

Emotional Accessibility



WOMEN'S HEALTH
IN WOMEN'S HANDS
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
STRENGTHEN • SHARPEN • BUILD

What is Accessibility?



- Accessibility is a set of practices, actions and thoughts that consider the spectrum of ability
- Accessibility looks like de-centering "normal abilities"
- Thinking of solutions and options available for those with varying abilities
- Being able and willing to listen, correct and modify behavior to be more inclusive

Emotional Accessibility?



- Considering access needs at an emotional level
- Not using ourselves as a "standard" for what are "normal emotions"
- Respecting and exercising boundaries, trigger warnings
- Asking over assumption
- Understanding that emotional expression looks different for everyone (i.e., not everyone can produce tears)
- Considering the connection between intersectionality and behavior



Emotional Inaccessibility

- Assuming when others are upset/not upset
- Tone policing
- Stigmatizing/unkind views about mental illness and mental health
- Dismissing or deflecting someone's emotions
- Manipulating on an emotional level/ gaslighting

Recognizing our Needs

- Our needs are the things (tone, practices, actions + more) that we require in order to feel safe, respected and cared for
- A good way to recognize our needs is to recognize our values
- What do we care about? What do we respect? What do we mutually require in relationships?

Consent

- An on-going process where we are able to deny or allow access to our physical, emotional or energetic bodies
- The right to have your choices listened to and respected
- Is mandatory for everyone
- Can always be changed, or revoked at any time

Boundaries

- Rules or practices that we need to feel respected and safe
- Things that we like and want more of, and things that we don't want in our lives at all
- Ways that we let others know how we need to be treated
- Crossed boundaries usually lead to mistrust, or lack of safety
- We show people we care about them by listening and respecting their boundaries

Recognizing our Needs

Identifying Needs

- Taking a moment to check: Is there anything I need right now? Do I feel safe? Am I ready to engage in any conversation?

Defining Needs

- Can you identify the emotions coming up? Is there a connection between anything that has happened and anything that you're feeling?

Expressing Needs

- Sharing your needs, even if it's to yourself is a great way to self-affirm. Sharing needs with others helps to self-advocate

Validating Needs

- It is okay and very necessary to state and respect your boundaries – even if that looks like changing your mind. Remember that self-validation helps connect you to you.