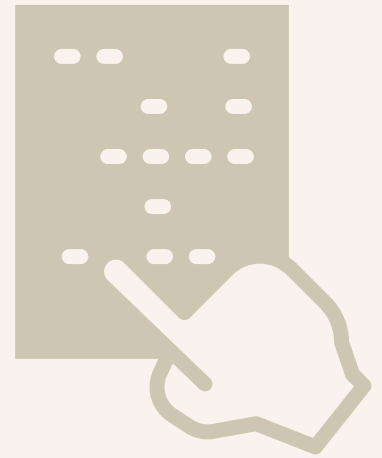
04.1 Visual Impairments

- Ensure that event materials, including presentations, handouts, and signage, are accessible to individuals with visual impairments using high-contrast colours, large fonts, and clear formatting.
- Use Braille and or descriptive videos/audio descriptions for presentations.
- Provide tactile maps or guided tours for participants who are blind or visually impaired to navigate the venue and participate fully in activities.

04 Considerations for differing abilities

04.2 Hearing Impairments

- Use microphones and amplification systems during presentations and discussions to ensure that all attendees can hear clearly.

- Arrange for sign language interpreters or real-time captioning services for participants who are deaf or hard of hearing. ABTC has linked in with Interpreters Live! and they can provide such services at a special 'bundle' rate for registered practitioners and member organisations – see https://abtc.org.uk/bsl-practitioners/

- Assistive listening devices are also available via mobile apps that convert speech to text in real-time, with many offering free trials to users.

04 Considerations for differing abilities

04.3 Neurodiversity and mental well-being

- Offer sensory-friendly spaces or quiet rooms where individuals with sensory processing disorders can retreat if they become overwhelmed.
- Provide advance notice of any changes to the schedule or unexpected loud noises that may trigger sensory sensitivities.
- Consider whether your content or discussions on topics within your event might be triggering for some attendees. If so, a valuable addition is to provide mental health support, such as having a trained professional[s] available or offering resources and contact information for mental health services – see https://www.sja.org.uk/globalassets/documents/mental-health-advice-and-info.pdf

04 Considerations for differing abilities

04.4 Mobility Impairments

- Arrange for accessible transportation options for attendees who may require assistance getting to and from the event venue.
- Ensure that all areas of the venue, including outdoor spaces, parking, overnight accommodation, toilets, dining and main-room/breakout rooms are wheelchair accessible and free from obstacles or barriers.

04 Considerations for differing abilities

04.5 Cognitive and Learning Disabilities

- Offer written or visual instructions in addition to verbal explanations to accommodate different learning styles.
- Provide clear signage and wayfinding cues throughout the venue to help individuals with cognitive disabilities navigate the space independently.
- Have staff or individual[s] available to offer support with guidance and directions. Ensure they are easily identifiable, such as wearing a 'Here to Help' sash/sweatshirt, etc in easy to spot colours.

04 Considerations for differing abilities

04.6 Chronic Health Conditions

- Consider the needs of individuals with chronic health conditions, such as providing seating options and access to water stations for those who may need to rest or manage symptoms.
- Accommodate dietary restrictions and allergies by offering a variety of food options and clearly labelling ingredients to prevent adverse reactions.

05 **Continuous Feedback**

- Finally, encourage continuous improvement by setting up a feedback mechanism that allows participants to express their thoughts on the event's content, inclusivity, and other areas you wish to gain insights. This could be via a digital survey, encouraging participants to chat to staff, volunteers, or helpers on the day to share their thoughts, or even a feedback box at the venue for anonymity.

By incorporating the additional considerations from this Checklist into your planning – be it for group classes, workshops, seminars, etc., you can create more inclusive and accessible environments that support the diversity of all participants.

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Promoting Excellence in
Animal Behaviour and Training

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