

Accessible research practice

Recruitment, consent, session design, and dissemination steps to make a study genuinely accessible to disabled participants and audiences.

Accessibility is part of research rigor, not an add-on for later — treat every item below as a design decision, not an accommodation request to react to.

Recruitment

- ☐ Outreach materials exist in more than one format: plain language, easy read, audio or video with captions.
- ☐ Sign-up doesn't require one specific channel — phone, in-person, and a plain online form are all options.
- ☐ Timeline allows real lead time for interpretation or accommodation requests.
- ☐ Access needs are asked about as a normal intake question, not raised only if someone struggles.
- ☐ Location and virtual options are both offered where feasible.
- ☐ Incentives are structured so participation doesn't put benefits at risk.
- ☐ Recruitment materials have been reviewed by disabled people before launch.
- ☐ There's a named, easy-to-reach contact for access questions.

Consent

- ☐ Consent documents are written in plain language and offered to be read aloud.
- ☐ Accessible formats are available: large print, easy read, audio, translated versions.
- ☐ Participants get real time to review and ask questions before agreeing — nothing is rushed.
- ☐ Capacity and legal representation are considered where relevant, without defaulting to exclusion.
- ☐ A verbal or recorded consent option exists for anyone for whom writing is a barrier.
- ☐ What happens to the data is explained in concrete, specific terms — not just "kept confidential."
- ☐ Consent is reconfirmed at natural breakpoints in longer or multi-session studies.

Session design

- ☐ The venue has a step-free route, accessible parking or transit, and an accessible restroom.
- ☐ Lighting, noise, and a quiet space option have been considered, not just room size.
- ☐ Pacing is flexible, with breaks built in rather than added only if someone asks.
- ☐ More than one way to respond is offered — verbal, written, pointing, assistive technology.
- ☐ Materials are shared in advance when processing time helps.
- ☐ Support people and interpreters are explicitly welcomed, not just tolerated.
- ☐ Virtual sessions have been tested with a screen reader and for caption quality.
- ☐ Facilitators are briefed on plain-language delivery before the first session.

Dissemination

- ☐ A plain-language summary is published alongside the full report, not instead of it.
- ☐ An easy-read version exists for people with intellectual or learning disabilities.
- ☐ Key findings are available as a captioned video or audio summary.
- ☐ Charts and figures carry image descriptions or alt text.
- ☐ A sign-language version of key findings exists where feasible.
- ☐ Files are shared in accessible formats — tagged PDF or structured Word, not scanned images.
- ☐ Findings are shared back with participants directly, not only with funders.

This is a floor, not a ceiling. The most reliable check is consulting disabled people with lived experience in your specific context before you finalize a design.

Want help putting this into practice?

Connect with CometX to talk through your evaluation, research, or reporting needs.