ACCESSIBILITY
CONFIDENT EMPLOYERS
(ACE)

ACE FALL COHORT

Accessibility Conversations

A Guide for Responding to Questions, Concerns and Resistance

How to Use This Guide

Conversations about accessibility do not always go as planned. Someone may have questions. Someone may disagree. Someone may worry about cost, time, fairness, or how much change is required.

This guide can help you respond without becoming defensive or feeling like you need to have every answer.

A simple approach:

1. **Listen:** What is the person really concerned about?
2. **Acknowledge:** Show that you heard the question or concern.
3. **Reframe:** Connect the conversation back to access, participation, and removing barriers.
4. **Move forward:** Focus on what you can learn or do next.

> **You do not need to win the argument. The goal is to keep the conversation open and move it forward.**

When the Conversation Gets Defensive

Try not to:

- Argue
- Shame someone
- Assume resistance means they don't care
- Overload them with facts
- Try to solve everything in one conversation

Try to:

- Stay curious
- Ask what is behind the concern
- Acknowledge practical challenges
- Bring the conversation back to people and barriers
- Focus on one next step

> **We need to try and understand resistance rather than simply trying to overpower it with more messaging.**

ACCESSIBILITY
CONFIDENT EMPLOYERS
(ACE)

Common Questions and Concerns and What You Can Say

1. “This is going to cost too much.”
The person may be worried about budgets, resources, or being asked to make major changes immediately.

Keep the conversation moving: “What information would help us understand the potential cost before making a decision?”

2. “We haven’t had any complaints.”
The person may believe that no complaints means no barriers.

Keep the conversation moving: “One question we could ask is whether we have actually created opportunities for people to tell us about their experiences.”

3. “We treat everyone the same.”

Keep the conversation moving: “The goal is not to give anyone an advantage. The goal is to reduce barriers that prevent people from having an equal opportunity to participate.”

4. “Can’t people just ask for help?”

Keep the conversation moving: “Individual support is important, but it is also useful to ask whether we can remove the barrier in the first place. What could we change so fewer people need to ask for an alternative?”

ACCESSIBILITY
CONFIDENT EMPLOYERS
(ACE)

A Simple Conversation Formula

Hear, Acknowledge, Reframe, Explore

Approach	Example
Hear	“Tell me more about what concerns you.”
Acknowledge	“I can understand why that might feel challenging.”
Reframe	“One thing we are trying to understand is whether there may be barriers we haven’t seen yet.”
Explore	“What would help us learn more before deciding what to do?”