

Inclusive and supportive approach in the training space - Acrolab 2023



Our aim with the Acrolab week is to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where as well as learning new tricks and moves, we can together build a more inclusive and accessible approach to acrobatics and acrobalance.

For us inclusion is a constant, ongoing journey and in no way do we proclaim that Mimbres are experts in the field. We are very much travellers on this journey and hope that together with all of you we can take turns to lead, share and guide each other to together explore the road (or to dig new paths)!

We welcome feedback, dialogue, corrections and discussions as part of this exploration and ask everyone else to do the same in an open and curious manner.

There are many resources and approaches that we have found useful in our journey so far and I thought it might be worth sharing a couple of these with you. It's in no way exhaustive but just some small steps to get started!

Names, pronunciation and pronouns

There will be many new faces, names and both binary and non-binary participants. Please try to use people's name and pronouns as they introduced themselves or if in doubt ask again. If you forget a pronunciation or get a pronoun wrong, accept the correction with a thank you, rephrase and move on. Below a useful little blog, or google further:

<https://blogs.shipleyschool.org/i-accidentally-misgendered-someone-how-should-i-respond>

Social model of Disability

We'll be working with the social model of disability across the week, which moves away from the idea of disability as being something that is fixed or cured, instead it pushes for political and social (and creative!) change, breaking down barriers that currently disable people.

The social model of disability holds that people with impairments are disabled by the barriers operating in society that discriminate against them and says that disability is created by the way society is organised, rather than a person's medical condition, impairment or difference.

(To find out more about the social model of disability, this is a great site:

www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/about-us/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/)

We will use this model when approaching tricks and creative movement. Instead of assuming there is only one way of doing a certain trick, we'll together develop new techniques by exploring what's the essence of a trick, how can we adapt traditional techniques and how can we support each other with more bodies and strength to make a new version of a trick. We think the final results are often more interesting than the 'original' versions.



Some quick, specific things....:

- Remember not all impairments are visible. Fatigue and inflammatory issues can change from day to day, renew consent and check-in each time you work with someone.
- Do let the people you are training with know if you are feeling exhausted or in pain, this is not being dramatic or letting the group down, it's essential both to protect yourself and the people you are working with.
- Nobody owes you their personal medical history. 'What happened', 'what's wrong with you' are not ok questions. But yes ask 'Is it ok for you to put weight through here?'; 'How can we adapt and make this move work together.', 'Is this ok for you?'
- If talking to the full group try to use inclusive language such as moving rather than walking and 'using a wheelchair' rather than 'wheelchair bound'.
- Bear in mind that wheelchairs are part of the user's personal space and an essential access equipment, not a circus equipment for someone else:
 - Interact with the person, not the wheelchair and ask for consent about putting weight on the chair in the same way you would ask for consent in putting weight on a person.
 - If in doubt about what weight-bearing is possible for an idea we normally have at least 2 wheelchair users involved in the discussion to share their experiences. Bear in mind each wheelchair is constructed differently so just cause it works with one chair it might not be safe with another.

Health

If you are unwell with a proper cold, flu or fever, please don't attend that day. If at tail-end of a cold, please increase hand-washing & hygiene. If anyone prefers to wear a mask that is absolutely fine, make sure you have clear lines of communication and respect for each person's choice to protect everyone's health.

Looking forward to train, explore and grow together!

