Access Details for SEWSA

We are striving to create an environment that is usable for as many people as possible. We must balance that goal against limited fiscal resources, an all-volunteer workforce, and the paradox that one person’s accommodation is sometimes another person’s barrier. We welcome your comments and discussion about how we can create better access at this conference and for future events.

If you have questions or suggestions about any aspect of accessibility (including mobility, sensory, or gender accessibility) or specific access needs that are not addressed on this website, please contact Ari Eisenberg at aeisenb1@kennesaw.edu.

Allies: How Every Attendee Contributes to an Accessible Environment

Please consider the following beneficial behaviors to make this conference as accessible as possible for attendees:

- The English language – including the pronouns we use to describe one another – incorrectly presumes that gender is obvious and readable for each person. We encourage you not assume any person’s gender identity, pronoun usage, or other aspects of their identities. Whenever you feel unsure, please ask the person to whom you are speaking what pronouns they use, or look at the pronoun tag or button that some attendees may choose to wear along with their name tag.

- When presenting, keep the following tips in mind:
  - Keep your lips visible for those who speech read.
  - Use a microphone if one is available.
  - If using a Powerpoint or other presentation software, review these techniques for making accessible presentations: http://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/

* Much of the language of this access statement is taken directly or paraphrased from Wiscon’s “Universal Design: Disability Access at Wiscon” webpage, http://account.wiscon.net/access.php#remain. We are grateful to Wiscon for providing such an excellent model of accessible conference planning.
• Use high color contrast for text in presentations or handouts. Low contrast may be difficult or impossible for colorblind or low-vision users to read.
• Caption any video/audio content.
• Describe any images/charts you are using, for the benefit of blind or low-vision attendees (general descriptions are fine; describe any relevant details).
• If you are using paper handouts, electronic versions help people who want enlarged text or who use screen reading software.
• Animations or other video content (particularly with rapid flashing/strobing) may be migraine or seizure triggers for some people. Let people know in advance if you will be using them.

• **Elevators:** A limited number of elevators serve hundreds of people. If you can use the stairways to move between program floors, please do! If you can only travel down, that still makes an important difference. Some of us absolutely depend on the elevators for access. The reason might not be visible (arthritic knees or limited breathing); or might be obvious (wheelchair or canes) -- but the need is still there. Don’t police or question others’ uses of the elevators, but think about your own needs and abilities before using them.

• **Maintain clear paths:** Please be conscious of the “traffic jams” that sometimes occur in doorways and hallways, and how they can impede others’ mobility. When possible, take your conversations to the hotels’ common areas and leave the hallways leading to the conference rooms clear. Tuck your belongings in front of your feet or under your seat.

• **Share the air:** Smoke and scents travel quickly, and air won’t move if you ask it to. Washing your hands after smoking makes a difference. We ask that you limit your use of scented products if you can do so without negatively affecting your health. For those of us with asthma, migraine, and chemical sensitivities, fewer fragrances, vapors, and particulates make the conference a place we can attend. Some of us smoke, and some of us don’t. The hotel is completely non-smoking, and we ask that you use the outdoor dedicated smoking area to smoke.

• **Service Animal Etiquette:** Although interacting with animals is tempting, please don’t pet, distract, or take photos of service animals at the conference. Those of us who rely on service animals need our animals to be able to concentrate on doing their jobs well.

**Helpful Attitudes for Universal Access:**
• **Offer help – don't assume it's needed:** Most of us are taught to "help the handicapped," but not "does this person want or need help?" If you think someone needs assistance, just ask. If they say yes, don't make assumptions; instead listen to the details of what the person wants. If they say "no thanks" don't be offended. What might look overly complicated or inefficient can be what another person finds works best for them.

• **Speak up:** If you see access barriers, feel free to suggest how to clear them – whether this means talking respectfully to other members or alerting a SEWSA volunteer or hotel staff.

• **Privacy:** People are often curious about the details of a visible disability. A member’s medical history and details of how their body functions is private. Please do not ask how someone became disabled or assume their experience is the same as another person with a similar disability.

**Minimizing Stress and Maximizing Comfort**
Conferences can be noisy and crowded, which will have different effects on all of us. Some of us feed off of the energy of the crowd; others will need plenty of down time to rest and recharge after so much sensory overload. Here are some places to find a little quiet:

• **Quiet Room:** We have turned the Piedmont Room on the second floor of the conference hotel into a quiet room. This room will have low lighting and chairs. Please, if you use this room, do not use your computer or speak to others while in it!

• **Nursing Room:** There will be a hotel room reserved for anyone needing to feed their child. Please ask the organizers for the room’s location, as it will most likely be determined on the day-of.

• **Outdoors:** There are several small green spaces located within a few blocks of the conference hotel. One is located on the corner of Linden Avenue NW and West Peachtree Street NW, directly across the street from the Crowne Plaza. Another is adjacent to Emory University Hospital on Peachtree Street NE, one block east of the Crowne Plaza between Linden Avenue NE and Pine Street NE.

**Listening**
There is limited availability of CART captioning and ASL interpreting. Please contact Ari Eisenberg at aeisenb1@kennesaw.edu to request captions or an interpreter.
Physical Space Access

The Crowne Plaza hotel offers some – but limited – accessibility for people who use wheelchairs and other assistive devices and for people with mobility impairments. The Crowne Plaza, like many hotels, segregates restrooms into “men’s” and “women’s” facilities; however, we will designate several “all-gender” restrooms which will be marked with written signs. Here are a few specific access notes:

- **Parking:** Parking for cars (including disabled accessible parking) is located across the street from the hotel at the One Georgia Center parking structure on Spring Street, and an accessible skyway (7th floor) connects this parking to the Crowne Plaza. Parking directly under the One Georgia Center building is not ideal, as you will have to pass through an office building that restricts access after 6:30 p.m.

- **Public transportation:** Several MARTA buses stop on the same block as the Crowne Plaza. The North Avenue MARTA train station is one block north of the Crowne Plaza. All MARTA transportation meets ADA requirements.

- **Hotel entryways:** The main hotel entrance has automatic entry doors and a car drop-off area. Skyway doors have push-button access.

- **Carpeting:** The first floor hotel lobby is uncarpeted, but the conference area (second floor and 25th floor Sky East room) is covered in firm, medium-pile carpet.

- **Conference rooms:** Conference room entrances all have doors with lever handles. The doors are moderately heavy in weight/resistance. Our volunteers will endeavor to keep all aisles clear, but please notify us if chairs need to be moved to create better access at any time. Please keep the first row of seats with blue tape in front of them reserved for people who read lips. For the keynote and plenary sessions, the speakers will be amplified. All presentation spaces are on the same level as the rest of the room.

- **Restrooms:** Restrooms are large enough to accommodate most wheelchairs, and each has one wheelchair-accessible stall with grab bars. Doors have lever handles and do not have push-button entry. Each restroom has one diaper-changing station. Several restrooms will be designated “all-gender,” and others are separated into “women’s” or “men’s” rooms. Please use the restroom in which you feel most safe and comfortable, and please do not attempt to regulate other people’s restroom usage.