



All
Abilities
Welcome

Connecting Communities through Sport and Physical Activity

Opening Doors to
People of All Abilities



ACTIVE
LIVING
ALLIANCE

FOR CANADIANS
WITH A DISABILITY

Who is the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability?

- Created in 1989, to motivate and assist Canadians with a disability to become more physically active
- Born out of 1986 Jasper Talks, where physical activity providers and disability organizations discussed the lack of programs for people with a disability
- National nonprofit, voluntary sector organization who envisions a society where all Canadians lead active, healthy lives.
- Built on an alliance of individuals, agencies and national associations that facilitates and coordinates partnerships among the members of its network.



ALACD Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles that we recognize as we develop and deliver our programs and projects:

- Quality of life is a fundamental right
- Empowerment is the key
- Every community should be involved
- Equal access must be guaranteed
- Respect and dignity are the foundation



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Who ALACD Serves

People of all abilities:

- Sensory
- Physical
- Learning
- Mental Health
- Chronic Disease
- Intellectual

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Our Members



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Representatives of:

- Communities
- Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity
- Rehabilitation
- Education
- Health
- Research
- Older Adults
- Fitness Facilities

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Our Partners

- Provincial/Territorial affiliates of Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
- Canadian Disability Participation Project
- Canadian Paralympic Committee

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What is Inclusive Physical Activity?

Inclusive physical activity reflects a person's ability to take part in an activity as they choose to, based on their own ability, needs, aspirations, and environment. Inclusion is explained through the following principles:

- Inclusion is *meaningful* participation in an activity while learning new skills, with every participant accepted and supported by peers
- Activities are modified and individualized as necessary
- Expectations are realistic yet challenging
- Assistance is provided only to the degree required
- There is dignity-of-risk and choice available

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Why is Inclusion Important?

For Canadians with a disability, physical activity:

- increases overall health
- reduces the risk of developing illnesses or conditions that are generally linked to an inactive lifestyle
- reduces the risk of developing secondary conditions specific to a person's disability
- lessens some of the negative effects that are associated with a disability
- makes daily living easier
- increases overall quality of life



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All Abilities Welcome

- AAW is aimed at promoting greater inclusion of Canadians with a disability in community recreation programming
- Program launched in 2006 in response to the lack of inclusive physical activity opportunities available to Canadians with a disability
- Canadians with a disability are often hesitant to participate in physical activity, recreation, and sport activities and many fitness facilities or clubs seem intimidating
- AAW aims to work with service providers around how to be more welcoming and inclusive, and is committed to supporting them in their efforts.
- AAW also aims to empower those with a disability to choose and pursue an active, healthy lifestyle



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Tips for creating a Welcoming Environment

- Treat all participants as you would like to be treated
- Avoid making assumptions or generalizations
- Pity is not proper
- Treat people with a disability as people first
- Do not insist on offering help where it is not needed
- Do not paint people with a disability with the same brush
- Ask, listen, and do not assume!
- Each person is the expert on their disability
- Do not lean on a wheelchair as it is part of personal space
- Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their caregiver, parent or friend
- Different degrees of disability mean that people may have different limitations
- Do not treat disability as a tragedy

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Language with Dignity

In general, focus on *respect*

- Speak to a person with a disability in the same way you would want others to speak to you
- Place the person before the disability
- Focus on accurate language
- Remember that body language is just as important as the words you use
- Patience, respectfulness, and a little creativity can go a long way in facilitating greater ease of communication with individuals with a speech impediment



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The Challenge beyond Inclusion



For many people with a disability:

- Access to programs is limited by economic, social, transportation, intimidation, and even cultural barriers
- Many people with a disability live at or below the poverty line
- Often, people with a disability may have low self-confidence, which can lead to a sense of resignation and disempowerment
- When accessing physical activity is difficult, as it can be so often, many people with a disability may simply give up
- With the right support, people with a disability not only benefit physically from physical activity, but socially and emotionally



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How Organizations can Proactively Reach Participants with a Disability



- Identify a “Disability Champion” among the staff or clientele of your organization to invite people with a disability from the community to visit your program
- Organize and promote a “meet and greet” for your organization so that people with a disability can meet your staff, ask questions, and gain a level of comfort
- Develop and promote fitness classes specifically for people with a disability
- Encourage people with a disability to bring a peer to assist them, and charge only the person with a disability
- Have assistants available to assist people with a disability who may require help
- In addition to competitive sport programs, develop some cooperative physical activities geared to the strengths of all participants
- Connect with rehabilitation therapists and disability sport organizations to share the fact that you are an organization that embraces inclusion



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The Challenge from a Program Provider Perspective

- Staff members that are stretched thin by current programming demands
- The feeling that persons with a disability may not be able to take part in many activities, and lack of knowledge in how to adapt activities to accommodate them
- The sense that including people with a disability in current programming may detract from the experience of other participants
- The fear that persons with a disability may get injured and that the facility would be held liable
- The perception that accommodating people with a disability would demand extensive facility renovations which the organization can not afford



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Another Perspective

- Staff training focused on simple inclusion strategies, creative thinking, and the willingness to make inclusion work, can make all the difference
- Including people with a disability will make recreation activities richer through mutual learning and cooperation
- Injury is a risk for anyone participating in recreation; those with a disability will likely know their limitations, even more so than other participants
- Although accommodating people with a disability may be made easier through facility renovations, renovating attitudes will make the biggest difference
- This change can be inspired from within through a willingness above all to include people of all abilities at your facility

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Accessibility Ideas

We encourage recreation organizations to accommodate persons with a disability to participate fully, in a modified form, in an active parallel capacity, passively, or as an informed observer.

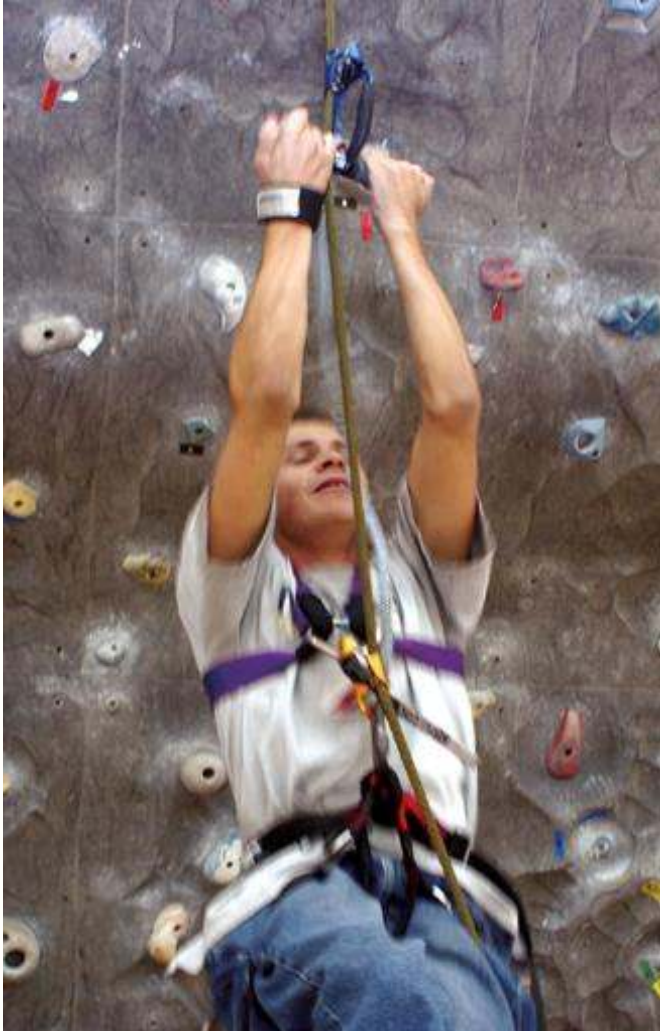
Accessibility ideas include:

- Persons with a disability may have limited arm strength and may be unable to play basketball but could play floor hockey
- One-on-one may help with some activities
- Providing verbal cues for someone visually impaired participating in an aerobics class
- Allowing two bounces instead of one for a person in a wheelchair playing tennis
- Tying a plastic bag around a ball to enable blind participants to play soccer



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Eight Steps to Inclusion

By following these eight simple steps, you will be laying the groundwork for participation of persons with a disability in your programs:

- Ask about the disability
- Ask about support
- Define safety concerns
- Assess skill
- Set realistic objectives
- Select activities
- Make modifications
- Implement and evaluate

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Contact Information

To learn more about All Abilities Welcome or to book a speaker to deliver a presentation at your event, call or write to us.

**Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability /
Alliance de vie active pour les Canadiens/Canadiennes
ayant un handicap**

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