

Make Room! Bristol Workshop



We Are The People is a group of disabled people and allies learning about disability issues at Bath Spa University.



We have learned that **accessible LGBTQ+ spaces** are important to Disabled people in the LGBTQ+ community in the Southwest of England.

Accessible means that something includes disabled people.



For instance, a LGBTQ+ space that is **not** wheelchair accessible, would be an example of an **inaccessible** LGBTQ+ venue.



We ran a creative workshop in Bristol, held at the Watershed for those impacted by accessibility in LGBTQIA+ venues.



It was important to us that our workshop was engaging, welcoming and emotionally safer.

We considered many different things when we planned for this workshop including:



- A variety of art materials for sensory needs.



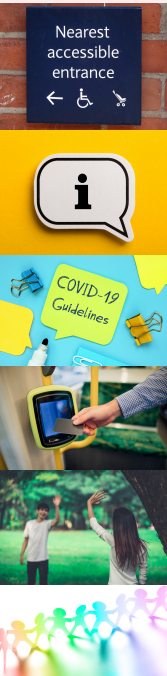
- Simple, effective activities with pens and collages.



- Working with therapists to provide a quiet space in the workshop.



- Learning from our previous workshop in Bath on how to improve this one.
- We agreed we wanted this workshop to have more opportunities for participants to share their art and experiences with each other.



Accessibility considerations we planned for included:

- Creating an access register to respond to participants' needs.
- Providing information about the event in advance
- Providing a clear Covid policy and provisions, including paying people back for Covid tests.
- Paying people back for their travel
- Having someone to meet participants at the door
- Creating a group agreement to encourage a safer and respectful space.



The workshop was kept small in numbers with 6 participants.

Participants were drawn to the workshop by:

- Passion for making LGBTQIA+ spaces more accessible
- Connecting and building community
- Enjoyment of art and creativity
- Sharing personal experiences



Just like the Bath workshop, we used the blobs, created by artist Sapphire Henrisken, as part of the creative activities for the workshop.



These were a great starting point to allow participants to express their feelings around Disabled LGBTQIA+ identity.



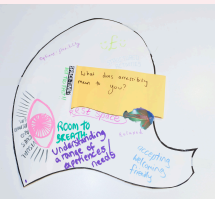
Participants shared what accessibility means to them, and what they needed from LGBTQIA+ spaces.



Participants also shared what creativity meant to them.

Participants agreed art should be a fun activity, and not something you can be a good or bad at.

Photograph by Diego Maeso



Group collage activities were also used to express:

- What participants wanted events organisers to be aware of.
- What accessibility meant to them.
- What their dream accessible LGBTQIA+ event would look like.
- Their experiences of accessibility in LGBTQIA+ venues in their local area.



In these discussions participants discussed:

- The importance of providing quiet spaces and consider sensory needs.
- The importance of addressing financial barriers and transport issues.
- The need to be flexible and offer a variety of events.
- For events organisers to make sure communication is clear and accessible.
- The importance of training venue staff on diversity and inclusion, with a focus on personal safety.

Want to find out more?
Follow us on Instagram at:
[@Wearethepeople_bsu](https://www.instagram.com/Wearethepeople_bsu)
or email us at:
wearethepeople@bathspa.ac.uk



Images courtesy of Adobe Stock.