

# Creating Accessible Spaces for Women

## A Tool for Fitness and Physical Activity Organizations and Providers

### ***Accessibility for Women:***

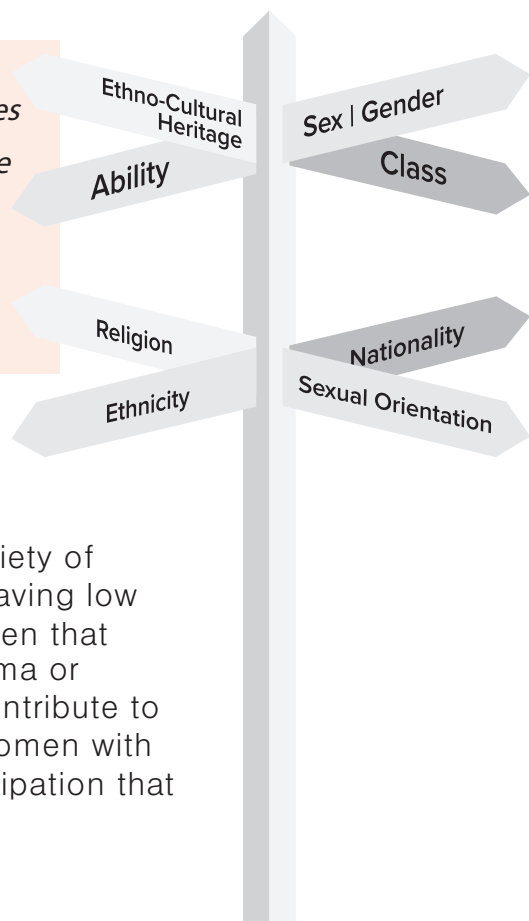
#### **What is it and why is it important?**

**Accessibility** is an idea that can involve many different elements. Designing accessible environments requires consideration of multiple factors that may create barriers to participation for women. When these barriers are under-addressed, women in the community may feel unwelcome or uncomfortable using physical activity resources, which can impact health outcomes. An accessible environment entails both physical spaces and behavioural and psycho-social atmospheres.



#### ***Accessible environments for women may include some of the following features:***

- *Free or inexpensive admission*
- *Women-only hours*
- *Childcare programming*
- *Family-oriented programming*
- *Communication of organizational values*
- *Diverse people in pictures*
- *Plain language and signage*
- *Welcoming and approachable staff*
- *Orientation for beginners*



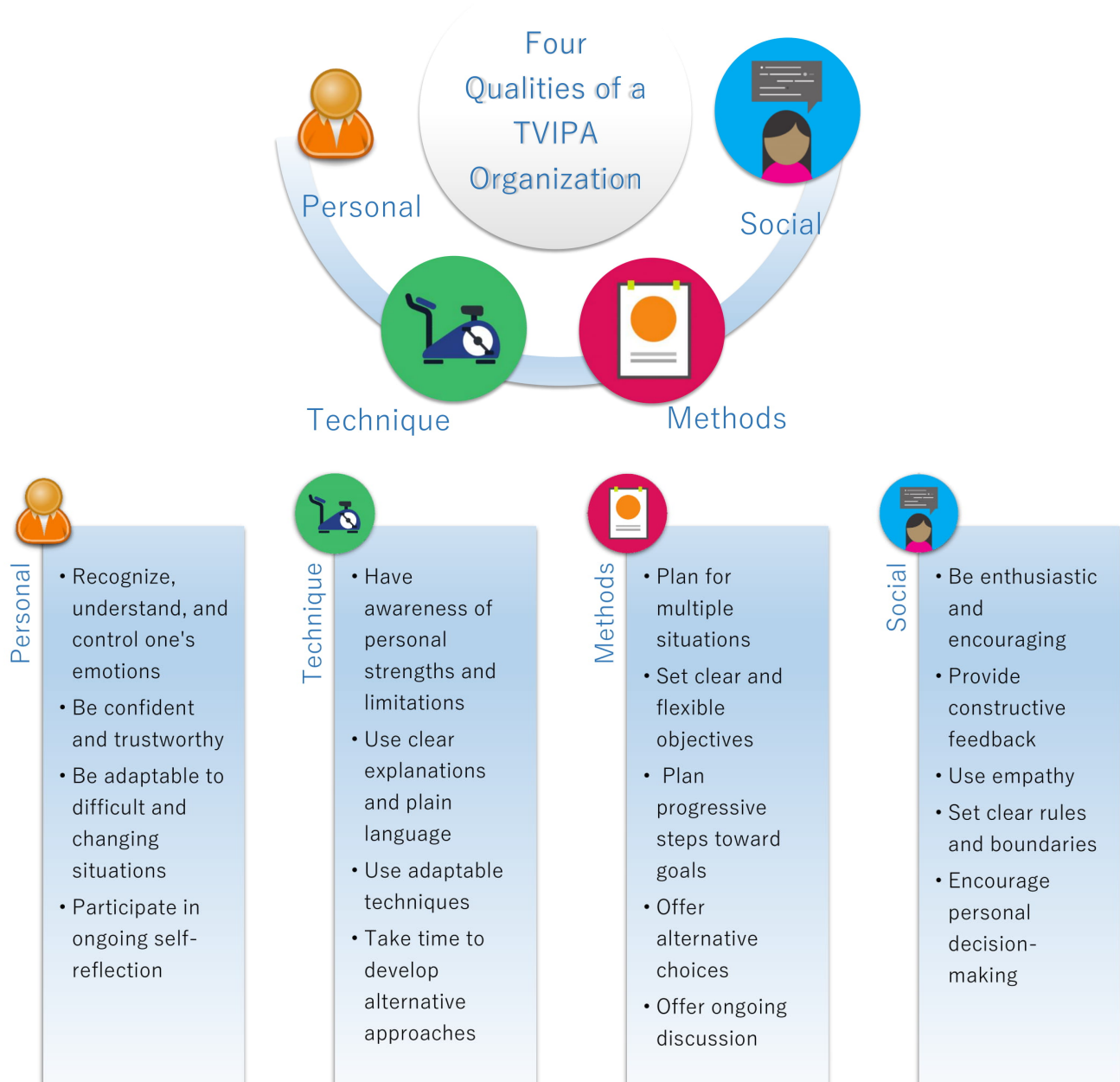
### **Barriers to Participation**

Women living in marginalizing conditions often face a variety of circumstances that can create barriers to participation. Having low income or unstable housing or employment, having children that need care, or having experiences of racism, sexism, trauma or violence are some examples of life circumstances that contribute to health inequity. Tailoring services to meet the needs of women with such experiences can help to reduce the barriers to participation that reinforce health inequities.

This toolkit offers actions you can take to enhance physical activity environments to be more accessible for women experiencing barriers to participation

## What Can Physical Activity Organizations Do?

- Ensure staff **can access and take part in training** to enhance their knowledge, skills, and awareness about trauma and violence.
- Ensure staff are supported to **remain healthy** while working with people who experience trauma.
- Create **policies** that reflect the diverse needs of people with experiences of intersecting marginalizations.



Adapted from [1]

[1] Ammann, P. & Matuska, N. (2014). Women on the Move: Trauma-informed interventions based on sport and play: A toolkit for practitioners. Swiss Academy of Development (SAD).

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