

# Best Practices Guidelines:

Universal Design Audit Tool for  
Recreation and Sport Spaces

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## NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

*Terminology can be used to empower, reclaim, and redefine identities. In this document, the term “Indigenous communities” is used to describe individuals and collectives who consider themselves as related to and/or having historical continuity with “First Peoples”. This includes all those whose civilizations flourished in what is now known as Canada, the United States, the Americas, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Asia, and Africa prior to European colonization. There is an incredibly rich diversity of Indigenous communities here in Calgary and this document has attempted to ensure that they are represented in the text wherever possible.*

*Exceptions to our use of the term Indigenous have been made of necessity when we are citing resources that use different terms. This report has capitalized the terms Indigenous, Black, Racialized, and White to respect and signal an understanding of the history and racial identity of these groups. Capitalizing White reflects our understanding that not naming White as a Racialized category risks perpetuating the assumption of White as raceless, superior, neutral, and standard.*

## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Sports and Recreation Equity Audit project recognizes and acknowledges that we are gathered on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy, made up of the Siksika (Seeg-see-kah), Piikani (Bee-gun-nee), Amskaapipiikani (Om-Skaa-bee-bee-Gun-nee) and Kainai (G-ai-nah) First Nations; the Îlethka Nakoda Wîcastabi (ee-YETH'-kah nah-COH'-dah WHISK'-ah-tah-bay) First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki(Chin-ick-ee), Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The city of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak (Oti-pe-mes-se-wa) Métis Government, Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6). We acknowledge all Indigenous people who have made Calgary their home.

To create an equitable city, it requires the foundational acknowledgement of the colonial history that began over 500 years ago through the Doctrine of Discovery which gave explorers the right to claim "vacant land" in the name of their Sovereign. This land theft was formalized through the Treaty agreements with control asserted through the Indian Act (1876). Indigenous communities did not only lose their land but faced genocide and irreparable damage to their social and cultural fabric. Colonialism was bound to notions of White Supremacy - the idea that the white race is superior to others which to this day remains entrenched in our systems including political, bureaucratic, legal, and economic. As a result, there is continued injustice and inequity faced by our Indigenous communities (De Leeuw, 2016). This is the starting point for our work on equity which presents unique challenges faced by Indigenous communities. We recognize that the fundamental root causes of inequity impact many groups and by centering those principles we can begin to address these historical injustices.

The City of Calgary in 2017 adopted the Indigenous Policy and through the Calgary Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (CAUAC) has been working towards actioning the calls for action outlined in the White Goose Flying report (2016). This Equity Audit tool takes an initial step towards building a framework that can actively provide guidance to sports and recreation facility managers towards reconciliation while recognizing that this is only a part of the broader context of actions that The City is undertaking.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of The City of Calgary’s continued commitment to making sports and recreation facilities equitable and accessible for everyone, The City commissioned Habitus Consulting Collective to develop an equity audit tool for sports and recreation spaces within the city. This document presents the results of the first phase of the audit tool development for sports and recreation facilities. Based on a comprehensive literature review, several best practices in the sports and recreation context were identified for equity-deserving groups. These best practices were structurally identified under four broad key principles for equity - ReconciliAction; Accessibility; Sustainability; Welcoming, Inclusion & Belonging. The following table summarizes the results of this review.

## 1. RECONCILI-ACTION

Spaces	
1.Community Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult and consent in designing public spaces.</li> <li>2. Spaces respect and reflect indigenous values and beliefs.</li> </ol>
Environment	
1.Community Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote sustainable programming through partnerships.</li> <li>2. Collaborate with Indigenous nations, Indigenous led/focused organizations, and educational institutions to implement sport, recreation and wellness programs.</li> <li>3. Develop links with provincial sport and multi-sport service organizations that enhance the development of Indigenous communities.</li> </ol>
Services	
1.Culturally Responsive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate recreation, sport and physical activity with Indigenous cultural and traditional practice.</li> <li>2. Ensure diverse Indigenous perspectives are included in programming rather than a singular pan-Canadian approach.</li> <li>3. Establish a program to enable community-based planning and implementation of sport/recreation/physical activity projects that increase opportunities and access.</li> </ol>
Policies, procedures and practices	

Decolonize policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reflect and create decolonizing sports and recreation's Anti Racism and EDI policies.</li> <li>2. Complete a provincial assessment of availability of facilities on reserve or close by off reserve.</li> </ol>
Indigenous Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create opportunities for Indigenous communities to feel empowered to take control of their wellness.</li> <li>2. Build youth empowerment opportunities.</li> </ol>
Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce and make available promotional material that profiles Indigenous people role modeling positive lifestyles.</li> <li>2. Develop a campaign to increase the number of Indigenous athletes participating in sports and recreational programming.</li> </ol>
Training and HR	
Capacity Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand training on addressing bias, improving knowledge and capacities that specifically pertain to Indigenous communities.</li> <li>2. Provide training and information to individuals and organizations on ways they can contribute and enhance the reconciliation movement in Canada.</li> </ol>
Knowledgeable /Lived Experience Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire full-time regional coordinators with working knowledge of First Nations and Métis culture to enable and support increased community participation.</li> </ol>

## 2. ACCESSIBILITY

Spaces	
Design/Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow current accessibility standards of The City of Calgary.</li> <li>2. Ensure physical spaces have accessible signage.</li> <li>3. Ensure individuals of all genders, sexuality, cultures and backgrounds can use spaces.</li> <li>4. Create sensory friendly or low sensory spaces.</li> </ol>
Reach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure sports and recreation spaces are easy to reach.</li> </ol>
Cost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create spaces that are free or have a low cost to have access to facilities. These spaces should be well maintained and adequately funded for</li> </ol>

	continuity.
Environment	
Language	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote the use of people first, inclusive language as well gender neutral pronouns and language with staff members and signage used.</li> <li>2. Provide recreation programs, facilities, and information in different languages or have interpreters to promote diversity and have easier access.</li> <li>3. Promote and launch accessible forms of communication for Individuals who identify as deaf, deafblind or visual impairment.</li> <li>4. Provide communication that is accessible to both recreation leaders and the community.</li> </ol>
Training and HR	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Train staff members on accessibility. These include accessible customer service, accessibility training, and human rights code.</li> <li>2. Build capacity among multiple staff to use communication devices operate specialized wheelchairs or other supportive equipment for individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol>
Knowledgeable /Lived Experience Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire full-time staff with lived experience or with working knowledge of diverse capacities, backgrounds, cultures, languages etc.</li> </ol>

### 3. SUSTAINABILITY

Spaces	
Adaptive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the space as whole and implement a plan of action that is long term and allows for continuous growth and improvement.</li> </ol>
Pro-environmental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide gathering space for community members to gather outdoors and indoors.</li> <li>2. Undertake steps to conserve energy and the environment.</li> </ol>
Environment	
Green spaces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planting trees, bushes, and flowers indigenous to the area encourages a healthy ecosystem's growth.</li> </ol>

Services	
Encourage Long-term Participation	1. Address personal and structural barriers for newcomers to build a sustainable and inclusive recreation program and services.
Pro-environmental	1. Provide customers with sustainable activities and services.
Policies, procedures and practices	
Support long-term participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritize children and adolescents with disabilities in policies and funding to increase participation amongst them.</li> <li>2. Improve monitoring of key settings (evidence of accessibility, inclusivity of infrastructure), remove ableism from existing reporting benchmarks and focus on both quantity and quality of activity and focus on active participation, fun, and feeling satisfied.</li> <li>3. Consider pairing persons with a buddy or mentor, structuring opportunities for social interaction, and building an atmosphere that celebrates strengths and achievements to provide opportunities for interaction.</li> </ol>
On-going Monitoring & Review	1. Monitor the implementation of policies to ensure that it is being implemented as intended and that there are not any negative and unwanted/unintended consequences.
Training and HR	
Commitment to Sustainable Education	2. Share 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive policies, neurodiverse policies, and EDI or anti-racism policies with staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and players as appropriate to build sustainable inclusivity.
Policy Documentation	1. Establish an accessibility manual and an equity, diversity, inclusion guideline and review them annually to ensure the content is still relevant.



#### 4. INCLUSION, WELCOMING AND BELONGING

Spaces	
Adaptable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure flexible spaces that include different features that make it multifunctional for all ages.</li> <li>2. Embed sensory needs while planning design for spaces to ensure neurodiverse individuals' recreation in a safe and calming space.</li> </ol>
Celebrate cultural diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage community building and culturally diverse sports and recreation facilities.</li> </ol>
Environment	
Culture safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a culturally safe recreation program by understanding the barriers faced by diverse cultural communities when it comes to access and comfort.</li> </ol>
Community Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a sense of belonging and community to reduce social isolation.</li> </ol>
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase visibility of signs of inclusion.</li> <li>2. Deepen engagement with social justice and equity focused issues.</li> </ol>
Services	
Meaningful involvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage racial and cultural diversity throughout the facility.</li> </ol>
Offering diversity in options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create sport and recreation activities that cater to individuals with physical disabilities.</li> <li>2. Offer programs to increase recreational participation in women and girls.</li> <li>3. Create programs and services that target diverse populations, such as immigrants/newcomers or 2SLGBTQ+ communities through targeted program design.</li> </ol>
Overcoming Barriers - Lack of Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help newcomers and immigrants overcome lack of information barriers as it will make it easier for them to participate and feel included.</li> </ol>
Policies, procedures and practices	
Physical safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create policies to address safety concerns for individuals with physical disabilities using adaptive sports to minimize chances of injury - unintentional</li> </ol>

	or inflicted.
Address Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create policies to address inappropriate language &amp; actions.</li> <li>2. Create procedural structures for addressing 2SLGBTQ+ athlete or staff coming out to make it comfortable and friendly.</li> <li>3. Create policies that address locker room concerns. These can include addressing issues like: insecurities about one’s own body; religious beliefs that make changing in front of others difficult; a history of sexual abuse or violence</li> <li>4. Create a trans-inclusion policy focused on complaint resolution procedure or create a reporting system to encourage individuals facing discrimination, bullying or harassment, or witnesses to take action to report</li> </ol>
Diversity in scheduling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create procedures around adaptable schedules that accommodate holidays and occasions of diverse backgrounds.</li> </ol>
Training and HR	
Training and capacity building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage and train staff in sensory friendly training, awareness and knowledge building.</li> <li>2. Support transitioning staff and members.</li> <li>3. Provide learning or training opportunities that build the capacity of staff, volunteers, participants and spectators to understand and support diverse gender identities and gender expressions.</li> </ol>
Overall approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create inclusion onboarding material for new hires to ensure they are trained before their first day of work.</li> <li>2. Ensure gender and cultural inclusive attire.</li> <li>3. Include images and language that are culturally sensitive and reflect the diversity within the community.</li> </ol>
Community Partnerships in Decision-making	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include members of the community in the decision-making process around programming.</li> <li>2. Train and educate staff members on how to create a safe space for neurodivergent individuals.</li> </ol>

## INTRODUCTION

The City of Calgary commissioned Habitus Consulting Collective to develop an equity audit tool for sports and recreation spaces within the city. The intention is that this tool will be utilized by Complex Coordinators, Facility Operators and their staff to make low/no cost modifications to their spaces, initiate procedural changes, and plan for future capital projects.

All Calgarians have the right to participate to the full extent of their abilities and interests, but not all facilities are inclusive and welcoming to the same extent. While considerable work has been done around addressing some areas of equity others have not been addressed to the same extent. By developing best practices guidelines to increase awareness and create inclusive and welcoming spaces across City owned recreation facilities, this initiative intends to transform the landscape for equity deserving groups.

Equity is a crucial concern at The City of Calgary and multiple initiatives, policies, and strategies have been developed to achieve equitable outcomes, including the development of the [City of Calgary's Anti-Racism Strategy \(2023\)](#), [Calgary Police Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Development \(2020\)](#), [Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(2019\)](#), [Social Wellbeing Policy \(2019\)](#), [Healthy Workplace Strategy](#), [Resilient Calgary Strategy \(2019\)](#), [Business Unit Gender Initiatives \(2019\)](#), [Diversity and inclusion in the workplace framework and action plan](#), [Indigenous Policy \(2017\)](#), [Digital Equity Strategy](#) and the [White Goose Flying Report \(2016\)](#), the Equity in Service Delivery fund<sup>1</sup> and Diversity & Inclusion Framework (2011). Additionally, The City recognizes the frameworks set forth by the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Alberta Human Rights Act. The City of Calgary is also a member of the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities (formerly known as Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination).

Within The City of Calgary there are several initiatives, policies and programs that address equity within sports and recreation. These include: [Access and inclusion information - Recreation; Inclusive Play Spaces Implementation Plan](#) (Jan. 2018); [Access Design Standards](#) (2016); [Safe and Inclusive Access Bylaw \(2023\)](#); [Research and Policy - Recreation page](#); The [CoC Recreation Facility Development & Enhancement Strategy \(2016\)](#); The [CoC Recreation Master Plan \(2010\)](#); The [CoC Recreation Zero Based Review](#); [Calgary Recreation Strategic Foundation \(2018\)](#); The [Joint Use and Planning Agreement \(2022\)](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The Equity Program team guides the Equity in Service Delivery Fund – a short-term funding model designed to encourage service lines to embed equity-based approaches in their service delivery. The intent is that successful innovations would later be integrated into regular operations and resourced through services' plans and budgets."

## Equity and equality

Equity does not mean equality. To achieve equitable outcomes often requires differential treatment and resource redistribution, recognizing and addressing barriers to provide opportunity for all individuals and communities to thrive (McGill University, 2023). Equality is treating everyone the same, – same for all is not always the solution (City of Ottawa and City for All Women Initiative, 2018). Equity is consequently achieved through transforming systems and practices that enforce oppression and focus on empowerment, capacity building, and centering equity as a human right (The Alliance, 2022). As municipalities are responsible for the quality of life of residents, it is vital to address inequities to ensure the inclusion of all residents to ensure sustainable cities (City for All Women Initiative, 2015; The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, 2017).

Therefore, identifying the needs of equity-seeking groups and mitigating their barriers could help society gain huge benefits such as having an engaged community that are able to meet their full potential and contribute to society. Equitable approaches recognize the “current, future and historical barriers that negatively impact an individual’s opportunity to participate and prosper as a member of the community” (Ministry of Health British Columbia, 2020). It implies an intentional approach to resolving historical and systemic barriers by identifying the most affected communities and providing them with a higher level of support to enable them to achieve their potential.

## Intersectionality

Within equality lenses, it is important to mention that all equity-deserving groups do not experience barriers in the same way. Within each individual resides multiple aspects of identity that shape the whole. At any given point, individual experiences can be a product of their race, age, social status, gender, physical/intellectual ability, immigrant status, Indigenous status, and more, and these identities intersect to create opportunities or systemic barriers in people’s lives. For example, Racialized women, Indigenous women, and non-binary people are often subject to both gender-based violence and discrimination as well as systemic racism. Identifying these systemic barriers can only be possible if intersectionality is considered as an essential accompaniment to equity. These intersectionalities are important to pay attention to while designing and strengthening the sports and recreational spaces.

## Systemic Barriers

In the context of sport and recreation, there is a renewed urgency for sport actors to adopt systemic change to ensure the future of sport and recreation includes all Canadians. The goal is to develop an understanding that supports systemic<sup>2</sup> change. This requires addressing **policies** (institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide actions), **practices**

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<sup>2</sup> A system is a configuration of parts connected by a web of relationships towards a purpose-such as the marine environment, the food system or socially created systems such as education and health. Systems can be small, such as organizations, or large, such as the whole economy. System boundaries define some “reasonable” limits of a system.

(activities that help achieve the mission), **resource flows** (the way money, people, knowledge and other assets are allocated and distributed), **relationships and connections** (among actors within the system with diverse histories and views), **power dynamics** (decision-making power and authority both formal and informal) and **mental models** (deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk) (Kania et al., 2018). For example, people with physical disabilities may be excluded from participation in events by not considering their accessibility needs at the event planning stage. Indigenous or other Racialized individuals may be excluded by overlooking their cultural needs for participation.

### Equity Outsizes Benefits

Often there is an assumption that equity is a zero sum game. However, in reality when services and spaces are equitable, they improve conditions for communities as a whole. The corollary is also true: When challenges faced by the most vulnerable are ignored, they can impact economic growth, prosperity, and well-being of the community over the long-term. In the sports and recreation context, equitable access and increased participation in recreation for diverse groups leads to increased mental and physical wellbeing for individuals across all dimensions of identities. An example of the ripple effect of such inclusion is a reduction in healthcare costs and burden on the whole population. The often cited example is of curb cuts (Blackwell 2017) when they were first included, they were seen to only benefit individuals in wheelchairs but ultimately helped a large number of individuals including parents pushing strollers, workers pushing heavy carts, business travelers wheeling luggage, even runners and skateboarders. Another example is how the seatbelt law that was initially introduced to protect children, ended up saving many adult lives as well or the growth of bike lanes in roads to protect bikers helped to reduce congestion and reduce accidents.

## UNPACKING EQUITY WITHIN SPORTS AND RECREATION

Calgary's visible minority represents 39.0% of the general population in Calgary, which is the 5th highest in Alberta (Government of Alberta, 2023). The Indigenous population grew faster<sup>3</sup> than the population of Calgary overall during the last five years, and today, most Calgarians are first or second-generation immigrants (City of Calgary, 2021). "In 2022, Calgary welcomed more Canadians and migrants per capita than any other city in Canada." (Calgary Economic Development, 2023). Not only is there a growth in Indigenous, Black, and diverse Racialized populations but simultaneously there is a recognition of their intersectional identities and specific needs. 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities (mental, physical), neurodiversity, women, and individuals and families living in poverty all have unique contexts that need to be understood and incorporated into sports and recreation spaces.

Sports and recreation facilitate social inclusion and belonging, offering opportunities for diverse community members to engage with each other and feel a sense of belonging (Arora and Wolbring, 2022). For newcomers, in particular, sports and recreation can contribute to integration as the process of resettlement in a new country can often be challenging (Lauckner, Gallant, Akbari, Tomas, White and Hutchinson, 2022).

Nonetheless, the social importance of sports and recreation varies significantly for diverse populations and is connected to the meaning of recreation. Sport and recreation can facilitate the well-being of individuals and families, well beyond physical benefits. However, to create inclusion requires sports and recreation spaces and services to employ an equity lens to create opportunities and shape positive outcomes.

### Indigenous Communities

For centuries, Indigenous people have engaged in various forms of sport and recreational activities. Their engagement in sports and recreation were for fun, competition, and as a way to teach survival and life skills. Indigenous sport and recreation played an important role in the community's way of life including but not limited to social, economical, spiritual, and political. These included activities such as wrestling, archery, awl games, ring and pole, kayaking, baggataway, canoeing, and snowshoeing. However, Indigenous people's contribution to sports and recreation are usually overlooked and unrecognized. A classic example is of Lacrosse, which originated from First Nations people from the East coast of North America who revered it as the Creator's Game gifted to the Indigenous Peoples (Oneida Indian Nations, 2015). The sport, Lacrosse, was later adopted and modified by Europeans (Collier & Blackshaw, 2018). Its Indigenous roots are often not known or celebrated.

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<sup>3</sup> Between 2016 and 2021, the Indigenous identity population grew at a faster rate than the population of Calgary overall. In 2021, 41,350 people in Calgary had an Indigenous identity, up 17% from 35,195 in 2016. During that same five-year period, the population of Calgary overall grew by 5.5% (City of Calgary, 2021).

Indigenous communities still view sports and recreation as “medicine.” It brings healing both on physical and spiritual levels (Lavelle & Levesque, 2013). It plays an important role in social development, physical health, mental wellbeing, and building communal values. For young people in particular, sport and recreation activity gives them a sense of purpose and direction, and helps to build self-esteem. Research has found that participation in sport can help to reduce violence, and keep young people engaged in community and enriched (Liew et al., 2022). Sports and recreation makes it easier for community members to build cultural connections and embrace their identity.

Nonetheless, poor community facilities, lack of transport, costs associated with participating in physical activity, experiences of racism and lack of cultural and historical sensitivity are common barriers that may lead to reluctance or rejection in participation in sports and recreation activities. Effective culturally sensitive, Indigenous-specific programming can help increase participation (Sutherland, 2021).

### Newcomers and ethnocultural communities

For immigrants and newcomers, sport provides opportunities to interact and join new social networks, build relationships within their community or neighborhood and strengthen integration. Newcomers often prefer to participate in familiar cultural recreational activities from their home country to alleviate migration stress, and bring with them a variety of sports and recreation activities that influence the country of origin as well. For example, immigrants from Mediterranean nations participate enthusiastically in football (soccer), while many South Asian immigrants are devoted to cricket, owing to the cultural importance of these sports for them (Ontario Heritage Trust, n.d.).

Nonetheless, studies have found that immigrants experience a variety of barriers that prevent them from engaging in sports and recreation. These include language barriers, lack of confidence as well as racial/cultural differences. For example:

- Iraqi youths interviewed for a study highlighted that simple differences such as having access to sports clothing can act as a barrier to participation (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). They reported that, in Iraq they would often play in their regular clothes rather than change into gym/athletic wear. This was unlike in Canada where it was expected for them to change into gym/athletic wear to play sports.
- As another example, Muslim females feel excluded from sports and recreation because facilities or services may not account for their religious beliefs and the practice of wearing a hijab (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

For some immigrants, sports and recreation is a new avenue they never explored. For example, immigrant participants expressed that sports offered them a novel activity to develop friendships and connections both within and outside their community. (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

For others, it offered an opportunity to learn and build on English language skills. For example, a Sudanese male student expressed to the authors that “*A few months I play with them I learn*

*a lot of things. I practice in English with other Canadians. So, when I started practicing with those guys I really improved my English” (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).*

Similar to Indigenous communities, participation in sports and recreation helps in building self-esteem, improving physical and mental health, and makes the settlement process a bit easier (Doherty & Taylor, 2007). Diverse newcomer and ethnocultural communities are drawn to different types of sports and recreation based on sports and recreation activities that they engaged in their country of origin. For example, cricket and yoga are popular among Indian immigrants, football/soccer is popular among Arab and African immigrants (StatCan, 2023), while European Immigrants tend to go more outdoor activities, such as skiing, hiking, and hockey. Further, religion and attending religious activities, other forms of community even/gathering, or simply going for a walk are considered recreational activities. Although in North America, these forms of activities might not be considered this way (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004).

## Persons with Physical/Intellectual/Mental Disabilities

Sport can play a key role in enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of people with disabilities, in the same manner as it can for people without a disability. Over the past three decades, numerous studies have revealed that physical activity and sport participation result in improved functional status and quality of life among people with disabilities (Heath & Levine, 2022). This includes improvements in both physical and mental wellbeing, by improving their motor skills, maintaining muscle fitness, lowering chances of getting life-long illness and psychosocial development.

However, individuals with disabilities face many additional barriers that impede their effective participation in sports and recreation activities. Typical barriers for disabled people to participate in sport include a lack of awareness from those without disabilities on how to include them in sport, lack of opportunities for training and competition, accessible facilities causing physical barriers, limited resources and negative social attitudes (Ramsden et al., 2023).

Sport can help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability because it can transform community attitudes about persons with disabilities by highlighting their skills and reducing the tendency to see the disability instead of the person. Through sport, persons without disabilities interact with persons with disabilities in a positive context forcing them to reshape assumptions about what persons with disabilities can and cannot do. Also, through sport, persons with disabilities acquire vital social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change. Sport teaches individuals how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork and cooperation and respect for others.

Sport for athletes with an impairment, or adaptive sports, has existed for more than 100 years. In Canada, sport for persons with a disability had its origins in rehabilitation medicine and was championed by disability/illness sport groups; for example, the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sport



Association or Canadian Blind Sport Association (Sport for Life, 2016). Since then, opportunities and investment in adaptive sport have grown over time, but financial, educational, medical and systemic barriers limit participation in sport by people with disabilities at all levels of participation- amateur, professional and Paralympic levels.

## Gender Diverse Communities

For members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, participating in sports can be an affirming, community-building experience. At the same time, it can mean navigating the difficult experiences of discrimination. These experiences — both positive and negative — can have a broad effect on an individual's mental health, sense of belonging, and overall physical health and well-being. Inequity in sports and recreation can lead to multiple barriers for effective integration and participation. Studies have shown that in the absence of policies and practices of inclusion, gender diverse individuals are less likely to participate in sports than heterosexual and cisgender peers; have the tendency to drop out of sports more frequently than heterosexual and cisgender peers, or feel that medical interventions are necessary to continue participation; and experience social isolation if they remain in excluding sport environments (Giannitsopoulou, 2020).

History of gender-based inequity in competitive sport can be traced back to Gender Verification Testing (GVT) in 1936 which was proposed after the Berlin Olympics due to fears that men would masquerade as women to have an advantage over female athletes. This expanded in 1968 to a mandatory Gender Verification Testing (GVT) in the form of chromosome testing which was introduced to the Olympic Games for all female athletes. Following its introduction, intersex people were routinely kicked out of competition and publicly shamed. GVT has a long history in international sports and has focused almost exclusively on female, trans and intersex athletes. No male athlete has ever been barred from international competition because of higher than average levels of testosterone. From that beginning, athletes continue to face many barriers to participating in sports such as gendered changing rooms and being unwelcome to participate in certain leagues or teams. Many sports are divided into men's and women's based on the concept of the gender binary. This is a barrier to people who do not fit into society's cisnormative expectations of male and female and those whose identities fall outside this binary model.

## KEY FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR EQUITY WITHIN SPORTS AND RECREATION

Promoting and creating conditions for good health and wellbeing cannot be understood without understanding key foundational principles. Based on a comprehensive literature review, several best practices in the sports and recreation context were identified for equity-deserving groups. These best practices were structurally identified under broad key principles for equity. Each of these principles are integrally tied to each other and can best be understood as nested within each other.

- **Reconcili-Action:** Taking active steps to respond to recommendations of Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ensure Indigenous principles and ways of knowing are embedded in all aspects of the work. Specifically, recognizing the unique differences between Indigenous communities and honoring their diverse traditions.
- **Accessibility<sup>4</sup>:** Meet needs of communities with disabilities including non-obvious/visible disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, diverse populations from different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, ages, and body types to ensure that they are able to fully engage and participate in sports and recreation.
- **Sustainability:** Create spaces, programs, services and systems that seek to positively impact social, economic and environmental spheres for future generations not just for individuals but communities, and the environment.
- **Inclusion, Welcoming and Belonging:** Ensuring all individuals irrespective of background, race, religion, ability, socio-economic status, gender or sexual identity among other identities feel that they can participate and engage in sports and recreation. There are cultural safety considerations made in the space. Belonging is a sense of security and support, when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group/community.

The following sections present the results of the best practices literature review, organized by key principles of equity. Under each principle, outcomes of the research are consolidated and presented under five operational aspects: spaces, environment, services, policies, procedures & practices, and training & HR. The operational aspects are further divided into subcategories

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<sup>4</sup> The City of Calgary's Sport for Life Policy defines "Accessible" as means factors that align with the ability for individuals to participate in Sport. This is achieved through the removal of barriers impeding access, which may include social, financial, geographic and physical barriers. The result of accessibility is that everyone is able to participate in all aspects of society. The Social Well Being Policy uses the following definition: Accessibility means removing barriers to access specifically for people with disabilities (which may include but is not exclusive to physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities) to participate in City Services. This project has expanded on these definitions based on community input.

signifying domains of practice. Specific notes are made under each subcategory to denote specific equity-deserving groups (EDGs).

- **Spaces:** How are the physical spaces organized and designed? Are there any special features or accommodations?
- **Environment:** What are the ways in which the environment of the facility supports inclusiveness and equity? What are the intangible ways in which people feel supported, equitable and welcomed?
- **Services:** How are services meeting the needs of diverse populations within the facility?
- **Policies, procedures and practices:** How is the facility including policies, procedures and practices to increase access, safety, usability and inclusiveness for equity deserving groups?
- **Training and HR:** What are the ways in which the facility is supporting its staff to serve equity deserving groups? How has the hiring practices and policies been adapted to better represent the community of diverse needs?

## 1. RECONCILI-ACTION

Taking active steps to respond to recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ensure Indigenous principles and ways of knowing are embedded in all aspects of the work. Specifically, recognizing the unique differences between Indigenous communities and honoring their diverse traditions.

SPACES	
Community Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Consult and get informed consent for Indigenous individuals when designing public spaces.</li><li>2. Spaces should respect and reflect indigenous cultural values and customary beliefs. This can be represented with the materials and artwork used for the space, e.g., use of natural resources such as wood.</li></ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wanuskewin Heritage Park <a href="https://www.earthscapelay.com/project/wanuskewin-heritage-park-interpretive-playground/">https://www.earthscapelay.com/project/wanuskewin-heritage-park-interpretive-playground/</a></li></ul>

ENVIRONMENT	
Community Partnerships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Promote sustainability within recreation centers/programming by involving organizations in partnerships with each other to collaborate on how to best serve in the best interests of the Indigenous population.</li><li>2. Collaborate with Indigenous nations, Indigenous led/focused organizations, and educational institutions to implement sport, recreation and wellness programs specifically designed for Indigenous communities.</li><li>3. Develop links with provincial sport and multi-sport service organizations that enhance the development of Indigenous communities.</li></ol>

	<p>4. Establish partnerships with local parks and recreation departments and school districts to enable use of facilities at low or no cost.</p>
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SERVICES	
Culturally Responsive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate recreation, sport and physical activity with Indigenous cultural and traditional practice, connection to the land, and relationship with the Creator.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support and promote outdoor recreation and the revival of traditional outdoor activities.</li> <li>b. Develop an Indigenous lifelong physical activity pathway that reflects holistic approaches, traditional activities and cultural practices.</li> <li>c. Create a smudge room. Smudging is an Indigenous tradition used as a blessing. Having smudge rooms or locations to smudge or allow to have smoke in the area is beneficial for Indigenous populations and adherence to their customs.</li> <li>d. Create culturally relevant programming as this key to promoting inclusion within Indigenous communities, e.g., pow wows, drumming circles, and other traditional games and activities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Ensure diverse Indigenous perspectives are included in programming rather than a singular pan-Canadian approach.</li> <li>3. Enable community-based planning and implementation of sport/recreation/physical activity projects that increase opportunities and access.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Canada Soccer and Sport for Life  <a href="https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ILTPD_Sept2019_EN_web.pdf">https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/ILTPD_Sept2019_EN_web.pdf</a></li> <li>● Cape Croke Park  <a href="https://capecrockerpark.com/activities/powwow">https://capecrockerpark.com/activities/powwow</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Indigenous Sport for Life – Long-Term Participant Pathway. This is designed to help sport and physical activity leaders and organizations across Canada enhance their understanding of how to support Indigenous participants and athletes in their programming and services offered. The purpose of these resources is to increase the percentage of Indigenous children who become physically literate, define a pathway for Indigenous athletes into high performance sport, and to increase the number of Indigenous peoples who are active for life.</li> <li>● Fort McKay Northern Spirits  <a href="https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/young-alberta-football-rivals-share-traditional-cree-smudge-before-kickoff-1.5528944">https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/young-alberta-football-rivals-share-traditional-cree-smudge-before-kickoff-1.5528944</a></li> </ul>
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POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES	
Decolonize policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reflect and create decolonizing sports and recreation’s Anti Racism and EDI policies. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish a framework and resources to support the implementation of policy, decision-making and resource allocation that enable mainstream sports and recreation organizations to deliver programs and services that fit an Indigenous context and result in meaningful Indigenous participation in an organization.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Complete a provincial assessment of availability of facilities on reserve or close by off reserve.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ISPARC. (2009). <i>Aboriginal sport, recreation and physical activity strategy - ISPARC.</i>  <a href="http://isparc.ca/pdf/asrpa_strategy.pdf">http://isparc.ca/pdf/asrpa_strategy.pdf</a></li> </ul>
Indigenous Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create opportunities for Indigenous communities to feel empowered to take control of their wellness and to think more proactively and creatively about increasing physical activity.</li> <li>2. Build youth empowerment opportunities especially for youth during times when they are more likely to engage in risky behaviours Sutherland (2021).</li> </ol>

Communications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce and make available promotional material that profiles Indigenous people role modeling positive lifestyles through sport, recreation and physical activity at a secondary and post-secondary level.</li> <li>2. Develop targeted campaign to increase the number of Indigenous athletes participating in sports and recreational programming.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada Soccer, FIFA <a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/musqueam-artwork-fifa-23-1.6594845">https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/musqueam-artwork-fifa-23-1.6594845</a></li> </ul>

TRAINING AND HR	
Capacity Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand training on addressing bias, improving knowledge and capacities that specifically pertain to Indigenous communities.</li> <li>2. Provide training and information to individuals and organizations on ways they can contribute and enhance the reconciliation movement in Canada.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Canada Soccer: Canada Soccer offers online training that can educate participants about Indigenous Culture, regarding the history, traditions, values, and beliefs of the Canadian Indigenous population. This includes an online training module that educates participants on the history, beliefs and values of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples, as well as a workshop module that provides training and support to Indigenous coaches. <a href="https://coach.ca/indigenous-coaching">https://coach.ca/indigenous-coaching</a></li> </ul>

Knowledgeable /Lived Experience Staff	1. Hire full-time regional coordinators with working knowledge of First Nations and Métis culture to enable and support increased community participation.
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## 2. ACCESSIBILITY

Meet needs of communities with disabilities including non-obvious/visible disabilities and/or chronic health conditions, diverse populations from different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, ages, and body types are able to fully engage and participate in sports and recreation.

SPACE	
Design/Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow current accessibility standards of The City of Calgary (See the <a href="#">link</a> for more information on the current Access Design Standards). Key actions include:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure there are accessible ramps and/or elevator access within the building;</li> <li>b. Accessible bathrooms; barrier-free pathways; wide doorways and aisles to accommodate wheelchairs/scooters;</li> <li>c. No loose cables across walking areas, smooth floors, and washrooms that are wheelchair accessible (University of Alberta, 2021).</li> <li>d. Create comfortable spaces for service animals to rest as well as accessible toileting and watering facilities nearby.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of British Columbia recreation services  <a href="https://recreation.ubc.ca/home/inclusive-rec/ability-and-accessibility/">https://recreation.ubc.ca/home/inclusive-rec/ability-and-accessibility/</a>            EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, sensory needs, and seniors</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Ensure physical spaces have accessible signage:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use of braille and auditory directions for visual and hearing impairment, this may include using voice apps or any new technologies to assist individuals.</li> <li>b. Large print documentation, easy to navigate digital technologies, clear signage (identifying location and directions)</li> <li>c. Use of different languages widely spoken in Calgary - English, French, Tagalog, Punjabi, and</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Mandarin.

- d. Use graphics and symbols for neurodiverse individuals.

Example:

- Adams Adventure

<https://www.tollandct.gov/recreation-department/pages/adams-adventure>

EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, neurodiverse, ethno-cultural/newcomers and seniors

3. Ensure individuals of all genders, sexuality, cultures and backgrounds can use spaces:
  - a. Offer change stalls, washroom stalls, and shower stalls that are gender neutral spaces (including appropriate signage);
  - b. Every stall has a door for privacy to avoid individuals or teams having to make special requests- important for individuals who may identify as trans, individuals who may be uncomfortable about their own bodies, have personal/cultural/religious beliefs changing in front of others difficult, or a history of sexual abuse or violence. Locker rooms have been historically spaces where 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals have faced discrimination and creating separation in design can partially support this.
  - c. Reduce/or have zones free of mirrors of the recreational center. This is particularly important for gender-diverse individuals, among 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Campus Sports & Recreation others, who may suffer from gender dysphoria.
  - d. Make sure there are lactation rooms, changing tables in both bathrooms, and family changing rooms for parents and nursing mothers.

Example:

- Canada Games Centre

<https://canadagamescentre.ca/news/universal-change-room-now-open/>

- University of British Columbia

<https://recreation.ubc.ca/home/inclusive-rec/ability-and-accessibility/>

- Jasper National Park

<https://www.jasper.travel/discover-jasper/lgbtq/>

- Atlas Tube Recreation Centre  
<https://www.lakeshore.ca/en/explore-and-play/community-centres.aspx>  
 EDGs: Gender and ethnocultural/immigrant/newcomer communities - women
4. Create sensory friendly or low sensory spaces. People with physical, neurodiverse and intellectual disabilities may find themselves to process information differently from others. For example, sensory processing may be different for people who have autism. Therefore, it may be appropriate to consider how sensory processing can be made equitable for these individuals (Cooke, 2023; Inclusive Sport Design, n.d.):
- a. Offer the individuals the choice of colour, pattern, and textures to ensure that neurodiverse individuals can stimulate or calm down environments when needed, e.g., mood lighting to allow for change of colours of the room.
  - b. Provide the individuals the ability to control and personalize the space they find themselves in.
  - c. Ensure stimuli such as proximity, acoustics, temperature and smell are considered when designing spaces.
  - d. Include spaces with auditory cues and textured surfaces for easy movement and engagement.
  - e. Provide access to assistive listening devices; roving microphone;
  - f. Limit unnecessary background music;
  - g. Provide seating available near the presenter for lip reading;
  - h. Ensure the place is well-lit space for an interpreter if needed.
  - i. Adjusting lighting to reduce glare and flicker.
  - j. Providing earplugs and headphones for auditory isolation and input.
  - k. Using softer, less brightly colored equipment or adding sensory-friendly activities and equipment.
  - l. Adjusting lighting to reduce glare and flicker.
  - m. Communication: clear and concise language with visual aids.
- Example:
- Inclusive Sport Design

	<p><a href="https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-sport#:~:text=Communication%20is%20key&amp;text=It's%20important%20to%20use%20clear,comfor table%20in%20the%20sport%20environment">https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-sport#:~:text=Communication%20is%20key&amp;text=It's%20important%20to%20use%20clear,comfor table%20in%20the%20sport%20environment</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Autism Nature Trail, Sensory room <a href="https://www.rhinouk.com/case-study/jakes-sensory-world">https://www.rhinouk.com/case-study/jakes-sensory-world</a> <a href="https://autismnaturetrail.com/trail-map/">https://autismnaturetrail.com/trail-map/</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, diverse neurodivergent communities</p>
Reach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure sports and recreation spaces are easy to reach such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure accessible parking near sites.</li> <li>Assess and take steps to ensure proximity to bus stops or train stations that can be accessed by diverse populations who may have challenges in mobility.</li> <li>Coordinate with transit operators to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transit options for individuals to get to and from the activities.</li> <li>Spaces are comfortable and easily accessible for all ages, which includes pavement type; continuity on side-walks; urban furniture for resting, green spaces with trees, benches, tables and fountains (Xue, Sedin, &amp; Zurlo, 2019).</li> <li>Spaces are barrier free and have points of interest, such as no potholes, good lighting, and legible and clear signage for directions. For other considerations for physical accessibility for seniors, please refer to best practices for those with reduced mobility/physical disabilities.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbide Park <a href="https://www.galvestoncountytexas.gov/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/60/573">https://www.galvestoncountytexas.gov/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/60/573</a> <a href="https://playpowercanada.ca/blog/designing-a-senior-park/">https://playpowercanada.ca/blog/designing-a-senior-park/</a></li> <li>High Park, Toronto <a href="https://www.highparktoronto.com/">https://www.highparktoronto.com/</a></li> <li>Example: City of Oshawa, Durham region transit <a href="https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/routes-and-schedules/on-demand-specialized.aspx">https://www.durhamregiontransit.com/en/routes-and-schedules/on-demand-specialized.aspx</a></li> </ul>

	EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, sensory needs, and seniors
Cost	<p>1. Create spaces that are free or have a low cost to have access to facilities. These spaces should be well maintained and adequately funded for continuity.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List of Toronto free or low cost Recreation Facilities  <a href="https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/free-lower-cost-recreation-options/">https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/recreation/free-lower-cost-recreation-options/</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, diverse age communities, diverse socioeconomic communities</p>

SERVICES	
Offering choice and autonomy	<p>1. Consider adjusting activities to fit diverse routine, as they may have a strong need for routine and structure and may be resistant to changes. Choice and autonomy foster a more comfortable environment in the long term for members of the community. Choices could be for equipment and options for activities. For example, giving them options for visual aids or having different activities in the sensory room, e.g., tunnels, musical touch wall, etc.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive Sport Design  <a href="https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-sport#:~:text=Communication%20is%20key&amp;text=It's%20important%20to%20use%20clear,comfortable%20in%20the%20sport%20environment">https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-sport#:~:text=Communication%20is%20key&amp;text=It's%20important%20to%20use%20clear,comfortable%20in%20the%20sport%20environment</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities</p>

## ENVIRONMENT

### Language/Communication

1. Promote the use of people first, inclusive language as well gender neutral pronouns and language with staff members and signage used.
  - a. Adopt a Language Guidelines document aimed towards moving away from direct oppressive language and deficit based language, to person centered language (ex. person who uses a wheelchair), sometimes even further to radically affirming language.

Example:

- Toronto Metropolitan University Rec centres  
<https://www.torontomu.ca/recreation/services/Inclusive-accessible-change-spaces/>
- Mount Royal University  
[https://www.mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/view/10lyxO\\_3TugMMUVQj73Wk2IBIm4Koz5j](https://www.mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/view/10lyxO_3TugMMUVQj73Wk2IBIm4Koz5j)  
EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, diverse age communities, diverse socioeconomic communities; gender diverse

2. Provide recreation programs, facilities, and information in different languages or have interpreters to promote diversity and have easier access. Having programs done in different languages can inspire newcomers to attend (Cultural Bridges Inc., n.d.).

Example:

- SportSign  
<http://www.sportsign.org/who.html>
- BC Deaf Sports Federation  
<https://bcdeafsports.bc.ca/bcdsf-launches-sport-interpreter-grant/>  
EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities and diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomers communities

	<p>3. Promote and launch accessible forms of communication for Individuals who identify as deaf, deafblind or visual impairment. This is could in form of signage, providing real time interpreters, braille visual aids, etc.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• City of Edmonton <a href="https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_people_with_special_needs/services-hard-of-hearing-or-deaf">https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_people_with_special_needs/services-hard-of-hearing-or-deaf</a> EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, diverse neurodivergent communities</li></ul> <p>4. Provide communication that is accessible to both recreation leaders and the community. This means using social media, newsletters, and door to door outreach. Other methods can include signage, boards, and photos and other signalers. This can ensure that communities are able to receive information and have the opportunity to choose.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Using promotional tactics to show inclusion of para-athletes such as social media platforms, website accessibility and include content that supports athletes with physical disabilities.</li><li>b. Communication of Gender Diverse Policy: Organizations should ensure that material can be readily found online or in public. There should be a statement or guiding principles of some sort that lists out their commitment to protect these individuals.</li></ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University of Alberta - Becoming Para Ready. <a href="https://www.ualberta.ca/steward-centre/resources/becoming-para-ready.html">https://www.ualberta.ca/steward-centre/resources/becoming-para-ready.html</a> EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities, Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer communities</li></ul>
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TRAINING AND HR	
Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Train staff members on accessibility. These include accessible customer service, accessibility training, and human rights code.</li> <li>2. Build capacity among multiple staff to use communication devices and apps including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices, operate specialized wheelchairs or other supportive equipment for individuals with disabilities.</li> <li>3. Train and educate staff members on how to create a safe space for neurodivergent individuals.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government of Ontario  <a href="https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility">https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities, Diverse gender and sexual communities, diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer communities</p>
Knowledgeable /Lived Experience Staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire full-time staff with lived experience or with working knowledge of diverse capacities, backgrounds, cultures, languages etc.</li> </ol>



### 3. SUSTAINABILITY

Create spaces, programs, services and systems that seek to positively impact social, economic and environmental spheres for future generations not just for individuals but communities, and the environment.

SPACES	
Adaptive	<p>1. Consider the space as whole and implement a plan of action that is long term and allows for continuous growth and improvement. Ensure considerations for the environment, diverse EDGs and overall community are considered in planning.</p> <p>EDGs: Diverse EDGs</p>
Pro-Environmental	<p>1. Provide gathering space for community members to gather outdoors and indoors.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using local products and bamboo tableware items is a sustainable choice for a picnic table. Or use chairs made of used (kart) tires or wood (for more eco-friendly and indigenous design).</li> <li>Use recycled bean bags, art and furniture or workwear made of recycled cotton for your employees.</li> </ol> <p>2. Undertake steps to conserve energy and the environment.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select sustainable equipment: Explore high-quality recycled materials, which are a great sustainable choice.</li> <li>Provide different waste disposal options, e.g., compost, refundable, recyclable, and waste disposal bins.</li> <li>Use motion light sensors: To prevent that lights won't be switched off after leaving a room, recreation facilities can use sensor-controlled lights that respond to motion. It reduces the electricity consumption, which is better for the environment and saves you money.</li> <li>Invest in alternative energy sources such as solar or wind energy.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, MB  <a href="https://www.assiniboinepark.ca/">https://www.assiniboinepark.ca/</a></li> </ul>

	EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities, Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer communities
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ENVIRONMENT	
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Green spaces	<p>1. Planting trees, bushes, and flowers indigenous to the area encourages a healthy ecosystem’s growth. The outdoor recreation space will be much healthier and easier to maintain when native species are used. These native plants create a habitat for diverse wildlife.</p> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities, Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer communities</p>
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SERVICES	
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Encourage Long-term Participation	<p>1. Address personal and structural barriers for newcomers to build a sustainable and inclusive recreation program and services. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Individual level: facilitators help build confidence and self-esteem.</li> <li>b. Structural level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. programs should be free or at reduced cost.</li> <li>ii. programs should be in proximity to neighbourhoods or near public transportation.</li> <li>iii. programs should address language barriers in all forms of communication (e.g., in registration forms).</li> <li>iv. programs should be cognizant of community experiences, such as busy work schedules and diverse work schedules.</li> <li>v. Programs should coordinate with ethnocultural and service providing organizations to fill gaps.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer</p>
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	communities
Pro-environmental	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide customers with sustainable activities and services. Examples include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Zero emissions activities, e.g., electric karting</li> <li>b. Activities that require less space: these lower your gas and energy bills, e.g., Escape Rooms, X-cube, Virtual Reality</li> <li>c. Outdoor activities: ziplining, building your own raft or stand-up paddling.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, Diverse intellectual capabilities and neurodivergent communities, Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant, racial, and newcomer communities</p>

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES	
Support Long-term Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prioritize children and adolescents with disabilities in policies and funding to increase participation amongst them (Calgary Adapted Hub).</li> <li>2. Improve monitoring of key settings (evidence of accessibility, inclusivity of infrastructure), remove ableism from existing reporting benchmarks and focus on both quantity and quality of activity and focus on active participation, fun, and feeling satisfied. EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities</li> <li>3. Consider pairing persons with a buddy or mentor, structuring opportunities for social interaction, and building an atmosphere that celebrates strengths and achievements to provide opportunities for interaction.  Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Sport Design <a href="https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-">https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/blog-posts/tips-for-including-people-with-autism-in-community-</a></li> </ul> </li> </ol>



## 4. INCLUSION, WELCOMING AND BELONGING

Ensuring all individuals irrespective of background, race, religion, ability, socio-economic status, gender or sexual identity among other identities feel that they can participate and engage in sports and recreation. There are cultural safety considerations made in the space. Belonging is a sense of security and support, when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group/community.

SPACES	
Adaptable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure flexible spaces that include different features that make it multifunctional for all ages, e.g., playground for children, skate park/outdoor recreation for adolescents, and benches/game table for senior citizens (Sundevall, &amp; Jansson, 2020)                       Example:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanshan Hillside Park  <a href="https://www.swagroup.com/projects/sanshan-hillside-park/">https://www.swagroup.com/projects/sanshan-hillside-park/</a>  <a href="https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20191028-the-cities-designing-playgrounds-for-the-elderly">https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20191028-the-cities-designing-playgrounds-for-the-elderly</a>                      EDGs: Diverse age communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Embed sensory needs while planning design for spaces to ensure neurodiverse individuals, recreation in a safe and calming space.                       Example:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imaginarium Sensory room  <a href="https://www.wssra.net/programs/imaginarium.php">https://www.wssra.net/programs/imaginarium.php</a>                      EDGs: Neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Celebrate cultural diversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage community building and cultural diversity within sports and recreation facilities. This includes creating different recreation programs that cater to the diverse population in the area, e.g.,</li> </ol>

	<p>soccer field, cricket field, and hockey field in an outdoor park/indoor recreation center. This also allows the public to be exposed to different forms of recreation and encourages intercultural participation.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul Coffey Park  <a href="https://www.mississauga.ca/events-and-attractions/parks/paul-coffey-park/">https://www.mississauga.ca/events-and-attractions/parks/paul-coffey-park/</a>  EDGs: Diverse ethnocultural, immigrant, newcomer communities and diverse socioeconomic communities</li> </ul>
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ENVIRONMENT	
Culture safety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a culturally safe recreation program by understanding the barriers faced by diverse cultural communities when it comes to access and comfort. This includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Addressing language barriers, ways in which information is shared (verbally, visual aids, and infographics). For information sharing, ensure the information shared considers the group receiving it, i.e., the preferred language of communication, visual aids for video such captions, and so on are encouraged.</li> <li>b. Addressing attire or clothing related barriers. For instance, Muslim women would like to be comfortable wearing their hijab.</li> <li>c. Addressing participation barriers related to how programs are designed and delivered. For instance, some immigrant women prefer to engage in women only spaces depending on their background. (Elsayed, Basheer, Odaa, Grgic, &amp;, Zaharijevic, 2020):</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oregon State University Rec centre  <a href="https://recsports.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/member-story-elhum-oskui">https://recsports.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/member-story-elhum-oskui</a>  EDGs: Diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomers, indigenous communities</li> </ul>

Community Building	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a sense of belonging and community to reduce social isolation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Creating age appropriate programming and activities for seniors.</li> <li>b. Embedding culturally diverse programs and activities for immigrants and newcomers.</li> <li>c. Offering opportunities for diverse disabilities to interact with each other in safe and open ways.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temple of Heaven Park  <a href="https://www.timetravelturtle.com/china/temple-of-heaven-park/">https://www.timetravelturtle.com/china/temple-of-heaven-park/</a>  EDGs: Diverse age communities, especially seniors, Diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomers, Indigenous communities</li> </ul>
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase visibility of signs of inclusion (i.e. pride flags, stickers, pins, etc.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Using diverse people and bodies on posters and promotional materials.</li> <li>b. Inclusion of pronouns on staff name tags, and changing of signage to explicitly state gender-neutral spaces.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Deepen engagement with social justice and equity focused issues. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support queer, trans, minority, and Indigenous creators, users, partners, etc. by highlighting their work, uplifting their causes, and ensuring a discrimination-free experience within the facility.</li> <li>b. Integrate 2SLGBTQ+ advocacy with other social identity-based advocacy efforts (e.g., race, gender, ability, Indigenous) for consistent and ongoing collaboration inside and outside of Pride month.</li> <li>c. Invest in year-round contributions to and partnerships with 2SLGBTQ+ and other communities and causes, especially those led by Black, Indigenous, and diverse Racialized communities, rather than limited-time Pride and Reconciliation month donations or partnerships.</li> <li>d. Utilize your power and influence as an organization/governing body to advocate for 2SLGBTQ+ people, minority groups, and Indigenous communities including refusing to do business with homophobic and transphobic institutions or lobbying on the side of 2SLGBTQ+, minority, and Indigenous groups' rights and protections.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Premier League Soccer  <a href="https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/19/sport/lgbt-premier-league-social-intl-spt/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/19/sport/lgbt-premier-league-social-intl-spt/index.html</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomers, Indigenous communities</p>
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SERVICES	
<p>Meaningful involvement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage racial and cultural diversity throughout the facility. The design of spaces should include community engagement, with community members being part of the design process to ensure all modes of activities and area use are being considered.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moakley Park, Boston  <a href="https://www.stoss.net/journal/equity-engagement-community-parks">https://www.stoss.net/journal/equity-engagement-community-parks</a>  <a href="https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/incd2021/chapter/making-multicultural-parks/">https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/incd2021/chapter/making-multicultural-parks/</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomer communities</p>
<p>Offering diversity in options</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create sport and recreation activities that cater to individuals with physical disabilities, e.g., wheelchair basketball. Availability of these activities makes it easier for individuals to find a sense of belonging and makes it easier to participate.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusive outdoor court in Dallas  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEf8oZXBTRs&amp;ab_channel=DiscoverwithDallas">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEf8oZXBTRs&amp;ab_channel=DiscoverwithDallas</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities</p>



2. Offer programming to increase recreational participation in women and girls:
  - a. Offer a variety of activities to ensure wide appeal, and within these ensure there are new and different types of activity included (particularly important for younger women).
  - b. Offer 'bankers' (activities whose popularity is well established, e.g. fitness and dance-based classes such as Zumba).
  - c. Bring a friend discount (or equivalent) to highlight the social benefits.
  - d. Offer loyalty card/programme to incentivise repeat participation.
  - e. Provide the opportunity for participants to be trained up for a special role which makes them feel they are part of the activity.
  - f. Make it shareable (for example encourage posting of achievements and successes on social media).
  - g. Be flexible (ready to scale up as momentum slowly builds up) Sport England, 2014).

Example:

- The Queer gym, Oakland, CA  
<https://www.thequeergym.com/>
- Women Center of Calgary, Calgary, AB  
<https://www.womenscentrecalgary.org/connect-with-others/girls-programs/>  
EDGs: Diverse gender communities

3. Create programs and services that target diverse populations, such as immigrants/newcomers or 2SLGBTQ+ communities through targeted program design. Although spaces might be inclusive and/or accessible, diverse population groups might not feel comfortable accessing that space due to uncertainty of acceptance.

Example:

- Colour the trails, Calgary, AB  
<https://colourthetrails.com/about-colour-the-trails/>  
EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities, Diverse immigrant/newcomers, Indigenous communities

	<p>4. Offer flexible options especially for neurodiverse individuals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer a mentor to support engagement in different activities.</li> <li>b. Structure opportunities for social interaction such as team building exercises or group activities, and building a supportive atmosphere that celebrates strengths and achievements of said individuals (Inclusive Sport Design, n.d.).</li> <li>c. Offer a balance of flexibility and routine to foster opportunities that are easy to navigate.</li> <li>d. Create a safe platform for addressing complaints.</li> <li>e. Be ready to modify equipment, policies, or generally the environment to adjust to needs.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive Sport Design  <a href="https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/">https://www.inclusivesportdesign.com/</a>  EDGs: Neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities</li> </ul>
<p>Overcoming Barriers - Lack of Information</p>	<p>1. Help newcomers and immigrants overcome lack of information barriers as it will make it easier for them to participate and feel included. This lack of information can be in regard to opportunities, finances, transportation, and time commitment. Refer accessibility and inclusion sections for examples.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport for Life Canada (Gosai, Carmichael, Carey, &amp; Rand, 2018)  <a href="https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Inclusion-for-New-Citizens.pdf">https://sportforlife.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Inclusion-for-New-Citizens.pdf</a>  EDGs: Diverse ethnocultural/immigrants/newcomers, Indigenous communities, Diverse socioeconomic statuses</li> </ul>

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND PRACTICES

<p>Physical safety</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create policies to address safety concerns for individuals with physical disabilities using adaptive sports to minimize chances of injury - unintentional or inflicted.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer tandem bicycles to those with visual or hearing impairment to enjoy cycling as there is someone else there to guide if needed.</li> <li>b. Provide safety training to recreation leaders and other members of staff.</li> <li>c. Equip spaces with signage that makes it easier for individuals to ask for help.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forge Beach Playground  <a href="https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/eagle-independent/2022/04/18/everybody-can-access-aac-boards-aid-children-speech-impairments/7170542001/">https://www.wickedlocal.com/story/eagle-independent/2022/04/18/everybody-can-access-aac-boards-aid-children-speech-impairments/7170542001/</a>              EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities</li> </ul>
<p>Address actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create policies to address inappropriate language &amp; actions.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use of gender inclusive language (name change or pronouns) to address LGBTQphobic language, inappropriate comments &amp; jokes.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Create procedural structures for addressing 2SLGBTQ+ athlete or staff coming out to make it comfortable and friendly.</li> <li>3. Create policies that address locker room concerns. These can include addressing issues like: insecurities about one’s own body; religious beliefs that make changing in front of others difficult; a history of sexual abuse or violence             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide an area for 2SLGBTQ+ persons to change.</li> <li>b. Provide options to rent locker rooms on a permanent basis for privacy and safety.</li> <li>c. Building a policy that prevents discrimination, harassment and hate.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Create a trans-inclusion policy focused on complaint resolution procedure or create a reporting system to encourage individuals facing discrimination, bullying or harassment, or witnesses to report.</li> <li>5. Provide tailored support to trans clients during transition through policies and procedures.</li> </ol>

	<p>6. Ensure strategic frameworks (vision, mission and values), policies relating to ethics and conduct (including prohibited grounds for discrimination), employment policies and employment agreements, policies governing athletes and coaches, including athlete agreements, and other orientation materials are focused on equity, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>a. Review &amp; reassessment of current policies for implementation.</p> <p>EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities</p>
<p>Sensitivity Language</p> <p>in</p>	<p>1. Create a Language Guidelines document that encourages use of appropriate language that does not disadvantage or disparage diverse communities.</p> <p>a. Use person centered language (ex. person who uses a wheelchair).</p> <p>b. Discourage directly oppressive language (ex. cripple).</p> <p>c. Discourage deficit based language (ex. wheelchair bound).</p> <p>d. Instead of using "Vulnerable populations", "at-risk populations", "our most vulnerable, at-risk people", use "people and communities facing barriers" or "people disadvantaged by the system".</p> <p>e. When metaphors or comparisons are used, consider whether a stereotype or a negative view of a social group is inadvertently being promoted. For example, "welshing on a bet," "I'm so blind," or "being gypped".</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mount Royal University  <a href="https://www.mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/view/10lyxO_3TugMMUVQj73Wk2IBIm4Koz5j">https://www.mtroyal.ca/Applications/PoliciesAndProcedures/view/10lyxO_3TugMMUVQj73Wk2IBIm4Koz5j</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities, &amp; Indigenous communities</p>
<p>Diversity scheduling</p> <p>in</p>	<p>1. Create a schedule that accommodates holidays and occasions of diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association</li> </ul>

<https://www.spra.sk.ca/Blog/2017-03-03-engaging-newcomers-in-canadian-programs/>

EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities, & Indigenous communities

## TRAINING AND HR

Training and capacity building

1. Engage and train staff in sensory friendly training, awareness and knowledge building.
  - a. Staff members should be aware of the ways to interact with different children and families, in particular with people who have disabilities.
2. Hire inclusion ambassadors to support the development of programs that are related to inclusion.
3. Provide learning or training opportunities that build the capacity of staff, volunteers, participants and spectators.
  - a. Hire individuals who belong to the community can foster a safer and comfortable environment that is conducive to inclusion.
  - b. Train staff on 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion, including the awareness of vocabulary and 2SLGBTQ+ language, and being equipped to handle harassment reporting. Staff to learn to differentiate between gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
  - c. Ask staff to identify their pronouns and birth names and its usage is embedded in the practices, policies and procedures.

Example:

- Calgary Adaptive Hub

<https://www.calgaryadaptedhub.com/>

EDGs: Individuals with physical disabilities, neurodivergent and diverse intellectual capabilities communities

<p>Inclusion Guidelines</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create inclusion onboarding material for new hires to ensure they are trained before their first day of work.</li> <li>2. Create organizational guidelines that support transitioning staff and members. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide clear directions for administrators, coaches and anyone involved in supporting a person’s process of transitioning.</li> <li>b. Provide the space and opportunity for the individual to be able to communicate what support they need, like being addressed by their chosen name and pronouns; take time off from training or competition for any medical treatments related to their transition, if needed.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McMaster University, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES) <a href="https://rec.mcmaster.ca/job-opportunities/inclusion-gender-equity-advocate-intramural-sports">https://rec.mcmaster.ca/job-opportunities/inclusion-gender-equity-advocate-intramural-sports</a></li> <li>• Jane Finch Centre <a href="https://www.janefinchcentre.org/announcements/inclusive-sports-rec-worker">https://www.janefinchcentre.org/announcements/inclusive-sports-rec-worker</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities</p>
<p>Overall approach</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure gender and cultural inclusive attire.</li> <li>2. Include images and language that are culturally sensitive and reflect the diversity within community.</li> <li>3. Enable all staff and members to wear attire that is appropriate and that they feel comfortable wearing. This includes while traveling as part of the organization or as a team.</li> </ol> <p>EDGs: Diverse gender and sexual communities, diverse ethno-cultural groups</p>
<p>Community Partnerships in Decision making</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Include members of the community in the decision making process around programming.</li> </ol> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Inclusion Plan <a href="https://www.phila.gov/media/20220601160004/Rec-For-All-Philadelphia-Parks-Recreation-Inclusion-Plan.pdf">https://www.phila.gov/media/20220601160004/Rec-For-All-Philadelphia-Parks-Recreation-Inclusion-Plan.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p>EDGs: Diverse intellectual capabilities including neurodivergent individuals</p>

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