

# Accessibility at AAA

Thursday, September 3, 2020, 1 pm Eastern

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# Accessible Introduction

- Name: Nell, CPACC
- Pronouns: she/her/hers
- Visual description: A white woman with short black hair wearing a headset, thin-rimmed glasses, and a white button-up shirt with a tan virtual background with the AAA logo.
- Position and institution: Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator for the AAA

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# Access Notes

- Accessible slides available on [www.americananthro.org/webinars](http://www.americananthro.org/webinars)
- ASL interpretation is provided and will be prioritized during screen share.
- Professional CART captioning is available by switching on Facebook closed captions.
- Please ask questions and share comments during the live stream. We will respond to them following the slides presentation.
- A recording of this livestream will be available on the [AAA YouTube channel](#) following the event by the end of next week.



# What are we talking about today?

## **15 minutes:**

1. Accessibility & Disability Basics
2. A Brief History of Accessibility at AAA
3. What is AAA Doing?

## **10 minutes:**

4. Questions?

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# Accessibility & Disability Basics

Language about Disability  
& Accessibility

Types of Disabilities  
& Access

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# Language about Disability & Accessibility

- **Disabled people** (identity-first) AND **people with disabilities** (person-first) are both used by different members of the disability community
- **Accessibility** – the commitment to an environment being initially designed so that the greatest number of people can participate without needing to later alter the space to meet individual needs
- **Accommodations** – individualized changes made to an environment after the initial design of a space upon a person's request to meet their needs
- **Access needs** – an individual's environmental, behavioral, physical, attitudinal, and other needs as related to accessibility and accommodations

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# Types of Disabilities & Access

## Examples of disability categories

- D/deaf & hard-of-hearing
- Blind & low vision
- Mobility impairments
- Psychiatric disabilities & mental illness
- Autism spectrum
- Intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD)
- Chronic illness & chronic pain & chronic fatigue
- Learning disabilities

**Sometimes they overlap! People can have multiple disabilities.**

## Examples of types of access

- Physical
- Sensory
- Mental
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Linguistic

**It isn't just about the physical space!**

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# A Brief History of Accessibility at AAA

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# Early Disability Advocacy

- 1992-1995: Commission on Disability developed and presented a report on improving accessibility services at the Annual Meeting
- 2006: Disability Research Interest Group (DRIG) of Society of Medical Anthropology sent a letter to the Executive Board regarding meeting standards and outlining demands

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# Recent Disability Advocacy

- 2014-2015: Disability Access Working Group (DAWG) was formed by Karen Nakamura and Rayna Rapp, DRIG members who joined the Executive Board
  - Developed a full report regarding accessibility and disability in the anthropology profession with recommendations for AAA
  - Ordered an independent audit of the Annual Meeting
- 2016 and on: DRIG Accessibility Advocacy Committee worked with Executive Board and staff to address accessibility and disability issues

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# The Last Two Years

- 2018:
  - Partnered with [The Kyle Duarte Company](#) for interpreting & captioning at Annual Meeting
  - DRIG collaborated with AAA Director of Meetings, Nate Wambold, to develop Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator position
- 2019:
  - First Accessibility & Meetings Coordinator hired

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# What is AAA Doing?

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# Initiating Cultural Change in Anthropology

- Supporting disability culture
  - “People with disabilities have forged a group identity. We share a common history of oppression and a common bond of resilience. ... Most importantly, we are proud of ourselves as people with disabilities. We claim our disabilities with pride as part of our identity. We are who we are: we are people with disabilities.” (Brown, 2002)
- Encouraging collective access
  - “[F]lexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.” (Sins Invalid, 2015)
  - Learn more about one application of collective access in Dr. Aimi Hamraie’s piece, “Designing Collective Access: A Feminist Disability Theory of Universal Design”.

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# Initiating Cultural Change in Anthropology (continued)

- Going beyond ADA compliance to create a more accessible anthropology discipline
- Working with staff to build accessibility & accommodation protocols in all AAA projects
- Collaborating with and learning from Disabled, Deaf, Blind, Autistic, Neurodivergent, Mentally Ill, Chronically Ill, and other disability-adjacent community members

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# AAA's Accessibility Education & Outreach

- Developing and distributing resources for people to learn how to create more accessible presentations, events, documents, resources, materials, etc.
- Guiding and supporting AAA speakers in generating accessible presentations
- #AccessibleAnthro
  - On social media via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn
  - Through *Anthropology News*
  - Through *Weekend Reads*

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# How We're Making AAA More Accessible

- **At in-person meetings** – developing a clear accommodations protocol, providing ASL interpreters and CART captioning for plenary events, establishing a scent-free meeting space, identifying prayer and quiet rooms, designating all-gender restrooms, & providing accessibility tools, such as yoga mats, ear plugs, stim tools
- **At webinars and virtual events** – training presenters in accessibility, providing CART captioning, inquiring about access needs & fulfilling accommodations requests
- **In our publications and communications** – including alt text and image descriptions

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# Accessibility is...

- ... more than legal compliance,
- ... an ongoing and changing effort,
- ... potentially challenging,
- ... a community effort, which leads to cultural change, and
- ... necessary for a more just and equitable AAA, anthropological discipline, and world.

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# Questions?

Learn more about accessibility on our accessibility webpage at [www.americananthro.org/accessibility](http://www.americananthro.org/accessibility)!

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