



Accessibility of Documents

When creating resources for survivors, including intake forms, it is important to consider their digital accessibility. This ensures survivors with disabilities can easily access the information they need to live a life free from violence.

Below are tips to consider when designing digitally accessible resources.

MS Word Documents

Use Built-in Title, Subtitle, and Heading Styles:

- Use a logical heading order and the built-in formatting tools in Word.
- To check that the order of headings is logical, visually scan your document's table of contents.
- This helps screen readers, such as [JAWS](#) and [NVDA](#), to read your documents more easily.

Add Alternative Text to Images:

- Use Alt Text to describe the content of images.
- This allows people using screen readers to understand what the image is about.
- You can add alt text to an object in Word, allowing screen readers to collect and read aloud the description.

Use Accessible Hyperlinks:

- Make sure the hyperlink text is meaningful and not just "click here."
- Screen readers read this text aloud to the user, so avoid using web addresses within the text.

Use Accessible Font Format and Colour:

- Use a font size of 12 points or larger to ensure visibility.
- Use fonts that are sans serif.
- Ensure that text is readable and has sufficient colour contrast.

Create Accessible Lists:

- Use the built-in list features to create lists.
- This helps screen readers to understand the list structure.

Avoid Using Tables:

- In general, avoid tables if possible and present the data another way.
- If you must use tables, use a simple table structure for data only and specify column header information.

Avoid Using Text Boxes:

- Avoid using text boxes to display text.
- Screen readers are unable to read their contents.

Create Paragraph Banners:

- Use built-in headings and styles.
- To check that the order of headings is logical, visually scan your document's table of contents if it has one.

Use Accessibility Checker:

- Use MS Word Check Accessibility to ensure there are no Accessibility issues with your document.
- Turn on the tool by clicking on Review, then Check Accessibility.
- These checks can be done after document editing is completed or the checks can be ongoing while compiling the document.

PDF Documents

Consider Accessibility Before Converting Documents to PDF:

- Think about accessibility when you create the source files in an authoring tool, such as Microsoft Word.
- Typical tasks in the authoring application include adding alternate text to graphics, optimizing tables, and applying paragraph styles or other document-structure features that can be converted to tags.

Add Fillable Form Fields and Descriptions, Set the Tab Order:

- If your PDF includes form fields, select All tools, then Prepare for Accessibility, then Autotag Form Fields to detect form fields and make them interactive (fillable).
- Use the Forms tools to create fillable form fields, such as buttons, checkboxes, pop-up menus, and text boxes.

Add Other Accessibility Features to the PDF:

- This includes setting the document language, making sure that security settings don't interfere with screen readers, creating accessible links, and adding bookmarks.

Tag the PDF:

- Tagging a PDF is not just highlighting a text block or a photo and labelling it.
- Assistive technologies interpret tags in a document and provide content to a user accordingly.

Evaluate the PDF and Repair Tagging Problems:

- After tagging the PDF, check for any tagging problems and repair them.
- A well-tagged document enhances accessibility, whereas a poorly tagged document creates accessibility barriers.

Helpful Resources on How to Make Documents More Accessible

- **Adobe:** [Create and verify PDF accessibility Adobe Acrobat Pro](#) – This resource from Adobe provides resources and guidance on creating accessible PDF documents.
- **OpenTextBC:** [Accessibility Toolkit](#) – The Accessibility Toolkit provides resources for content creators, instructional designers, administrators, and facilitators to create documents accessible to all.
- **MS Word:** [Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker](#) – Before you send an Outlook email message or share a Word document, Excel spreadsheet, or PowerPoint presentation, run the Accessibility Checker to make your content easier for people with disabilities to read and edit.
- **WebAIM:** [Contrast and Color Accessibility](#) – Evaluating Contrast and Colour Use in PDFs and MS Word documents.

For more information about assistive technology, see our information sheet, Common Types of Assistive Technology.

Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) is part of a continuum of violence that can be both online and in-person. If you or someone you know is experiencing TFGBV, you are not alone. You can use www.sheltersafe.ca to find a shelter/transition house near you to discuss options and create a safety plan. You don't need to stay in a shelter to access free, confidential services and support.

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For more information about using tech safety visit

www.techsafety.ca

