



Practices and Resources to Explore to Make your Program More Inclusive

Ask yourselves

- Which of the inclusive practices and strategies are you already doing?
- What do you want to start doing?

Being inclusive of all students, including those with disabilities

- Celebrate disability culture in your program: Include disability art in your physical space, include disability stories and materials in your curriculum, and include disability images in your outreach materials and website.
- Consider the role of the formal and informal assessments that you use to understand your students learning abilities:
- How can this assessment inform your work? What is missing in this assessment? What was unanswered?
- Ask questions of students during intake or at the beginning of class, including: “What do you need to make school work for you?” “What would be your ideal classroom set up and what would help you concentrate?” “Tell me about yourself. I am here to listen.”
- Connect with your local Mass Rehab Commission, find out what services are available to your students.

Resources to explore

- Search [Job Accommodation Network](#)'s SOAR ([Searchable Online Accommodation Resource](#)).
- Get in touch with the [Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission \(MRC\)](#).

Being inclusive of all students, including those with acute and continuous trauma

- Recognize when you don't have enough information about a student to know what is at the root of the problem, and use appreciative inquiry to find out more (where appropriate and welcome).
- Spend time at the beginning of class setting expectations around safe spaces. Make sure students are the architects of what constitutes a safe space.
- Encourage use of native language between students when discussing difficult and potentially re-traumatizing topics.
- Normalize the discussion of difficult topics. Create a monthly meeting for open sharing, or a support group for student led peer-to-peer exchange.
- Establish clear referral practices to local mental health supports and share with all staff. Program policies should describe a consistent and equitable process for how, when, and where to refer students for mental health support.
- Establish a program-wide check-in for staff well-being. Encourage self-care strategies and normalize the effects of vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue.



Practices and Resources to Explore to Make your Program More Inclusive

Resources to explore

- Review and use these ideas: [Co-Created Strategies for Creating Healing Spaces](#)
 - Evaluate your program through the lens of this [Trauma Informed Program Checklist](#)
 - Read and extract helpful [Tips for Teachers During Times of Trauma](#)
-

Being inclusive of all students, including those in a corrections setting or in re-entry

- For those in corrections, increase your understanding of how the experience of incarceration impacts a student's brain, nervous system, and learning abilities.
- For staff and directors in corrections, understand the impacts of vicarious trauma and secondary trauma on educators who work in corrections.
- For programs working with students in re-entry: Develop concrete responses to incarceration-related traumas that manifest in the learning environment.
- For programs working with students in re-entry: Identify three key elements that foster trust and safety in the classroom to promote the creation of transformative spaces for all students.

Resources to explore

- Review this [Glossary of Terms for Re-entry, Equity and Transformative Justice](#)
 - Check out [The Change Agent's Prisons and Justice?](#) Issue (Issue 40). Subscriptions are free for Massachusetts ([sign up here](#)).
-

Being inclusive of all students, including those with beginning digital literacy skills and / or access

- Assess student skills and include essential skills as part of orientation.
- Describe students as having beginning digital literacy skills; don't refer to students as "low level."
- Hire tutors to help beginner-level students during classes and in short-term, targeted digital literacy classes.
- Provide an on-site computer lab and space for students to connect using their own devices. Have options for individualized support.
- Help students find affordable devices and connectivity, and loan devices and wifi hotspots or data plans to students who need them.
- Build digital literacy into curricula such that students develop mastery and resilience when new technologies are developed.



Practices and Resources to Explore to Make your Program More Inclusive

Resources to explore

- Take one or more of our asynchronous, “On Demand” PD sessions. For more information, go [here](#).
 - Visit the [Distance and Hybrid Education Discussion](#), including sections on Technology and Connectivity Access and Orientation/Onboarding to Studying Online
-

Being inclusive of all students in our recruitment and outreach, including hard to reach or new populations

- Use data to determine who is in your program and who is in your community. Do your students reflect the diversity in your community?
- Identify populations “in need” in the community and network to find local organizations that can help you connect with them.
- Consider non-traditional approaches and social media. Get your students to help you understand where people in the community learn about your program.
- Consider radio, especially multi-lingual programs, local public television, local newspapers, bulletin inserts at local houses of worship, etc.
- Host a community event; sponsor a local sports team

Resources to explore

- View the [Guide to Recruiting, Onboarding, and Enrollment Strategies](#) for more than 50 strategies to help recruit and onboard new students.
 - Visit the [MA Adult Literacy Hotline](#) to access information about AE programs and opportunities.
-

Being inclusive of all students and staff, in decision making, problem solving and program development

- Create a student council or other student leadership group with advisory capacity to inform program planning and policy
- Avoid top-down decision-making. Rather, create inclusive processes that foster shared ownership (vs. “buy-in”) and mutual accountability.
- Ensure that all stakeholders have a voice and opportunities to shape the vision, design, and culture of the program.