

PRACTICE SCENARIO: DISABILITY

Youssef is a tall man who takes a seat at the front of a presentation blocking the view of two women behind him.

The women start to make negative comments along the lines of 'typical man'. As the event organiser, you sense the issue and politely encourage Youssef to move further back.

Youssef tells you the reason he is sitting at the front is because he is hearing impaired, and his hearing aids are not working. He adds that there wasn't an event-registration form where he could have given this information in advance.

What do you do?

First and foremost, you should apologise to Youssef for asking him to move. People with invisible disabilities are often overlooked and assumed to not have accessibility needs as an event organiser this should be a prime consideration.

If the women who are criticising Yousseff are still having issues, then ask them to move to the side, or provide more seats at the front if possible. Do not draw attention to Yousseff unnecessarily but instead mention to the women that there had been a mistake around accessibility needs by the events team that will be corrected going forward.

Introduce event registration forms where people can state their accessibility needs. Take guidance from a trusted disability charity or community resource to help you ensure the form is inclusive featuring as many requirement options as possible.. If he is open to it, ask for Youssef's thoughts on the form too.

