Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education

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Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)/Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) Vision provides adult educators with the charge to create inclusive program environments:

> *We envision a future where every adult in Massachusetts has the knowledge, skills, and support they need to lead the life they aspire to live.*

Programs should base their decisions regarding disability-inclusion on the Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education and according to the ACLS Indicator for Program Quality 2 (Equitable Access), which sets the following standard for all programs:

> *Standard 2.3 The program has documented strategies to provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students with self-disclosed disabilities and/or makes referrals within and outside the agency.*

This *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* document is a resource to help adult educators increase the inclusion and effective support of persons with disabilities in their programs. Increased inclusion of persons with disabilities can be accomplished by designing disability-conscious environments and activities at all levels of program delivery: by creating disability-inclusive organizational culture, by infusing Universal Design for Learning in the instruction, and by providing easy access to accommodations for all learners. *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* focuses on creating inclusive disability program culture and increasing access to accommodate teaching and learning. *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* uses person-first ("person with disability") and identity-first language ("disabled people") language interchangeably.

Research on the best practices for accommodated teaching, learning, and testing in adult education is scarce and its findings inconclusive. Nonetheless, the research provides a broad source of information on strategies used by adult educators who accommodate learners with disabilities. *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* is informed by the teaching and learning accommodations and strategies mentioned in research on disabilities, particularly learning disabilities, in adult education (for example, Gregg, 2012; Hock 2012).

In addition to research from the field of education, *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* draws on literature from disability studies, a field that encompasses voices from disability scholars and activists alike. From this literature we can conclude that disability experience is both shared by all disabled people, and also unique to each person with a disability. Programs can address the commonality of the experience by creating an atmosphere of respect and acceptance of disability diversity, as well as through adherence to disability and rehabilitation laws.

Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education contains several forms to help you in the process of increasing disability inclusive programming. The Basic Accessibility Checklist for ADA Coordinators and Administrators is the instrument that will help you begin to evaluate your program's ADA compliance and disability-conscious program administration, and assess your current preparedness to welcome disabled adult students into your program. The Brief Basic Disability Screening is designed to help providers and students begin the

conversation about students' desire and need for required professional assessments and accommodations. The Common Accommodations for Adult Learning form contains common accommodations for adult learners which you can use to inform your discussion with students about their past and present accommodation needs. Finally, the Preferred Accommodations Plan is a form you may choose to record students' accommodation priorities and monitor the implementation of their accommodation plan.

The Appendices section of the *Basic Disability Screening for Adult Education* offers a sample of a referral letter, brief information on testing accommodations, a selection of sources for creating a disability inclusive culture in your program, a list of selected external resources for expanding your knowledge on disability experience in adult education, and examples of inclusive strategies for teaching.

This resource recognizes that adult learners have diverse cultural identities that are reflected in the different ways they understand and use the words "disability" and "accommodation." Some students may associate these terms with negative connotations, some may regard them as parts of their lives, while some may view them as important to their sense of pride and the recognition of their belonging to the global community of disabled people. To honor cultural preferences of students and to acknowledge disability as a form of human diversity, program staff should emphasize their commitment to inclusion of students into their program regardless of the difficulties or diagnoses they may report to staff.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND DISABILITIES

Current research on persons with disabilities who are English language learners is limited and by and large inconclusive, but it could be said that it offers a simple message to the practitioners: language acquisition is a complex process that is complicated by a variety of factors, including the presence of specific disabilities. Further, since the standardized diagnostic criteria for specific learning disabilities are established without much regard for the diversity of human experience, diagnosing a learning disability is particularly hard for persons who are evidently members of non-dominant cultures. Thus, estimates on the prevalence of learning disabilities are anecdotal and unreliable.

However, for the purposes of adult education programming, a hint of the prevalence of learning disabilities in adult English language learners may come from the statistics on dual identified students in the K-12 system. According to the US Department of Education data from 2017, across all grades, 14% of students who were English language learners were eligible for special education services due to a disability, and the most commonly identified disability for these students was a specific learning disability.

While some researchers and practitioners organize their thinking and recommendations around discerning the learning disabilities from language acquisition (see, for example, Haas, Eric M., and Julie Esparza Brown. *Supporting English Learners in the Classroom: Best Practices for Distinguishing Language Acquisition from Learning Disabilities*, Teachers College Press, 2019), others recommend holistic approaches that view the two conditions as inseparable parts of students' experience. For example, there is a growing interest in the application of Response to Intervention (RTI) (RTI Action Network) and Universal Design to Learning (WIDA consortium). Alongside this, we must remember that building an alliance with each student is a prerequisite for the application of any methodology.

CREATING DISABILITY INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

Perhaps the most important starting point in designing a disability inclusive program is the inclusion and promotion of disability culture in all aspects of programming. When an agency's culture reflects respect and recognition of disability culture, students and staff with disabilities will more likely feel accepted and valued. Like members of other marginalized groups (e.g. women, ethnic minorities) people with disabilities are commonly assigned attributes that obscure their individuality, their power, and the strength of their communities. And like other minoritized groups, people with disabilities do not have an interest in upholding these misrepresentations about their identity.

However, an understanding of a personal experience of disability is not acquired by asking persons with disabilities how disability is defined in their respective racial/gender/ethnic communities, but by first and foremost recognizing that disabled people are a part of disability culture (which we may ask them to describe to us). Based on the literature we can say that disability culture is not a collection of all imaginable views on disability, but a distinctive biosocial arrangement of diverse human beings, all of whom have a stake in developing definitions of disability that fit their experience and connect to the experiences of other persons with disabilities. Therefore, creating an atmosphere in which each student feels that they themselves can define their own level of difficulty in completing tasks or accessing goods and services is a crucial step in designing a disability inclusive program. You can find a selection of sources to help you design such a program in the Appendices section of this resource.

As you work on developing and strengthening the culture of inclusion in your programs, you may wish to conduct a self-assessment of your program's disability-inclusion readiness and basic ADA compliance. The Basic Accessibility Checklist for ADA Coordinators and Administrators will help you evaluate the areas of your program that need improvement in terms of compliance, as well as the basic components of disability-inclusive programming. After the assessment, you may use the Transition Plan for ADA Compliance to outline the steps your program will take to make the improvements.

SUGGESTED STEPS

In addition to creating the culture of belonging and acceptance and establishing the basic ADA compliance, program staff can also increase inclusion of persons with disabilities in adult education through collaborating with each student with disabilities to develop accommodated teaching and learning plans. The Brief Basic Disability Screening is designed to help program staff begin the conversation with students about their disability-related accommodation needs and to guide the process of development of a Preferred Accommodations Plan for each student who discloses disabilities or difficulties with performing tasks related to daily activities, including learning. The process may be carried out by instructors, advisors, or ADA coordinators in collaboration with the student. It consists of three steps to be completed in tandem with students individually or as a group activity:
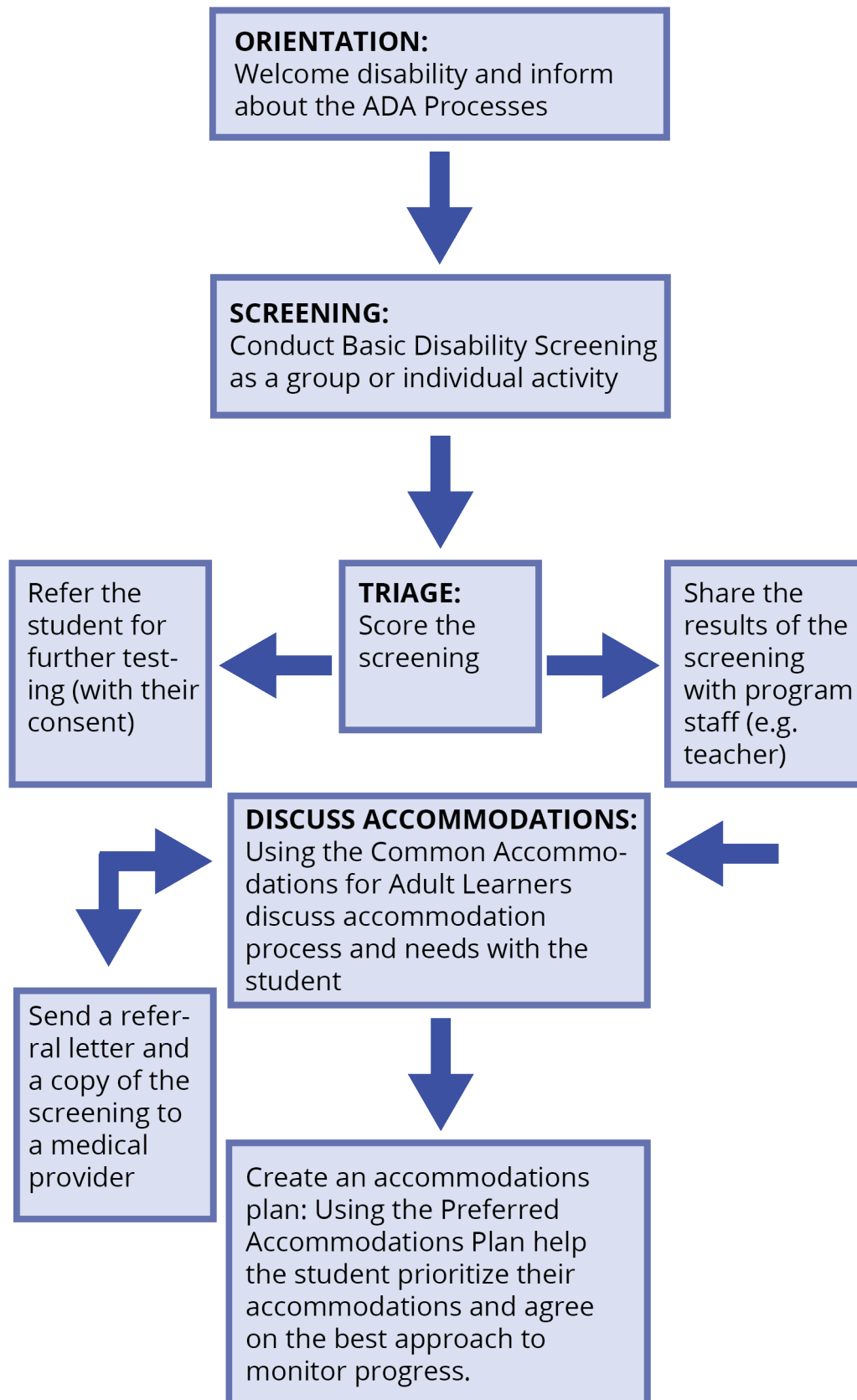
1. **Use the Brief Basic Disability Screening to start the conversation** about disabilities and barriers and facilitators of learning. If the screening indicates that the student has difficulties accomplishing many of the tasks the screening addresses, refer the student for further testing. It is important to keep in mind that diagnostic

criteria for disabilities, including learning disabilities, are rather complex. Therefore, a diagnosis of a disability should be assigned by a highly trained professional. As advisors, teachers, and administrators in adult education, you can only assess if the student would benefit from a professional evaluation. The Brief Basic Disability Screening is a short assessment tool that helps guide your conversation with students about the kinds of difficulties they may experience in everyday life which can, in turn, manifest as a diminished capacity to learn and difficulty participating in scholastic activities. This tool was created to identify accommodation needs for all students, including those with and without diagnosed medical conditions or prior IEPs. To communicate that you are not asking about private medical or educational records and history, you may wish to emphasize to each student that this process aims at identifying the learning accommodations for every learner in your program. In the Appendices section you will find a list of possible providers to whom you may refer the student.

2. **Use the list of Common Accommodations** to identify possible accommodations for the learner. Feel free to add items to this list based on your experience and knowledge of accommodating strategies for teaching and learning.

3. **Use the Preferred Accommodations Plan** to summarize preferred accommodations for teaching and learning. The student may choose to share this plan with relevant program staff. To be effective, the Preferred Accommodations Plan should be updated periodically. The review date may vary on the nature of the preferred accommodation. For example, if you are going to be using an accommodation that the student has successfully used in the past, the review date may be later than the review date for a new accommodation. In either case, the review date should be set in collaboration with the student and should be before standardized post-testing. During the review meeting, you may choose to re-engage in the process of re-designing student's Preferred Accommodations Plan (all three steps) or you may choose to review only the accommodations marked for the review. You may choose to ask the student to bring examples of their work or informal assessments to share with you so that together you can assess if the accommodation has improved their performance.

To create the atmosphere of acceptance and to adhere to the purpose of this process – to increase access to accommodations in teaching and learning – introduce this three-step process by explaining its purpose (e.g. "to make learning easier") and the objective (e.g., "to design the Preferred Accommodation Plan to help the program and students understand how teaching and learning could be made easier for each student"). Keep in mind that although you may wish to complete this process with your students so as to give them an opportunity to share the information about a diagnosed disability, students are not required to share this information with you.

Brief Basic Disability Screening Process for Adult Learning Flowchart

ORIENTATION:
Welcome disability and inform about the ADA Processes

SCREENING:
Conduct Basic Disability Screening as a group or individual activity

Refer the student for further testing (with their consent)

TRIAGE:
Score the screening

Share the results of the screening with program staff (e.g. teacher)

DISCUSS ACCOMMODATIONS:
Using the Common Accommodations for Adult Learners discuss accommodation process and needs with the student

Send a referral letter and a copy of the screening to a medical provider

Create an accommodations plan: Using the Preferred Accommodations Plan help the student prioritize their accommodations and agree on the best approach to monitor progress.

Brief Basic Disability Screening Instructions

Brief Basic Disability Screening protocol is based on the recommendations issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), Version 2.1a of the Clinician Form for International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health ("ICF Checklist"). The ICF Checklist reflects the multidimensional character of health and disability. Notwithstanding critiques of this approach, the checklist remains the preferred tool for identification of disability across the world and is influential in the field of rehabilitation in the United States. This modified screening tool is based on the section of the ICF checklist which measures difficulties in performance of tasks in a person's lived environment.

For the purpose of *Brief Basic Disability Screenings for Adult Education Programs*, the ICF Checklist has been modified to meet two goals: 1) to help the practitioner start the conversation about students' experience with disability in order to encourage the provider and the student to devise Preferred Accommodations plan, and 2) to help the student identify possible areas they may wish to discuss with a medical or rehabilitation provider. Access the full text of ***WHO's ICF Checklist*** instrument.

Note that SABES created a version of the Long Brief Basic Disability Screening in addition to the more abbreviated version included in this document. If you would like to access the Long Brief Basic Disability screening, here is the PDF version, and the Word version. This Long Disability Screening is an adapted and condensed version of the WHO instrument. The main content difference between these two instruments is that the Long Brief Basic Disability Screening organizes conversation between the provider and the student around several performance domains (e.g., mobility and self-care), while the Brief Basic Disability Screening only focuses the conversation around two domains.

To complete the Brief Basic Disability Screening, ask each student in your program to give numerical value to the level of difficulty (Performance Qualifier or PQ) with which they are performing the named task or activity. After asking each question, check for the student's comprehension prior to recording the answer. You may perform this check by asking the student to answer in full sentences or to rephrase the question prior to giving the answer. If using an interpreter for this task, provide the screening instrument to the interpreter well ahead of time so that they may adequately prepare for the screening session. After recording the level of difficulty of each task, probe the student to give you detailed examples of difficult tasks or aspects of tasks. Next, inquire about the environmental factors (e.g., format of learning materials, transportation, etc.) that make the task easier (facilitator) or harder (barrier).

The Performance Qualifier (PQ) indicates the extent of participation restriction in the named activity by describing the person's actual performance of a task or action in his/her/their current environment. Because the current environment brings in the societal context, performance can also be understood as "involvement in a life situation" or "lived experience" of people in the actual context in which they live. The PQ measures the difficulty the respondent experiences in doing things, assuming that they want to do them. For all items marked at and above moderate difficulty, refer the student to a health or rehabilitation professional. Use the following to assess the difficulty:

Performance Qualifier: *Performance Extent of Participation Restriction*

PQ	Description	Meaning
0	**No difficulty**	Person has no problem.
1	**Mild difficulty**	Problem is present less than 25% of the time, with an intensity a person can tolerate and which happens rarely over the last 30 days.
2	**Moderate difficulty**	Problem is present less than 50% of the time, with an intensity, which is interfering with the person's day to day life and which happens occasionally over the last 30 days.
3	**Severe difficulty**	Problem is present more than 50% of the time, with an intensity that is partially disrupting the person's day to day life and which happens frequently over the last 30 days.
4	**Complete difficulty**	Problem is present more than 95of the time, with an intensity which is totally disrupting the person's day-to-day life and happens every day over the last 30 days.

Here is how your Brief Basic Disability Screening grid may look like:

Short List of Performance Domains	PQ	Example	Environmental Barrier or Facilitator
LEARNING AND APPLYING KNOWLEDGE			
Watching/Seeing	1	*None given*	
Listening	2	*Hears better when looking at the person who is speaking*	*Helps when seated in the front of the classroom*
Learning to read	2	*Words smudge together*	*Bright light makes it worse*
Learning to write	3	*Punctuation does not make sense; does not like to write*	*Did not like English teacher in school; words blend together on page*
Learning to calculate (arithmetic)	2	*Does not understand division*	*Calculator helps*
Solving problems	2	*Can balance money in the bank, difficulty solving word problems in math, does not understand what word mean*	*It is always harder when the problems are long, have lots of words that mean different things*

It is important to keep in mind that the ICF Checklist and the PQ scale have been created to standardize diverse human experiences in order to manage public health needs of communities across the globe. Any process of standardization is laden with cultural habits of people who create the standards and who guide their implementation. In addition, standards and measures are often based on the perspectives derived from knowledge banks created by professionals who live and work in culturally and economically dominant regions of the world. In other words, as standardization procedures, both the ICF Checklist and the PQ scale are somewhat culturally biased.

As participants in the standardization of ACLS-required process of inclusion of students with disabilities in your programs, you are in a position to help your students interpret the ICF standards as they intersect with the students' own cultural understanding of the terms like "difficulty" and "performance." With this in mind, prior to assigning PQ values make sure that the student has understood how PQ scaling works. For example, to illustrate the relationship between the scale and the performance in this standardization instrument, you may ask the student to rate the difficulty in lifting four objects in your office (a pencil, a desk, a small bookshelf, and a filing cabinet filled with paper). As recorders of student answers, you act as a cultural broker between your students' personal and cultural experiences and the standardized PQ measures. Use the last two columns of the Brief Basic Disability Screening Form ("Example" and "Environmental Barrier and Facilitator") to show how the PQ value you are assigning to each task reflects the student's lived experience.

Brief Basic Disability Screening

Student: _____   Date: _____   Assessor: _____

Current Medical Diagnosis (only if the student wishes to disclose):

Short List of Performance Domains	PQ	Example	Environmental Barrier or Facilitator
LEARNING AND APPLYING KNOWLEDGE			**What makes it easier/harder?**
Seeing: How difficult is it to see text/white board…?			
Hearing: How difficult is it to see your teacher/classmates…?			
Reading: How difficult is it for you to read?			
Writing: How difficult is it for you to write?			
Calculating/using numbers: How difficult is math?			
Solving multi step problems: How difficult is it to figure out steps to solve a problem?			
Speaking/Holding a conversation: How difficult is it to speak to your teacher/classmates/neighbors/others?			
Other:			

Short List of Performance Domains	PQ	Example	Environmental Barrier or Facilitator
MAJOR LIFE AREAS			
Lifting: How difficult is it to lift things? Are you in pain when lifting?			
Walking: How difficult is it for you to walk? Are you in pain when walking?			
Managing stress levels: How difficult is it for you to manage stress?			
Sleeping, resting: How difficult is it to get enough sleep?			
Accessing community supports: How difficult is to for you to get around and be social?			
Other:			
ENVIRONMENT What surroundings help you learn?			
Quiet space (e.g. ear mufflers, white noise, and/or other equipment used to block external sounds)			
Noise (e.g., listening to music while learning)			
Extra time on task			
Other			

Notes:

Common Accommodations for Adult Learners

Student: _____   Date: _____   Assessor: _____

	USED SUCCESFULLY IN THE PAST	WILLING TO TRY	NOT INTERESTED
READING: What helps you read easier?			
Reading out loud on own			
Reading together with someone			
Being read to by someone			
Text-to-speech software			
Use of colored overlays			
Use of colored paper for handouts/printer materials			
Visual guides (e.g., graphic organizers, story maps)			
Note taking while reading (e.g., to generate questions, identify story structure)			
Highlighting, underlining, text marking			
Other			
WRITING What helps you write better?			
Telling the story out loud before writing it			
Use of word prediction			

	USED SUCCESFULLY IN THE PAST	WILLING TO TRY	NOT INTERESTED
Use of text to speech and dictation software/features			
Use of spell checkers			
Revising and editing multiple times			
Other			
COMPREHENDING AND MEMORIZING Does it help you to visualize what you are learning? Does it help you hear the content repeatedly? Does it help you to repeat in your own words what you heard? Does it help you write about what you are learning?			
Instructor shows me how something is done			
Instructor tells me how I could understand a story or a problem			
Recording lectures to listen multiple times			
Viewing recorded videos by the teacher			
Other			
Use of short glossaries for common terms (math, science, literature)			
Use of closed captioning in videos			
Use of visual guides: graphic organizers and story maps			
Seeing or drawing pictures of what I am learning			

	USED SUCCESFULLY IN THE PAST	WILLING TO TRY	NOT INTERESTED
Knowing what I am expected to learn from an activity			
Working in pairs; hearing how peers understand the content			
Knowing the cultural context of the characters/story/word problem			
Asking questions			
Pausing/rephrasing each sentence after hearing it or reading it			
Pausing and retelling/rewriting each paragraph			
Making lists on my own			
Making my own glossaries			
Other			
MATHEMATICS When does math make sense?			
Use of visual organizers (e.g., causal maps, graph, diagrams)			
Use of manipulatives (e.g., blocks, cubes, sticky notes, index cards)			
Use of math/logic/simulation software (e.g., strategy games, Gizmos)			
Other			

Notes:

Preferred Accommodations Plan

Student: _____   Date: _____   Assessor: _____

Preferred Accommodation	Environmental Facilitator	Start Date	Review Date
Example: Sit in front of the classroom	*Desk close to the whiteboard*	*XX/XX/XX*	*XX/XX/XX*

Basic Accessibility Checklist for ADA Coordinators and Administrators

Program: _____ Date: _____ Assessor: _____

	YES/NO	DOCUMENTATION
1. Program has a designated staff member who will respond to accessibility inquiries.		
2. Program documents the designated staff member's commitment to confidentiality regarding accessibility inquiries and disability-related information about a student.		
3. A designated staff member is knowledgeable about appropriate and available instructional and testing accommodations.		
4. Program disseminates contact information for the designated staff member widely and regularly.		
5. Program requires all staff to complete a disability-related training.		
6. Program allows alternative admissions tests and/or test administration procedures.		
7. Program includes a statement regarding availability of accommodations on all written program information.		
8. Program has a defined ADA grievance protocol that is published and transparent to all staff and students.		
9. Program provides assistance for obtaining evaluation and/or accommodations from out-of-program resources (e.g., Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission).		
10. Program regularly disseminates information about common classroom accommodations to all staff.		
11. Program provides materials in alternative media (Braille, large print, audiotapes) upon request.		
12. Program includes a statement regarding availability of alternative formats for learning materials upon request.		

13. Program allows students to borrow available copies of materials for an extended period of time needed to create alternative formats, if they are not provided by the program.		
14. Program allows use of adaptive technology when requested.		
15. Program provides adaptive technology.		
16. Program welcomes students' use of their own adaptive technology.		
17. Program provides assistance for obtaining adaptive technology.		
18. Program creates a welcoming environment for students with disabilities (e.g., displays art that represents disabled people).		
19. Program encourages instructors or creates incentives for instructors to design lessons that include examples from disability history and the work of scientists with disabilities.		
20. Program promotes the view that disability is a form of human diversity.		
21. Program recognizes and addresses ableism to the same extent it recognizes and addresses racist and gender oppression.		
22. Program creates accessible events (e.g., graduation celebrations). Read the *Accessible Meeting & Event Checklist*.		
23. Program's website is accessible. Read the *Checklist for Creating Accessible Websites*.		
24. Program's physical space is accessible. Read the checklists for accessible physical spaces: *ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities* and *ADA Readily Achievable Barrier Removal Checklist for Existing Facilities*.		
25. Program adheres to recommendations for creating accessible documentation. Read the resources for creating accessible documents: *Microsoft* and *Google*.		

Notes:

Transition Plan for ADA Compliance

Assessment Date: _____   Review Date: _____   Assessors: _____

Assessment Area	Improvements to be made	Timeline	Priority Level	Charge Person
ACLS ADA Standards: 1. *ADA Coordinator* 2. *Public Notice* 3. *Grievance Procedure* 4. *Self-Evaluation* 5. *Transition Plan*				
Disability culture and disability justice				

Accommodations, assistive technology and alternative media				
Information sharing				
Staffing (Changes to staff responsibilities)				

Professional development				
Other				

Appendices

Appendix A: A sample of a referral letter

Appendix B: Resources for Formal Assessment, Accommodation Testing, and Further Study

Appendix C: Sources for Creating a Disability Inclusive Culture in Your Program

Appendix D: Research Articles for Further Reading

Appendix E: A Selection of Instructional Strategies

Appendix A: Sample of a referral letter

Your stationary/logo/address
Date

Dear Doctor/Institution (the more personal the address, the better),

I am writing to recommend further testing for [first and last name]. As a part of our service as adult educators at [your] program, we conduct Brief Basic Disability Screening on a regular basis. The screening that we use is the modified version of the protocol issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), Version 2.1a of the Clinician Form for International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health ("ICF Checklist"). The ICF Checklist reflects the multidimensional character of health and disability.

The scoring is based on the Performance Qualifier which quantifies the difficulty of performing a task on the scale of 0 to 4, with 0 being no difficulty and 4 being complete difficulty.

In our program we use the modified version of the ICF Checklist to identify students who may benefit from further medical assessments and as the basis for determination of their needs for accommodated learning.

In [month, year] I conducted this screening with [first name]. The results indicated that [she/he/they] is/ are in need of further medical assessment and attention. As noted in the attached document, [first name] scored particularly high in the areas of [name the areas]. I hope that you will consider providing additional assessments or referring [first name] for further evaluation. Should you have any additional questions or need more information please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
XXXXX
Title
Phone
Email
Address

Appendix B: Resources for Formal Assessments, Accommodation Testing, and Further Study

1. **The following entities may fund and conduct assessments:**

   - [Workman's comp (MA Department of Industrial Accidents)](#)
   - [Veterans' Administration](#)
   - [Mass Rehab Commission](#)
   - [Mass Developmental Disabilities Council](#)

   Medicare/Medicaid: any qualified approved venue. The student can access this funding by speaking to their medical provider. Student may choose to share the results of the Brief Basic Disability Screening with their medical provider in order to obtain a referral for a medical/psychological evaluation covered by Medicare/Medicaid.

2. **The following providers advertise expertise in learning assessments of adult students:**

   - [Learning Disorders Clinic, Mass General](#)
   - [Massachusetts Dyslexia Center](#)
   - [Howard Learning Assessment Services](#)
   - [Learning Solutions](#)
   - [Cambridge Center for Neuropsychology and Learning](#)

3. **The following resources provide information on testing accommodations:**

   Note that GED Testing Center provides specific guidelines for evaluations. If you are referring a student for evaluation in order to apply for testing accommodations, they should bring the guidelines to the provider. The guidelines and the accommodation request for GED testing can be found at GED Testing Center: [GED Testing Accommodation Request](#)

   To request accommodations for HiSET, go to the: [HiSET Accommodation Request](#)

   Testing accommodations typically include: extended time, private room, additional break time, reader/recorded audio, large print/screen magnification, scribe/keyboard entry aid, and embedded e-test accommodations. Other accommodations are possible and would be based on the evaluation and advocacy.

Appendix C: Selected sources for further study of disability in adult education:

Further accommodations to consider adding to the screening or discussing with your students:

- LINCS Publication on learning disabilities in adult education:
  [Learning to Achieve: A Professional's Guide to Educating Adults with Learning Disabilities](#)
- LINCS self-paced training on learning disabilities in adult education:
  [LINCS Learning Portal](#)
- Job Accommodation Network website where you can search for accommodations based on disabilities: [JAN Publications & Articles Regarding Learning Disability](#)
- LDonline website that contains many strategies for accommodated teaching and learning: [All About Learning Disabilities and ADHD](#)

ADA compliance resources:

- New England ADA resources center where you can ask specific questions about the ADA compliance: [New England ADA Center](#)
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:
  ACLS ADA Standards: [Massachusetts ADA Standards](#)

Appendix D: Selected research articles for further reading:

Genesee, F., Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, W., & Christian, D. (2005). English language learners in U.S. schools: An overview of research findings. Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 10, 363–385.

Gregg, N. Increasing access to learning for the adult basic education learner with learning disabilities: evidence-based accommodation research. J Learn Disabil. 2012 Jan-Feb;45(1):47-63. doi: 10.1177/0022219411426855. Epub 2011 Nov 7. PMID: 22064949.

Haas, E. M., and Esparza Brown, J. Supporting English Learners in the Classroom: Best Practices for Distinguishing Language Acquisition from Learning Disabilities. Teachers College Press, 2019.

Hock, M.F. Effective literacy instruction for adults with specific learning disabilities: implications for adult educators. J Learn Disabil. 2012 Jan-Feb;45(1):64-78. doi: 10.1177/0022219411426859. Epub 2011 Nov 7. PMID: 22064951.

Mavis, C. (2006). Adult education and disability studies, an interdisciplinary relationship: research implications for adult education. Adult Education Quarterly 56.308-322. Doi: 10.1177/0741713606289661.

McCormick, K. (1991). Myth #14: All literacy problems are the result of learning disabilities. The Literacy Beat 4(2), 1-4

Reynolds, S. L., Johnson J. D., and Salzman A.J. (2012) Screening for learning disabilities in adult basic education students. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 25(2), 179-195; https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ994285.pdf.

Shewcraft, D.F., & Witkop, E. (1998). Do my ESOL students have learning disabilities? Pittsfield, MA: Western Massachusetts Young Adults With Learning Disabilities (YALD) Project.

Taymans, J.M. Legal and definitional issues affecting the identification and education of adults with specific learning disabilities in adult education programs. J Learn Disabil. 2012 Jan-Feb;45(1):5-16. doi: 10.1177/0022219411426857. Epub 2011 Dec 1. PMID: 22134963.

Appendix E:

A SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Presentation

When presenting content, consider the following presentation design tips:
- Allow students to audio- or video-record a lesson instead of taking notes
- Record your lectures and disseminate the recording
- Read the directions or problems out loud to the student
- Increase the font size—enlarging text or using a magnification device
- Increase the contrast or differentiation of information included in visual representations (e.g., using color to help students identify corresponding sides on similar figures)
- Describe visual representations in words
- Reduce the number of words/visuals on a page
- Offer tactile prompts such as raised-line paper or manipulatives
- Provide students with a copy of notes or class presentations before the lesson begins
- Shorten story problems in math by reducing the number of relevant steps needed to respond
- Reduce the reading expectation for word problems (e.g., remove irrelevant information)

Setting

Changes to the setting of instruction or assessments are most beneficial for students who are easily distracted by routine classroom interactions or need support to make the learning environment physically accessible.
- Allow students to pick their own seats
- Create a darker part of the room (e.g., remove some overhead bulbs)
- Designate "quiet area" in the classroom for students who prefer to work alone and minimize interactions
- Allow use of headphones during individual work
- Offer students fidgets and paper/pencils for doodling

Practice Exercises and Tests

When administering practice exercises of tests, consider the following presentation design tips:
- Provide extended time to complete a task
- Break a task into components
- Be transparent about the purpose and the length of assessment (e.g., number and type of questions)
- Build in multiple breaks during class time

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was developed as an approach to inclusive teaching aimed at addressing the diverse learning needs of students in the classroom. It can be applied to course or single class session designs. UDL is founded on three essential principles:

- Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (the "why" of learning)
- Provide Multiple Means of Representation (the "what" of learning)
- Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression (the "how" of learning)

These principles are also understood within UDL as approaches that, respectively, account for learning inquiries like "affective" (why?), "recognition" (what?), and "strategic" (how?). The National Center on Universal Design for Learning provides many helpful sources and videos on UDL.