

YACHAD NEW ENGLAND

KEY TIPS TO RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Celebrate Jewish
Disability Acceptance
and Awareness Month!

Regardless of ability, everyone has their own personality and unique likes and dislikes. That means that not every person is going to enjoy every program. Participation is never mandatory in any program. Sometimes people just want to sit and be around others

Offer positive feedback for any level of participation in an activity. If someone is struggling, don't make a big deal and say "you are doing it wrong," simply encourage their own way of doing things

Start each event with a social emotional check-in, review expectations and the schedule

Give people with speech impediments the time it takes for them to say their thought, don't assume what they will say or cut them off

If it is hard to understand someone, ask them to repeat the phrase with different words, act it out or draw. Sometimes people have escalated emotions when they are misunderstood or dismissed because others don't understand/hear

For participants who are nonverbal, reword your question to provide two clear options ex. "Do you like to listen to music or watch tv?" Assign locations to answers ex. "move this hand for music." AAC device or notecards help

Yachad is dedicated to enriching the lives of Jewish individuals with disabilities and their families, by enhancing their communal participation and their connection to Judaism through social and educational programs and support services.



Everyone has certain likes and needs. Always have at least 2 or 3 back up activities ranging from quiet (coloring sheets) to movement (freeze dance)

Encourage people to advocate for themselves. Build a space where individuals know they are being heard and are comfortable asking for accommodations – for example, larger typeface, a different chair, a different kind of marker. If you have a question about how to help, ask!
Thank them for their feedback

Let participants share their opinions/suggestions for the group to encourage a greater sense of autonomy, as opposed to just staff leading

Our brains take in so much sensory input and sometimes it can become too much. We may not know what sensory input is overloading someone but we can always offer a break

Value the knowledge people come in with and make no assumptions about someone's ability

Show interest in the person, not the disability. Ask about family, trips and daily life. Learn and listen

When choosing recipes to cook, think about who is helping you in the kitchen and what tools they can use safely. Let your helper assist with tasks independently in tandem with you demonstrating the skill

Remember the goal of a program is to build community and confidence, not to produce the perfect art piece. Have grace and enjoy the tiny milestones

Questions? Reach out to newenglandyachad@ou.org



Yachad New England runs weekly programs-bowling, music, art, cooking Torah study, movies/mitzvahs, field trips, and gender specific events. Volunteers and high schoolers join members to create a diverse and inclusive community in the Boston area.

