Creating Safe and Inclusive Events

Purpose

When creating an event or conference, it's easy to fall into a "get it done" mentality; with multiple competing priorities, involving different stakeholders, the default is to use your practical skills to ensure everything is ticked off before the big day. However, an event is only actualised when people turn up and an event is successful when everyone feels welcome. The purpose of this document is to provide a guide on what to think about to ensure the event or conference you're creating considers the diversity of your potential attendees.

Objective

To support Centre members when they're organising and running an event or conference.

Planning

- ☐ **Have I set up a planning committee?** If you're organising a large event, create a planning committee. Ensure you have communicated the time commitment involved and that everyone is happy to proceed.

- ☐ **Do I need volunteers?** Should you require volunteers, all efforts must be made to ensure a diverse range of members are contributing their time.

- ☐ **Is pricing a barrier?** Ensure pricing is not a barrier for people on low income participants. This includes the cost of an event ticket and/or the food and drink available.

- ☐ **Have I thought about the accessibility of the schedule?** Some people need breaks to take care of medical needs and for in-person events, it may take more time to get from room to room.

- ☐ **Have I arranged a diverse group of speakers?** All efforts must be made to ensure a diverse range of speakers are presenting.

- ☐ **Will there be an open discussion?** If you intend to hold an open discussion during the event, ensure the MC is cognisant of giving diverse voices a chance to share.

- ☐ **Is my advertising representative?** When advertising the event, choose photos that represent a diversity of people. Avoid using gendered language in any communication.

☐ **Have I planned to limit distractions?** Organise catering to be in a separate room to limit noise and keep any background noise to communal areas.

☐ **Have I included the following in my registration form?** When designing the registration form, ensure to ask about the following to help with participants name tags, catering, accessibility, and accommodation.

  ☐ **Preferred name**

  ☐ **Pronouns**

  ☐ **Dietaries** (Vegan, Vegetarian, Gluten free etc.)

  ☐ **Allergies**

  ☐ **Dietaries details** (This can be free text for people to provide more context to their dietaries such as how severe the allergy, if it applies to certain food and not others)

  ☐ **Accessibility requirements**

    ☐ Impaired sight?

    ☐ Hearing impaired?

    ☐ Mobility impairment?

    ☐ Adaptive devices?

    ☐ Service animals?

  ☐ **Accommodation preferences** (whether they require a room on the bottom floor, or if they have someone they'd prefer to share a room with. Additionally, no one should be coerced into sharing a room to save money)

☐ **Community agreement** (a statement such as " I agree to a zero-tolerance policy for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, classism, and body-shaming")

It's important to consider the questions you're putting on a registration form and if they're necessary to the success of the event.

☐ **Has my program been endorsed by a DE&I professional?** Work with a DE&I specialist to get their opinion on the finished program.

Location & Logistics

☐ **Is the venue accessible?** Ensure it is accessible by public transport and/or there is sufficient parking, particularly disabled parking.

☐ **Have I included tips on how to get to the venue?** This can include suggested public transport routes or a preferred taxi company

☐ **Does your location have gender-neutral bathrooms?** This is to ensure transgender and non-binary people feel more comfortable.

☐ **Is the sound system suitable?** Ensure an adequate sound system and arrange for microphones for presenters and speakers in the audience.

☐ **Is your event available online?** If possible, organise your event to be hybrid so people can join remotely.

☐ **Is the building and the rooms you're using accessible?** Ensure to provide accessibility information beforehand, such as the accessible routes between meeting rooms.

☐ **Does anyone attending have a hearing impairment?** Arrange for assistive listening devices, interpreters, and captioners. Ensure you test these in rehearsal.

☐ **Is there good visibility of the speakers?** Check lighting in rehearsal and look out for bright sunlight or flashing lights.

☐ **Do you have a strong internet connection?** This is crucial for remote captioning during the event and transferring audio for remote attendants to hear speakers clearly.

☐ **Do you have catering or food options that accommodate a range of dietary, religious and cultural requirements?**

☐ **Have you provided attendees the option to share their pronouns? Either in the registration form or on name tags?** This will help reduce instances of misgendering.

☐ **Have you requested consent from attendees to take their picture?** Do not take pictures or recordings of any attendee unless you receive explicit permission.

☐ **Have you provided directional signage or maps to ensure people can find their way around?** Including to the toilets, public transport, parking, chill out/first aid area

Safety

☐ I**s there a code of conduct in place for attendees?** This is to ensure your event and associated online spaces provide a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender and gender identity, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, or religion. Make it clear that harassment of participants in any form is not tolerated.

☐ **Is everyone aware of the closet fire exits?** At the start of the event, discuss fire exits and the closest medical room.

☐ **Is there a feedback function available at the event?** This is to allow people the opportunity to provide insight into their experience during the event.

☐ **Is there a designated space certain attendees needs?** Such as a sensory friendly space or chill out zone.

☐ **Does the event need security staff?** If so, make sure they are easy-to-identify by their uniforms and badges.

☐ **Have the event staff been briefed on what behaviours are unacceptable?** This can be intimidating, harassing and predatory behaviour.

☐ **Does your event run into the night?** Think about setting up a process that provides attendees a safer option to get to their accommodation e.g., groups to walk to their cars together.

☐ **Is everyone at the event wearing a lanyard?** Ensure everyone attending is wearing a lanyard or name tag so you know they're part of the event.

For the Speakers

☐ **Have you provided guidelines to speakers for Acknowledgement of Country?** This can include suggested phrasing and the name of the traditional owners of the land the event is taking place on. An Acknowledgement of Country is advised, even if a Welcome to Country has taken place or previous speakers have acknowledged Country.

☐ **Are the speakers aware of the accessibility requirements of the audience?**

    ☐ Provide guidance if they're unsure how to tailor their material

    ☐ Help the speaker coordinate getting their material to participants, interpreters, and captioners

□ **Are speakers being remunerated fairly?**

    □ Are you paying the speakers for their time? If so, this needs to be equitable across the board.

    □ Are you covering the speakers affiliated costs? e.g. travel and accommodation, if so, this should be uniform across every speaker

Note: see "Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communication" for further guidance for speakers

Useful Resources

- <u>How to Acknowledge Country</u>
- <u>Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communication</u>
- <u>Guide to Conference Speaker Fees</u>

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