

## TIPS ON HOW TO INCORPORATE MORE ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

### **Introducing Invitational Language**

*Everything I say is a suggestion . . .*

*I invite you to . . .*

*As you explore this exercise, I invite you to explore ways to make it more comfortable for your body/mind . . .*

*As you are ready . . .*

*If it feels comfortable for you in this moment . . .*

*If it feels accessible for you in this moment . . .*

*There are many ways to do this exercise. I will share several, and I encourage you to explore what works best for your body/mind. You may find a different approach works for you and that is welcome. . .*

*If you would like . . .*

**Mindful Ways to Shift Language to be More Inclusive**

<b>Commonly Used Language</b>	<b>More Inclusive Language</b>
<i>Walk around the space.</i>	<i>I invite you to travel through the space.</i>
<i>Let's all gather for our sit.</i>	<i>I invite you to gather for our practice/ meditation; you may choose to sit, stand, or lie down.</i>
<i>Feel your feet on the floor.</i>	<i>If it's available to you, notice which parts of your body are touching a surface.</i>
<i>Ground your sit bones or feet.</i>	<i>Notice gravity in your body, allow wherever you feel weight to beckon your muscles to soften where they can.</i>
<i>Sit with an erect spine.</i>	<i>Notice your inner dignity, allow your body to shape itself around it.</i>
<i>Find a comfortable posture.</i>	<i>Relax your physical form as much as you are able. Allow the shape of your body to support your loving awareness.</i>

**Offering Multiple Options/Variations Without Ascribing a Hierarchy**

Instead of using the term “modifications,” try using the following phrase:

Here are variations of this pose for us to explore.

Verbally share that each variation is worth exploring and not implying that one is better than another.

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*You can explore \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.*

*If \_\_\_\_\_ anchor isn't comfortable for you right now, you might choose \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.*

*You are welcome to close your eyes or cast your gaze softly in front of you.*

*You are also welcome to pause, open your eyes, stand, and/or take a sip of water and begin again.*

### **Creating Ways for Everyone to Engage in an Exercise So No One Is Excluded**

The invitation in this exercise is to [move quickly, to move slowly, or to be in stillness]. Quick or slow in your body may be different than it is in my body. A body in stillness still has some movement and how much movement varies from body to body.

No matter what anyone in the space is doing, they are doing this exercise correctly.

Notice and include your internal movements; your breath, your awareness, and kindly connecting to parts of your body are all subtle internal movements.

### **Cultivating Mindfulness Around Language that Implies What is Possible for People**

<b>Commonly Used Language</b>	<b>More Inclusive Language</b>
<i>This easy exercise . . .</i>	<i>This exercise . . .</i>
<i>Everyone should stretch right now.</i>	<i>If it feels right for your body, I invite you to take a stretch break.</i>
<i>It just takes a moment to . . .</i>	<i>I invite you to practice this next week and see how much time it takes you to do it . . .</i>

**Cultivating Mindfulness Around How We Describe What Students Are Experiencing**

Commonly Used Language	More Inclusive Language
<i>Didn't everyone love that last exercise?</i>	<i>I invite you to take a moment to notice how that last exercise was for you.</i>
<i>We are all having so much fun!</i>	<i>I invite people to share their experience of that last exercise. Was it fun for you? Challenging for you? I would love to hear how it was for you.</i>
<i>Metta practice will open your heart</i>	<i>Lovingkindness and compassion practices can cultivate the heart's capacity to be with what is, with greater ease over time.</i>
<i>This meditation practice will bring you joy and peace.</i>	<i>Notice how you feel during and following your practice of X.</i>
<i>Mindfulness prevents anger and anxiety.</i>	<i>Mindfulness practices can lead to insights about our own thoughts and emotions.</i>
<i>Mindfulness can cure your body.</i>	<i>Mindfulness can lead to having a better understanding of the relationship between your body and heart/mind.</i>

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Commonly Used Language	More Inclusive Language
<i>Be friends with or love your pain.</i>	<i>Finding ease and kindness toward your body and its conditions can be cultivated over time.</i>
Be aware of your whole body.	<i>Bring kind awareness to the areas of your body that are the most comfortable for you to be within this moment.</i>
Bring nonjudgmental awareness to . . .	<i>Becoming nonjudgmental is a process, not a decision. Allow the process to begin with kindness toward your self/body/conditions.</i>
<i>Pain and illness are caused by your mind.</i>	<i>Pain and illness are natural occurrences in a human body and not your fault.</i>
<i>Your anger caused your disease.</i>	<i>You are not to blame for your illness. Let's develop the ability to be with our current condition rather than fight it.</i>
<i>Sit with your pain.</i>	<i>Move tenderly toward areas of pain or illness slowly—for a moment here a moment there—as you are able.</i>

### **Additional Examples of More Inclusive Language**

#### **...with prompts that unfold toward greater understanding**

*Slowly become more aware of your inner speech. What words do you use to describe your illness, pain, disability? Begin to gently replace them with words of kindness.*

*Become aware of your expectations (we all have them). For instance, are you expecting things to be different than they are? If so, remind yourself that what you are aware of is how things are right now. Wishing them to be different only causes stress and discomfort.*

*Allow loving and thoughtful intentions to lead you toward more ease in being with what is.*

### **Using Plain Language**

Avoiding large vocabulary words that people may not be familiar with, and defining words if you need to use them:

*This next movement is a good stretch for your gastrocnemius, or your calf muscles.*

OR

*The next movement is a good stretch for your calves.*

### **Introducing Access Check-Ins**

*We will go around the room and share our names, pronouns, and access needs. An access need is anything you need to participate more fully in today's experience. If your needs are met, let's practice saying, "My access needs are met."*

Examples for in-person access needs: being able to lie down, having the speaker use a microphone, having an ASL interpreter.

Examples for online access needs: captioning, reading comments from the chat aloud, to turn off one's camera.

Alternately, when time does not permit a go-round:

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*I will share several options for how to engage in today's meditation. Please let me know if you have questions about how to adjust the practice to work for your body/mind.*

You can also add access needs as an item on an intake form. Here is some sample language:

*Do you have any access needs for our time together? An access need is anything you need to be better able to participate. Some examples (for virtual events) include captions, having things read aloud from the chat, the option to turn your camera off. Some examples (for in person events) include being able to lie down or stand, having the speaker use a microphone, being able to bring a service animal, practicing in an area free of fragrance.*

### **Resource List**

#### **Web-Based Resources:**

[Ten Principles of Disability Justice - Sins Invalid](#)

[Access Suggestions for a Public Event - Sins Invalid](#)

[The Importance of Being Fragrance Free \(and How-To Guide\) - East Bay Meditation Center](#)

[Jill Satterfield - <https://jillsatterfield.org/>](#)

[India Harville - Embraced Body](#)

[Disability Justice: An Audit Tool](#)

[Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People \(a Disability Justice Primer\)](#)

[Service Dog Law Q and A](#)

[Lavant Consulting \(inclusion consultancy\)](#)

#### **Books**

*Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling* - Cure Eli Claire

*Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* - Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

*The World Could Be Otherwise: Imagination and the Bodhisattva Path* - Norman Fischer

## TIPS ON HOW TO INCORPORATE MORE ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

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### Videos

[“Meet Disabled Dancers Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson: ‘I Feel It in My Wheels’”](#)

(facebook link)

[“Meet Disabled Dancers Alice Sheppard and Laurel Lawson: “I Feel It in My Wheels”](#)

(YouTube link)

[Crip Camp](#) and [Crip Camp Discussion Guide](#)

[Tame the Beast - Lorimer Moseley](#)