

PROCEDURAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Guidelines for the procedural facilitator

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INTRODUCTION

Procedural accommodations are all necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments in the context of access to justice, where needed in a particular case, to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others (International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities. UN, 2020).

Procedural accommodations effectively enforce the right to a fair trial and the right to participate in the administration of justice, and they are an intrinsic element of the right to access justice.

Equality of arms is a component of the right to a fair trial, guaranteeing that the same procedural rights are provided to all the parties to ensure access to the same information and the same opportunities to adduce and challenge evidence (Report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the right to access to justice under article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

We employ the term 'accommodations' because it is insufficient to establish a set of accessibility rules that can universally apply. Acknowledging that each person presents unique characteristics and challenges, it is vital to stress the importance of assessing each case individually. Potential obstacles should be evaluated case-by-case, considering their nature and complexity.

Article 7a(1) of the Law on Civil Procedure outlines the specific areas where accommodations must be made. These include communication, comprehension, and interaction with the environment.

The third area, relating to interaction with the environment, clearly indicates the social model of disability.

When creating an individual profile for procedural accommodation measures, it is essential to solicit the input of the person with a disability and consider their opinion. To accomplish this, the procedural facilitator must conduct an interview and analyse the documentation provided to develop a highly personalised and contextualised profile. It is imperative to avoid generalisations and the use of stereotyped formulas. The profile must identify the areas where the individual requires assistance and those where they are fully autonomous. Conducting thorough and methodologically strict data collection tailored to the specific disability of each individual is a critical factor in ensuring a comprehensive screening process. This process upholds the rights of persons with disabilities to access justice and ensures no violations occur.

After conducting a thorough assessment of the person with a disability to determine their communication strengths and limitations and analysing the communication barriers that exist within the police or judicial context, the report should clearly outline the most relevant factors that aid both the person with a disability and legal agents in achieving mutual comprehension.

The primary objective is not to assist the individual in achieving the desired result in their legal proceeding but to enhance their efficacy in engaging with the justice system.

The procedural facilitator should thoroughly evaluate all information relevant to the involvement of the person with a disability in police or legal proceedings and recommend appropriate accommodations to ensure their full participation in the process.

The right to understand

The law emphasises the importance of understanding persons with disabilities. To ensure its effectiveness, it mandates that all forms of communication with them, whether oral or written, must be presented in clear, simple, and accessible language that accounts for their unique characteristics and needs.

This implies that not only court rulings but all types of communication must be translated into a language that is easily understandable for the person.

The Easy Read format is the accepted method for making written documents more accessible to persons with cognitive disabilities.

The right to be understood

It is a legal requirement to offer assistance or support to ensure that the person is understood. Persons with disabilities may require substantial communication assistance and diverse modes of expression, such as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems.

Environmental accommodations

The accommodations related to interaction with the environment cannot only refer to physical accessibility or the elimination of architectural barriers to the judicial premises.

When required by the person's disability, accommodations related to the examination of evidence may be adopted. These may range from adapting the location to adjusting the pace and time of response or the methodology concerning the questions.

Therefore, accommodations:

- Minimise the impact of a person's disability on their daily life.
- Accommodations are anticipatory, meaning that the general accommodations that might be needed must be considered and prepared in advance.
- Accommodations are personal. Each individual has unique requirements, and it is essential to evaluate and agree with persons with disabilities regarding their needs.

IDENTIFICATION of procedural accommodation measures in various areas of interest

This section provides an overview of procedural modifications and adaptations adopted at the global level based on a literature review of accommodation measures in countries where the facilitator is implemented in judicial and police settings. This thorough analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the strategies implemented, significantly contributing to the comprehensive understanding of practices used in judicial and police settings in other countries.

These accommodations have been thoughtfully classified into categories to enhance comprehension. Each accommodation is designed to cater to the specific needs of persons with disabilities. Importantly, as individuals and their environments evolve, we can look forward to the emergence of many new and innovative accommodations that will continue to meet their changing needs.

There are two areas where accommodations or supports may be necessary for the development of the police or judicial procedure:

The profile of limitations/strengths for PwD communication

1. Sensory, cognitive, or intellectual limitations stemming from disabilities. The facilitator is not qualified to assess these limitations, but they can provide accommodations if sufficient information is available through individualised support programs (ISPs) or expert psychological reports.

2. Communication

3. Understanding

4. Emotional and behavioural management

5. Interpersonal interaction (social behaviours)

The profile of barriers to communication in the police and/or judicial environment

The development of an individualised procedural accommodation profile will be based on the unique characteristics of the person with a disability and their interaction with the police and/or judicial environment in which the procedure will be conducted. This process will always involve the participation and informed consent of the person with a disability.

The design of the individualised profile of procedural accommodations could be composed of the following four steps:

1. Detect the relevant areas of accommodation.
2. Identify the relevant accommodation activities for each of the areas.
3. Assess the level or intensity of accommodation needs.
4. Report the individualised profile of accommodation needs

1. Sensory, cognitive, or intellectual limitations stemming from disabilities.

ATTENTION deficit

Sustained attention is the ability to focus on a task for an extended period of time. Persons with disabilities have shorter attention spans and struggle to maintain sustained attention.

Selective attention is the ability to focus on a specific stimulus or task without attention to possible distractions. A person with a disability may have difficulty identifying the most relevant information in a given context, decreasing the quality of their testimony by failing to direct attention to the main issue.

A person with a disability may have difficulty identifying the most relevant information in a given context

MEMORY limitations

Episodic memory: refers to the type of memory that enables a person to recall a specific event that occurred in the past at a particular time. The person may have difficulty remembering a past event as they may be combining different experiences to create their account. This phenomenon is typically observed in real-life situations and can result in inconsistencies in their descriptions. In a process known as free recall, the person often provides minimal details in a non-linear fashion, and the sequencing of events can be problematic. The level of detail in a memory tends to decrease as the memory becomes more distant.

The concept of episodic memory, which involves a person's capacity to remember specific incidents (such as being a victim, perpetrator, or witness of a robbery), is crucial in their ability to assist their legal counsel. For instance, their recollection of details when asked about the location of the events or their activities at a particular time and place can significantly shape their lawyer's defence strategy and capacity to provide an alibi.

Procedural memory: refers to the type of memory that allows for the recollection of sequential actions or routine chained events. A person may struggle to connect these events, making it difficult for the interviewer to understand the situation entirely..

Semantic memory: is a type of long-term memory that stores general knowledge and concepts and is not associated with personal experiences or specific events. This part of memory pertains to storing and retrieving information related to the meanings of words, concepts, and facts.

Working memory: (or operational memory) refers to the ability to recall the necessary components required to execute a task while performing it. Individuals with poor working memory dedicate almost all their attention to decoding words while reading, resulting in their brains not having enough resources to understand the text comprehensively.

QUANTIFICATION deficit

Quantification deficit refers to difficulties some individuals may have in understanding, measuring, or handling numerical concepts. When asked to state a quantity of something specific, they may not be able to quantify it, possibly responding with "I don't know" or providing a specific figure. Upon confirming their response, they may reply by saying "I don't know" again or providing a different figure than before. This approach indicates that they do not understand the question. They can state if something has happened to them once or many times, but they cannot specify how many times.

METACOGNITIVE PROCESSES deficit

Reasoning and conflict resolution refer to the cognitive process of using logical thinking to identify and evaluate various premises or alternatives to solve complex problems. Individuals experiencing deficits in this area face challenges in generating diverse and alternative responses.

Type of thinking: concrete thinking is a cognitive process that defines an object or reality based solely on actual stimuli, with less emphasis on intuition and more on logic. Most individuals with cognitive disabilities exhibit this type of concrete thinking, and their imaginative capacity tends to be more limited. They often face difficulties in identifying the emotions of others and understanding what triggers those emotions. When asked to describe an event, they focus on physical characteristics rather than emotional aspects. For instance, when they are shown a photo of an angry boy, they describe him physically. The emotional information they provide is often superficial. Abstract thinking is the ability to think about relationships between things rather than the things themselves. It involves the use of symbolic or logical representation.

SPATIAL-TEMPORAL INTEGRATION deficit

Spatial Management is a cognitive skill that involves locating an event in space and understanding spatial information. This includes the perception of three-dimensional space, orientation in the environment, and the relationship between objects.

Time Management refers to the skill set required to assign a specific time frame to an event. Persons with disabilities often face temporal orientation difficulties while gathering information about temporal moments. They face challenges measuring aspects such as elapsed time or temporal concepts like dates.

Distance Management: the ability to assess and understand the distances between objects or locations in the environment.

Deficits in spatial-temporal integration and distance could impact a person's ability to provide information about their activities during a particular event. Consequently, they may only be able to deny their presence at the location of the alleged incident without offering any details about their actions or whereabouts at the time of the event. This could significantly hinder their participation in their defence.

2. COMMUNICATION difficulties

Comprehension and linguistic expression are not synonymous terms, but the two have a strong correlation. Coherent and contextually appropriate speech involves transforming communicative intent into a message that comprises a sequence of sounds that are both perceptible and understandable to the listener. For persons with disabilities, their use of language may be severely limited or even non-existent. However, professionals or individuals within their social context can communicate with them using various tools such as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) or visual supports.

Verbal expression: Persons with a deficit in expressive language may face difficulties answering questions in police or judicial contexts. They may need to repeat their responses, but given some time, they are capable of providing appropriate answers. They tend to use simple and basic words while describing complex actions. They may also use misaligned terms and learned expressions that seem incoherent within the context. They struggle to provide detailed descriptions and rely on representative information, often overlooking peripheral details or aspects. Due to this, their communication may appear less detailed and sometimes out of context.

Limited vocabulary: individuals with a limited vocabulary may struggle to find the right words to express themselves. Understanding intricate technical terms or unfamiliar jargon can be challenging for them. Misunderstanding of the question can lead to socially desirable responses or a skewed interpretation of the concept, resulting in an answer that may not align with the question's intended meaning. Legal jargon can be challenging to comprehend, leading to misinterpretation for many individuals.

They sometimes require more time to respond, and respecting their silence is important to allow them to provide a detailed description. They may use vague expressions like "everything" or "the usual" when asked to list or describe something. Therefore, asking them what they mean by "everything" or "the usual" is necessary to get a more detailed response.

Nonverbal language encompasses gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal cues that can provide insights into the emotional state or experience of people with disabilities during an interview.

When faced with questions they cannot answer or are unsure how to respond, they may freeze, avoid eye contact, experience trembling, or even exhibit erratic behaviour.

Speech speed and tone: Persons with disabilities may experience challenges in language processing, short-term memory retention, thought organisation, and verbal expression during the interview stage of investigation or the evidence presentation stage of a trial.

Grammar level: Some individuals may struggle to understand or use complex grammatical structures. The complexity of grammar is often language-specific.

Narrative ability is a cognitive skill that refers to the capacity to construct a coherent and compelling narrative. It involves structuring information or events in a logical and understandable sequence, typically with a beginning, middle, and end. This skill is critical for individuals interviewed in legal proceedings, whether as witnesses, victims, or suspects. Individuals with deficits in narrative ability may experience difficulties in conveying their story and being understood in a police interview or judicial process.

Literacy Level: It is important to note that the literacy level of individuals who engage with the justice system via a police station or a court may differ significantly from that of legal professionals or police officers. Given that the justice system deals with a considerable volume of written documents, it is often presumed that individuals possess a high literacy level.

3. COMPREHENSION dificulties

The skill of comprehending language is a highly intricate process that demands the engagement of various cognitive functions. Persons with disabilities may have linguistic and written comprehension limitations, resulting in difficulty understanding complex sentences and questions or processing information, ultimately leading to inaccurate interpretations. Some individuals with low educational levels may either not be able to read or write or, despite their ability to do so, have poor reading comprehension and may find it challenging to understand what they read.

Police and judicial proceedings are typically complex and rigid, which impedes an individual's understanding.

4. EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT deficits

Managing emotional regulation and responses to aversive events requires the ability to recognise, understand, and regulate one's emotions and the capacity to manage behaviour effectively in response to these emotions. This competence is essential for maintaining healthy relationships, making informed decisions, and facing challenges constructively.

In the context of police and judicial proceedings, procedural facilitators should address the barriers that can lead to disruptive behaviours among persons with disabilities. These barriers can be classified into three categories:

a) Inappropriate attitudes on the part of police officers or legal professionals stemming from their prejudices about people with disabilities;

b) Physical spaces of police stations and judicial headquarters;

c) Complexity and rigidity of proceedings.

Persons with disabilities may exhibit disruptive behaviours in certain situations due to their frustration at being in a situation they do not control or understand or perceive as threatening. These behaviours can range from shouting to self- or hetero-aggressive behaviours or even the destruction of objects. Thus, police stations and judicial headquarters can be intimidating for them.

Therefore, a person with a disability should not be considered dangerous or unmanageable but rather someone who requires the support of others to adjust their behaviour.

5. INTERPERSONAL INTERACTION deficits (SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS)

We are referring to behaviours associated with social engagement, including the initiating, maintaining, and ending interaction with others, the ability to perceive and respond to situational cues, the recognition of emotions, the provision of negative and positive feedback, self-regulation of behaviour, awareness and acceptance of peers, adjustment of interaction volume and nature, the capacity to confront demands, control impulses, empathise, and balance introversion and extroversion, the tendency towards social isolation, challenges in expressing feelings or appreciating emotions of others, deficits in social skills, and a lack of assertiveness, among others.

Persons with disabilities may present deficits in interpersonal interaction and, in police or judicial contexts, tend to experience emotional blockage under these types of social stressors.

Thus, it is critical to evaluate the behaviour of persons with disabilities when confronted with unfamiliar or unknown individuals, such as police officers and legal professionals.

Likewise, it is essential to consider other variables in interpersonal interaction in these contexts. Some individuals are prone to suggestibility or complacency, mainly when conversing with individuals in positions of authority or when being interrogated by them. For example, they may agree with a statement to appease the person making it. Some of these tendencies include acquiescence, social desirability, and suggestibility.

- **Acquiescence** is the inclination to provide responses based on the phrasing of the question.

- **Social desirability** is the tendency to respond based on what the interlocutor is perceived to want to hear. This approach does not imply the fabrication of situations. Still, a person with a disability may agree with what is asked of them to please the interlocutor, or they may provide a response that aligns more closely with what they consider socially acceptable.

- **Suggestibility** refers to the potential inclination of the person to incorporate or agree with suggestive information.

Limitations/barriers of the POLICE AND JUDICIAL CONTEXT

The environment is crucial in enabling effective communication, regardless of disabilities. In police or judicial settings, a significant challenge arises due to the prejudices and stereotypes about persons with disabilities and the lack of awareness and training among police officers and legal professionals.

Further, the physical spaces of police stations and courtrooms can be intimidating, and the complexity and rigidity of police and judicial procedures add to the challenge. Some countries addressed these concerns and developed informal interview spaces that are located at a distance from the police station or have a separate entrance.

This design may help traumatised victims feel more comfortable during interviews by providing a homely appearance, a comfortable chair or couch, nearby support services, and other amenities such as drinks. Additionally, many individuals may require an exit that allows them to leave quickly, sometimes to smoke and spend some time alone.

However, there is limited flexibility in a courtroom setting as the proceedings must be formal and based on long-standing traditions.

MEASURES OF Procedural Accommodations

Thinking "creatively"

Determining the appropriate adaptation will rely on the creativity of the procedural facilitator and the adaptability of the local police or justice system. It is crucial to think outside the box and remember that every accommodation will have its first implementation.

Accommodations for the limitations presented by individuals with disabilities

1. Accommodations for sensory, cognitive, and intellectual limitations stemming from disabilities

Attention

1. They may need rest periods to regain attention. Also, consider the duration of the rest.

2. Reduce possible sensory stimulations and interruptions in the room space.

3. Request permission to use distracting "sensory toys" that the person with a disability can manipulate. This tool will help their concentration.

4. Consider providing them with paper and pen for "doodling".

5. Develop an "agenda" for the entire process so that you can help the person "cross off" the different steps as the process progresses.

Memory

1. To elicit detailed and comprehensive narratives, it becomes necessary to question individuals multiple times about the same event. It is important to explicitly state that they should provide as many details as they can recall. Consequently, the number of details they provide about their episodic and semantic memory will largely depend on the type of support and questions provided to them.

2. Support of this nature, coupled with interventions such as "What happened next?" will assist them in accurately sequencing their experiences, thereby reducing potential errors. For example, the interviewer might ask: "So, you were in the square; what were you doing there? And then?" The individual can provide more information by sequencing in this manner and with these supports.

3. Inquire about the conversations that occurred in the situations you wish to investigate. For instance, "What did that person tell you when they arrived at the square?"

4. Emphasize the last step they narrated to continue the investigation without suggesting anything. For instance, "You said that after being in the square, you went to buy at the store."

5. Allow more time for processing responses and support the conversation so that the description of the events becomes more precise and detailed.

6. Introduce subtle cues that aid in the recovery of memory.

Metacognitive processes:

1. Do not use abstract or technical language. If you need to use such terms, explain their meaning clearly.

2. To ensure reliable responses, asking precise questions is essential.

3. Do not use double negatives.

4. Avoid using ambiguous phrases or words that can cause confusion.

5. Use phrases that generate multiple response options.

6. Sometimes, individuals may need to see something or someone to compare it with what is being asked of them.

7. Give them enough time to recount the event completely.

Time/Orientation/Space integration

1. It is advisable to use significant events in an individual's life to overcome the limitation of temporal integration. These events can help them identify the occurrence of another event within the timeframe of two such important events. For instance, one might ask, "Did this event happen before or after your birthday?"

2. It may be necessary to engage in discussions with the individual about concepts related to time and the sequence of events to identify how they perceive the world. For instance, before lunch, after breakfast, a day at school, or moments around a religious holiday or a birthday, instead of specific dates, days or clock hours.

3. When discussing the concept of distance, relatable terms might be necessary. For instance, instead of using measurements like meters, one could use references like "How many houses from there?"

2. Communication accommodations

1. Employ simple, concrete, and brief sentences. Refrain from using third-person phrases. Ensure questions are concise and consist of a single sentence. For instance, the question "Did you go shopping or to the cinema before going home?" should be simplified to "I would like to ask you about your journey home", "Where did you go?", "Did you go shopping?" and "Did you go to the cinema?". These questions should be asked separately, and it may not be necessary to ask them all depending on the witness's response.

2. Avoid questions that include any form of negation.

3. Use straightforward words and present one idea at a time.

4. Listen to what the person is trying to convey; do not interrupt or finish the sentences they are saying. Allow them enough time to express themselves, respecting the interval between question and answer.

5. Request them to repeat in their own words what has been told or explained to them to ensure they have understood us, but avoid having them repeat things many times.

6. Provide the opportunity to say "I do not understand..." by saying, for example: "I can explain it to you again in a different way..."

7. Seek a third person to provide support (family, support person, etc.).

8. Adapt the pace of speech to the person's assimilation rate, avoiding going too fast. Accommodations should be made to reduce the pace of the conversation or the line of questioning. The person in charge of asking the questions should be asked to speak more slowly.

9. Do not overuse YES/NO type questions; use open-ended questions.

10. If they must read any documentation, it should be written in simple language, with short sentences and ordered ideas (adapted to Easy Read methodology).

11. Use active verb tenses and avoid subjunctives.

12. Avoid figurative, metaphorical, or ironic language. The content of the message should be explicit, avoiding the use of technicalities or figurative language or clarifying them if their use is necessary.

13. Limit the use of closed questions and use open-ended questions more frequently.

14. Recommend simplifying grammar. The following examples refer to English grammar;

- Avoid using passive sentences. For example, if it is said, "Tom was hit by John," it could mean that Tom was the hitter.

- Avoid using negations that could confuse a sentence, such as "Is it not true that you were not going to leave the house?". This sentence could be modified to say: "Were you going to stay in the house?" or "Were you going to leave the house?"

- Avoid using the present tense when addressing or questioning traumatic episodes. This approach can lead to re-traumatisation. In that case, it will be better to use the past tense. Avoid using other complex grammatical structures, for example, "confirmatory questions".

- A confirmatory question is a statement followed by a "confirmation" like: "You like to eat tomato, don't you?" or "You didn't eat the tomato, did you?" where in the same sentence, there is both a positive and a negative component. These sentences are difficult to process.

- Avoid the complexity of questions: Offering options can make a question more complex, limit the possible answer, or cause the question to be leading. For example, "Were you going to go to the bakery or had you already bought the bread you needed?". Simplify it by saying: "Where were you going?" or "Were you heading to the bakery?" or "Were you going to the bakery or somewhere else?"

- Make sure that any question that contains "options" includes the option of "none of these/something else", for example: "Do you prefer a pita bread, a baguette, or something else/another thing?". Some people with limited understanding or prone to obey will tend to agree with the last option. Open-ended questions often prove more effective.

- Questions should not have an introductory phrase like "in relation to..." or "remember when" or unnecessary information that has already been accepted, like "the day in question..." or "at the moment of meeting your uncle, Mr Snow...". These phrases will only add a processing load for a person with communication difficulties, and therefore, it could be difficult for them to know which part of the sentence to focus on.

15. Advise the free description without interruptions, followed by a recapitulation in which the interviewer asks questions about each description section to get more details. For example, "Tell us what happened yesterday" ... Wait as long as possible, and then "Now let us go back to the beginning. Where were you? Who else was with you?"

16. Use visual aids such as timelines, body maps, or witness drawings.

17. Suggest that the person respond in writing instead of orally if this is easier for them.

18. An appropriate interpreter will be required when individuals cannot speak verbally but can communicate through sign language.

19. Some individuals will use augmentative communication devices. In this case, the procedural facilitator will need to have experience with these specific devices or request the help of another professional to ensure they offer appropriate support.

20. Any written document should be in Easy Read format.

21. If we see that they present some sign of blockage in their nonverbal language, offer them time and a warm environment of trust. Changing the conversation topic to something more neutral and returning to the main subject is also appropriate.

3. Comprehension accommodations

1. To ensure that a person with a disability comprehends the information, they should be encouraged to reiterate the message in their own words instead of resorting again to YES/NO questions. Provide feedback on being understood through non-verbal aspects of active listening (nodding, eye contact).

2. Use simple, concrete, and brief language as much as possible to facilitate the person's understanding. It is helpful to ask the person concerned for feedback on the message to ensure it is understood.

3. Give the possibility to express incomprehension: "I do not understand...", "Can you repeat it?".

4. If they must read any documentation, it should be written in simple language, with short sentences and ordered ideas (adapted to Easy Read methodology).

5. Use active verb tenses and avoid subjunctives.

6. Avoid figurative, metaphorical, or ironic language.

7. Repeat complex concepts or ideas.

8. Use simple, short sentences with a usual structure: subject + verb + complement.

9. To enhance understanding, complement the text with relevant images and place them to the left of each idea.

10. If reading a text, each sentence should occupy one line. If this is impossible, the sentence should be cut by natural elements and arranged in several lines.

11. Avoid impersonal sentences and reflexive passives.

12. Avoid the subjunctive or the passive voice.

13. Avoid unusual punctuation marksre (%, &, /).

14. Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and initials.

15. Use words with precise meaning and reiterate the terms.

16. Select the main ideas.

17. Write in direct mode.

18. Do not take prior knowledge for granted.

19. Avoid loaded designs and columns.

20. When necessary, use alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) methods or visual aids such as images, pictograms, or drawings to communicate effectively. For most people, using multiple communication channels will facilitate their understanding of what they hear. This means that using visual aids to facilitate understanding or support the expression of information increases understanding effectiveness. For example:

- A stick figure or sketch of a person with basic lines to depict the placement of individuals, for instance, in a case related to sexual assault.
- A timeline with a simple line to depict events over time and determine their sequence.
- Cards displaying reminders such as “I don’t know”, “speak slower”, and “I don’t understand”.
- Drawings that graphically represent options like “Yes/No/I do not know/Something else”.
- Drawings that show the distribution of spaces to facilitate the understanding of events.

4. Emotional and Behavioural management accommodations

1. The procedural facilitator should assist the person in feeling safe, modifying their defence mechanisms, and regulating their emotions. In some cases, this may involve suggesting accommodations to the judicial process, such as allowing the witness to maintain physical contact (such as touching their arm) or having the facilitator stand by their side to help convey their responses to the questions.

2. Change the position in which the person will sit or stand.

3. Allow the person to bring a toy or personal object that calms them.

4. Allow more breaks.

Equally important, the procedural facilitator should proactively address the potential barriers in the police and/or judicial context that can favour the appearance of disruptive behaviours. This can be achieved by raising awareness among police officers and legal professionals before interviewing the person, preparing the room, etc.

5. Interpersonal interaction accommodations (social behaviours)

1. Avoid exposing individuals to stressful situations during communication interactions as much as possible to minimise the chance of emotional blockage.

2. To help individuals manage new situations and reduce the impact of changes during important events like interviews or trials, it is recommended to propose a pre-visit to the interview location or court a few days before the actual event. This visit can help them become familiar with the environment and adapt to the surroundings.

3. Suggest a brief meeting with the police or legal professionals in a neutral waiting room.

4. To minimise the impact of social desirability bias, it is essential to allocate some time at the beginning of the interview to emphasise the significance of responding with "I don't know" if the interviewee does not know or remember the answer to a question. It is also important to encourage them to say "I didn't understand" if they did not comprehend something communicated to them, providing examples if necessary.

5. Create an atmosphere that is calm, non-threatening, and trustworthy. Avoid using authoritarian styles during the interview.

6. Request the presence of a trusted figure to help the person feel more at ease and be less subject to the effects of acquiescence or social desirability.

7. It is recommended to avoid asking yes/no questions. When using closed or dichotomous questions, it is important to be cautious with the responses obtained, and it is advisable to repeat the questions to balance the alternative responses.

8. To avoid suggestibility, refrain from suggesting information in questions. For example, avoid asking, "You were wearing a red sweater, right?"

9. The procedural facilitator needs to evaluate whether an individual with a disability has acquired the following abilities:

- Observation, listening, and comprehension skills that are necessary to communicate with others effectively.
- Ability to express appropriate information about themselves and their surroundings.
- Self-expression skills and the ability to respond appropriately to others.
- Competencies required to maintain conversations with others.
- Behavioral patterns necessary to initiate, establish, and maintain interpersonal relationships.

Accommodations for context

1. Accommodations for context police and legal professionals

1. Raise awareness among police and legal professionals about the role of facilitators and biases towards persons with disabilities.
2. Remove the siren from the car.
3. Remove a jacket or part of a uniform, such as a cap or sunglasses. In a judicial context, this canalso refer to removing a robe.
4. Attend to the individual in a quieter space.
5. Try to create an environment of trust and calmness for the person.
6. Allow the presence of their support person or the facilitator.
7. Record the statement to avoid repeated statements from the person with a disability.
8. Allow the person to stand up during interviews and take breaks more frequently.
9. Allow the person to use notes.
10. Support with easy-to-read texts or pictograms.
11. Use sequences of activities.

12. Try to see the courtroom with fresh eyes (as often the professionals participating in the justice system are already accustomed to it, so they do not perceive those things that an ordinary person would find strange. A repetitive low-volume noise or the flash of bright lights can cause sensory overload. The position of the lawyers, who will often be with their backs to the accused person, canprevent effective listening.

13. Try to view the courtroom from a fresh perspective. Legal professionals are often familiar with the courtroom environment and have become accustomed to certain aspects that an ordinary personwould find strange. For example, a repetitive low-volume noise or the flash of bright lights can cause sensory overload. Additionally, the position of the lawyers, who often have their backs turned to the accused, can hinder effective listening.

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