



ONTARIO REGION ACCESSIBILITY CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU BREAK DOWN BARRIERS FOR ADDICTS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS AT YOUR HOMEGROUP

Disclaimer: Narcotics Anonymous does not enforce the law, however, this Guideline is in line with The Canadian Human Rights Act, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) and the Canadians with Disabilities Act, as well as A Vision for NA Service which states: Every addict in the world has the chance to experience our message in his or her own language and culture and find the opportunity for a new way of life;

To assist Groups and the NA service structure to fulfill Tradition 3 and Tradition 5 in reaching out to those with additional needs, the following guidelines are provided.

This Guideline is only a general guidance on a complex set of issues. Groups and Service Entities may find that their situation may not be covered in these guidelines. In these cases, or at any time, it is highly encouraged to contact your Area, Region, or NAWS to obtain further assistance.

You may contact the Additional Needs Workgroup of Ontario & Manitoba Region at Addneeds@orscna.org

Statement of Purpose: The Ontario Regional Accessibility for Addicts with Additional Needs Workgroup is committed to supporting the right of every addict to find recovery through Narcotics Anonymous.

This checklist is to help groups, Areas, and the Region with suggestions on how to be inclusive and accessible to addicts with additional needs.

Location (Outside):

- Is the pathway from the sidewalk and parking to the entrance clear of hazards like snow, ice, and other debris?
- Are accessible parking spaces available at or near your location? Are they close to an accessible entrance?
- Is the meeting space accessible using public transportation?
- Is there a clear route of travel that does not include any stairs or steps?
- Can any potential obstacles along pathways — including hanging objects — be detected by a person using a cane or other mobility device?
- If the meeting is at night, are the pathways and entrances well lit?
- If there are stairs or physical barriers (including a raised lip at any point) in the main entrance, is there a ramp, lift, or alternate entrance that is accessible?
- Is the ramp excessively steep? Does it have railings?
- Is the lift in good working order? If the lift is operated by a key, does someone on location have possession of the key or know where it is kept?
- Is there signage indicating the location of the alternate accessible entrance?
- Does the entrance door have adequate width (32") and clearance to accommodate a wheelchair?



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- Can the doors be opened by someone in a wheelchair? (Note: if assistance is required to gain entrance, your homegroup could post a greeter at that door to help)

Venue (Inside):

- Is there level access from the wheelchair accessible entrance to the meeting area?
- If there is not level access to the meeting room, is there is an elevator or a lift, is it in good working order?
- If the elevator or lift is operated by a key, does someone on location have possession of the key or know where the key is kept?
- Are corridors and door widths (32") adequate for passage of a wheelchair?
- Are corridors clear to allow safe passage for everyone?

Bathrooms:

- Is at least one fully accessible restroom available?
- Is there adequate space for a person in a wheelchair to maneuver within the stall? (44" for forward movement and a five-foot diameter or T-shape of clear space to make turns.)
- Are there grab bars on the walls behind and to the side nearest the toilet?
- Can the faucet be operated without grasping, twisting, or turning?
- Is the lighting adequate?

The Meeting Room:

- Are chairs set up with adequate aisle space for a wheelchair?
- Does your meeting have ample lighting for safer physical navigation and so that lips can be read, or interpreters can be seen?
- Is there a designated section for members who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing? If so, is there adequate space for a sign language interpreter to sit with easy access to that group?
- Is the coffee service (if applicable) accessible to a person in a wheelchair or with another type of mobility device?
- Is N.A. literature available that addresses the needs of individuals with additional needs? (large print, braille)
- Do you ensure there is space in your room layout for a person with a mobility device to navigate to all key areas? Example: Literature table, sitting area, bathroom
- Does your meeting keep its room layout consistent so those addicts who are blind or vision impaired can map out the room?
- Does your meeting seat people in a square, circle, or rectangle formation, so that people can see each other while they are speaking? (will accommodate those who read lips)

Greeting:



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- Is someone available to welcome people and orient them to the meeting space as needed?
- Do you ensure there is a clear path from outside into the meeting space? (Discouraging crowding in doorways/hallways)

Group Members:

- Do you walk up to people who may be new and introduce yourself? Keep in mind that if the addict is blind they will not see you approach, therefore, do not walk up in front of the addict and do not yell.
- Do you ask members who need assistance how they would like to be assisted, rather than assuming?
- Does your literature rep know how to help connect someone to literature in a way that they can access it? (suggest that the literature rep review various formats available through NA.org)
- Do you face the people you are talking to, for as long as you are talking to them, ensuring you do not cover your face while talking?
- Do you speak to people clearly and at a standard volume (unless asked to do otherwise)?
- Do you take turns speaking, so that people are better able to understand the message?

Format:

- Does your meeting/preamble invite members with additional needs to seek a group member if there are barriers to their ability to access the NA message? (You can have photocopies of the readings for those addicts who are deaf to read along.)
- Does your group encourage people to minimize distractions (phones on silent, not getting up a lot/ walking in front of the view of the person speaking, whispering, crinkle paper or plastic water bottles, or dragging chairs)
- Do you ask attendees to raise their hand when they begin to share so it is easier to identify who is speaking?

NOTE: Some Addicts who are deaf/hard of hearing or vision impaired may open the readings on their phones, they are not being disrespectful.

Fellowship:

- Does your group include those with additional needs in conversations that occur before or after the meeting?
- If meeting at another location (for example, a coffee shop) before or after the meeting, does the second location meet the accessibility needs of those in attendance?



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Meeting Listing:

- Does your meeting clearly state its accessibility information in places where it is listed? (e.g. Barrier free entrance, wheelchair access, etc.)
- If your meeting is a candlelight meeting, is that clearly stated wherever the meeting is listed? Dark meeting rooms can increase barriers for some people.
- If your meeting info is shared through a poster, do you also share a text version?

Contact:

This Checklist is only a general guidance on a complex set of issues. More detailed Guidelines are available on our Website ORSCNA.org which offer more detail on breaking barriers and making your meetings, conventions, and events accessible to all addicts. Groups and Service Entities may find that their situation may not be covered in these guidelines. In these cases, or at any time, it is highly encouraged to contact the Additional Needs Workgroup of Ontario Region at Addneeds@orscna.org