

# Neurodiversity Accessibility Checklist

*These suggestions can assist your chorus in creating spaces that are welcoming and supportive of neurodivergent individuals. Many of these suggestions are also relevant for individuals living with mental illness.*

## Lighting and Sound

- Dim light is preferred and can help reduce anxiety.
- Fluorescent lights—especially if buzzing—and flickering lights are distracting.
- Social gatherings held in quieter spaces can facilitate participation.
- Providing earplugs in noisy environments can help to diminish overwhelming stimulus.
- Subtitles can be helpful to make concerts and other events more accessible (CART: Computer-Aided Real Time Translation).

## Rehearsal Etiquette and Seating

- Create space between seats or remove every other chair to allow more freedom of movement.
- Provide different seating options, such as soft and hard seats. Invite singers to sit on the floor or stand.
- Consider allowing friends, family members, or emotional support animals in rehearsal or performance spaces.
- Allow space to fidget during rehearsal for anxiety reduction.

## Food

- Offer a variety of food choices to accommodate texture preferences.

## Interaction

- Create color coding on choir name tags to indicate preferences regarding social interaction (e.g. Green: please approach me, Yellow: only those I'm comfortable with should approach, Red: please leave me alone).
- Do not touch people without their permission.
- Create a separate quiet space where people can rest from interaction when they are feeling overstimulated.
- Invite neurodivergent people into conversations and give them time to respond.
- Create a “no one stands alone” policy to facilitate marginalized individuals feeling welcomed.
- Assign a buddy to help neurodivergent folks navigate the social and musical aspects of choir participation. Facilitate conversations with the pair so that the buddy understands the best way to support in rehearsal or concert settings.
- Plan structured interactions to help people connect.

## Instructions

- Provide written instructions that are clear and easy to follow.
- Let people know exactly what's going to happen and what they need to bring.
- Offer checklists and flow charts about what needs to be done and when.
- When arranging meeting locations, be very specific about where and when. Provide photos of buildings and rooms so that people can prepare themselves for new and potentially overwhelming experiences and have reassurance that they are on the right track.

## Chorus Travel

- Unfamiliar situations can arouse anxiety, so talk to neurodivergent members about their needs and accommodations before embarking on an overnight trip.
- During the overnight trip, have someone (a buddy, section leader, choir director) check in with neurodivergent individuals periodically to see how they are doing.

## Financial Access

- Neurodivergent people can lack stable employment, so scholarships and tiered cost structures, with alternatives such as volunteering, can be important to facilitate participation.