

Accessible & Inclusive Design

Accessible and inclusive design helps ensure materials are clear, readable, and usable for people with diverse needs and preferences. This summary, based on the Centre on Aging's **Age-Inclusive Guide**, provides strategies for how structure, layout, and formatting can support effective information sharing.

1. Layout & Navigation

Organize information into a clear and logical structure:

- Use clear headings and section breaks
- Avoid clutter or overly complex layouts
- Ensure content follows a logical reading order, especially for screen readers
- Use bullets and white space to break up dense information

2. Font & Text

Improve reading comfort, clarity, and comprehension:

- Use sans-serif fonts for clarity, such as:
 - Gotham
 - Arial
 - Calibri
 - Verdana
- Use at least 12-point text for print materials or 16-pixel text for digital content
- Make headings larger than body text
- Keep spacing and alignment consistent
- Avoid all caps (ALL CAPS), italics (*italics*), or large blocks of uninterrupted text

Curious about the font and text on this page?

Gotham was chosen because it is a clear, readable, sans-serif font. It is also a recommended font for UCalgary materials.

Titles, headings, and sub-headings are larger than body text and bolded to organize content and support navigation.

Text sizes were chosen to meet the minimum standard and create a clear distinction between content levels:

- Title: 37-pt (50-px)
- Headings: 18-pt (24-px)
- Sub-headings: 15-pt (20-px)
- Body text: 12-pt (16-px)

Line spacing is set at 1.4 to improve text legibility. Spacing between items in a list is set at 1.7 for easier scanning, and paragraphs are spaced at 2.0 to clearly separate them.



3. Colour & Contrast

Ensure important information is visible and distinguishable:

- Use high-contrast text and background colours
- Avoid grey or low-contrast text, especially on coloured backgrounds
- Do not use colour alone to convey meaning such as red to indicate “stop” or “important”

High contrast	Low contrast
High contrast	Low contrast
High contrast	Low contrast

4. Visuals & Multimedia

Support understanding through accessible visual and media content:

- Add alt text to visual elements to explain their content or purpose
- Caption videos and provide transcripts for audio content
- Make clickable elements large and spaced apart for ease of use
- Avoid fast animations or transitions that may distract users or cause motion sensitivity

Use inclusive and realistic representations of aging:

- Use images and visuals that reflect the diversity of aging experiences
- Avoid age-based stereotypes such as portraying aging solely through frailty, decline, or exceptional ability



Example alt text:

A diverse group of people smiling together, including an older gray-haired person in the center and others standing around in a bright, simple illustration.

Want to Learn More?

This summary is adapted from the Centre on Aging’s Age-Inclusive Guide.

References

- World Wide Web Consortium. 2024. Accessibility Principles.
- Government of Canada. 2023. Annex: making documents more accessible.

