

A key objective for Touchstone Theatre is to ensure that our productions, programs, employment, and volunteer opportunities are accessible to all individuals, including people with disabilities.

Building on a firm foundation of commitment to accessibility, we continue to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to participation on an ongoing basis. We work in partnership with staff, volunteers, visitors, and the community at large to meet, and where possible exceed, the requirements of folks with barriers to access; and to demonstrate our commitment to access and inclusion. The limitations imposed upon us by budget constraints mean we cannot provide all the services we would like to at all times, but we are continuing to work on methods to better serve patrons with all manner of disabilities and special needs.

At this time, Touchstone Theatre strives to identify and remove barriers to access in the following ways:

ASL Interpretation

American Sign Language Interpreted Performances are available at select performances for Deaf or hard-of-hearing audiences. For in-person performances, reserved seats are available for audience members who will be using the services of the interpreters.

Closed Captions

When possible, surtitles will be included in the Projection design of shows.

Vocal Eye

Vocal Eye is designed to make the arts more accessible for persons who are blind or partially sighted. Vocal eye is available at select performances to help serve this community.

Relaxed Performances

Relaxed performances are designed to welcome patrons who may benefit from a less restricted audience environment. Patrons of all abilities are welcome, including those with sensory processing conditions, autism, social anxiety, Alzheimer's, PTSD or dementia. There will be a relaxed attitude to noise and movement within the auditorium, and some minor production changes may be made to reduce the intensity of light and startling effects. During the performance, patrons may leave and re-enter the theatre as required, and quiet spaces are provided in our lobbies.

These shows are for anyone. Many other people may choose to attend a relaxed performance, either as an access requirement or because they like the inclusive environment. We work a relaxed performance into our runs where appropriate.

Wheelchair Accessibility & Mobility

We are committed to working exclusively in venues which are accessible to wheelchairs and other mobility devices. Our offices are also fully accessible.

Touchstone Theatre encourages the use of personal assistive devices such as Patron-Owned Electrical Equipment and Mobility Devices whenever necessary or possible in order to improve access to our programs and services.

Service Animals

All service animals are welcome at Touchstone- but there may be constraints placed by individual venues.

Support Persons

Support persons are welcome to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to our facilities. Support persons will receive a complimentary ticket to our performances.

Cultural Safety

Touchstone Theatre strives to be culturally safe for audiences and participants, and we acknowledge that culture can, and often does, encompass a broad range of things including ethnicity, race, gender, socio-economic status, age, sexuality, and disability.

Touchstone staff and associates are responsible for:

1. Educating themselves on the demographics we work with on a given project so as to be able to conduct themselves in a respectful and informed way.
2. Examining and reflecting on their own culture and its potential impact on others.
3. Acknowledging power relationships and dominance that are a result of cultural privilege and acting to ensure equitable and respectful engagement.
4. Acceptance of the right to hold differing world and other views.
5. Refraining from culturally unsafe practices and interactions, and where safe to do so, challenging potentially unsafe practices and interactions, including such things as stereotyping, discrimination, and racist, sexist or other demeaning and harmful commentary.

We engage in ongoing conversations with the people and companies we work with in order to understand their individual needs in terms of cultural safety. We acknowledge that this is not a one-size-fits-all situation, and are always open to learn and receive feedback.

We incorporate Indigenous land acknowledgements at the beginning of every show and event.

Financial Barriers

We offer partially or entirely discounted tickets to those requiring financial assistance to view our work. Patrons requiring this assistance are encouraged to reach out to us via email, and we

will help them arrange their tickets. We also offer student discounts for many of our productions, as well as low cost performances on specific days.

We are committed to paying all of our staff and associates a living wage, and providing adequate paid time off, healthcare for permanent staff, as well as a flexible work environment that serves the needs of the staff and allows for them to have multiple revenue streams by taking on projects outside their work at Touchstone.

Geographic Barriers

We strive to work in places which are highly accessible by transit so as to foster ease of access for our audiences and participants. We also strive to work outside metro Vancouver whenever the opportunity becomes available so as to bring our work to folks where they live.

Social Barriers

We distribute a “Letter of Inclusivity” to any contractors and volunteers at the beginning of their engagement with Touchstone. This letter will speak to the conduct we expect from those participating in our activities with respect to anti-racism, anti-harassment, anti-bullying, et cetera. We believe it will help to set a positive tone and expectation for those working with us, and help to create an environment in which it feels safe to create and explore.

We have comprehensive healthy workplace policies to help protect our staff, associates, volunteers, and participants.