

Strategies for Creating Inclusive Barn Spaces

Below are a series of starter tips to help barns create a sense of community and grow inclusive spaces and for barn staff and partners to broaden their inclusivity skillset.

- **Marketing and Social Media**

- Follow a diversity of local, regional, and national social accounts of brands, influencers and organizations. Contribute as appropriate in those forums. Repost efforts from these accounts as appropriate. Some example accounts:
 - [The Helmet Queen](#)
 - [Equestrian for Everyone](#)
 - [Cool Ridings](#)
 - [Brianna Noble \(Urban Cowgirl\)](#)
 - [Black Equestrians](#)
 - [Compton Cowboys](#)
 - [Black Reins Magazine](#)
 - [Emma Booth](#)
 - [The United States Para Equestrian Association](#)
 - [Kerrits Official Page](#)
 - [Ever Wood Stables](#)
 - [Riviera Equisports](#)
- Seek community partnerships and opportunities to advertise at locations that attract a diverse clientele (e.g. grocery stores, gyms, schools, camps, places of worship).
 - Recognized Riding Academies (RRAs) can run low/no fee sessions on a regular cadence that introduce communities to horses, basic horsemanship, and the opportunities offered at the RRA.

- **Signaling and Visibility**

- **Post a statement of inclusion** - Publicly hang a statement of values so that students and family members can easily see it ([USHJA Statement for Barns](#)).
- **Use inclusive language** ([Preso from the 2020 Annual meeting](#)) - Look for simple changes that can make a huge difference in folks feeling seen and supported. These adjustments are for everyone, not only those that you may fear offending. Some examples below:
 - *Boys and girls* → *Everyone, Folks*
 - *Your Mom and Dad* → *Parents/Guardians, Your Parenting Adults*
 - *What are you doing for Christmas?* → *What are you doing for winter break?*
- **Recognizing relevant holidays** - Acknowledge relevant holidays (e.g. Black History Month, Pride month, National Women's day, Hispanic Heritage month etc.) via social media or in a place of visibility in the barn. One easy way to do this is by reposting USHJA elements related to these moments on social media, or having a festive statement on the day board.

- Note that some religious holidays have elements of fasting that may impact student's ability to participate. Talk to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students or the students themselves, depending on their age, about what accommodations need to be made.
 - **Recognize sportsmanship and horsemanship** - and do so in a way that is agnostic of riding ability and age. Look for ways to recognize folks for sportsmanship, camaraderie, and horsemanship to elevate and promote behaviors that make the sport inclusive. This could be in a monthly highlight, a conversation with guardians, or another way.
 - **Embrace Body Neutrality** - riders are athletes who represent a variety of [body types and sizes](#). Refraining from commenting on body size and/or type and acknowledging that riders of all shapes and sizes can be successful is a big step toward people being healthy and safe in their bodies in the horse world.
- **Intervention**
 - Bust bias and intervene in moments of disrespect. Modeling behaviors that emphasize the importance of inclusion and safety is crucial to creating a welcoming environment. Common areas that might require intervention:
 - Using preferred pronouns and terms when addressing Queer identities. It is important that these are disclosed by the individuals or their guardians, not assumed.
 - [Creating Safe and Inclusive Teams for LGBTQ+ Athletes](#) and Learn more [here on general terminology](#) (GLSEN).
 - [Reform the Locker Room](#) is a free course designed for coaches, parents, or students to support LGBTQ young people and help drive positive sports environments for all (Trevor Project).
 - Heritage
 - Background, culture, and food can lead to conversations around differences. Ensure that all parties are respectful and that questions come from a place of curiosity not exclusion.
 - Accessibility
 - Body Image and Size
 - Additional resources around acceptance
 - [USHJA training and webinars](#)
 - [DEI Term Glossary](#) (provided by Westover School)
- **Safety**
 - **Clothing and Helmet fit** - Prioritize safety and kindness over aesthetics when addressing the fit of helmets and riding clothing.
 - Ex. Dreadlocks or long, thick, or curly hair in a tidy braid or ponytail may work better with the fit of someone's helmet than attempting to put all of a rider's hair in a helmet. It is a legal style, and having a braided style may allow for a safer fit of the helmet.
 - Ex. Riding clothing is expensive. If it is functional and safe and your opinion is not asked, never comment on brand choice or repetition of outfits.

- **Use Veterinarian-Recommended, Consistent Standards** - when determining weight and height boundaries for horses and ponies, use a consistent and transparent measure.
 - In initial conversations, use intake questions to determine which horses would be a best fit for the rider based on the information provided. If there are limitations and you cannot provide a horse to fit the individual, be welcoming and share ways of how to be involved with horses in another way (e.g. horsemanship lessons, grooming, ground work).
- **Bilingual signage** - If you live in an area that is multilingual, aim to have prominent directional and informational signage in both the primary and secondary languages spoken in your region (e.g. English and Spanish). Signage should include but is not limited to:
 - Hours of operation
 - Safety protocols both in the barn and in the ring
 - Barn rules and expectations
 - [Google Translate](#) can help get you started on simple translation.
- **Continued learning**
 - As an RRA, it is important to understand the changing landscape of terminology and inclusion, in particular how it relates to GenZ.
 - [Attend USHJA Webinars and Seminars.](#)
 - Resources from these events are great ways to deep dive into topics:
 - [From #weridetgether](#)
 - [Resources on cultural competency](#)

If you have any questions please reach out to diversity@ushja.org.