

November 2023

# Accessibility: It's a work in progress!

A conversation about putting our commitments into action.

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# Introductions



**Audrey Homan**  
**Web, Accessibility,  
Communications**



**Adrienne Miao**  
**Community Services**



**Jesse Suter,**  
**Executive Director**



# Who We Are

The Center on Disability & Community Inclusion (CDCI) at the University of Vermont is Vermont's UCEDD.

**We're home to 34 full-time staff, and 31 projects.**



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# Turn to your neighbors

What does  
accessibility mean  
to you?

What is something  
your center has  
done for  
accessibility?



**We are all working to improve accessibility...**



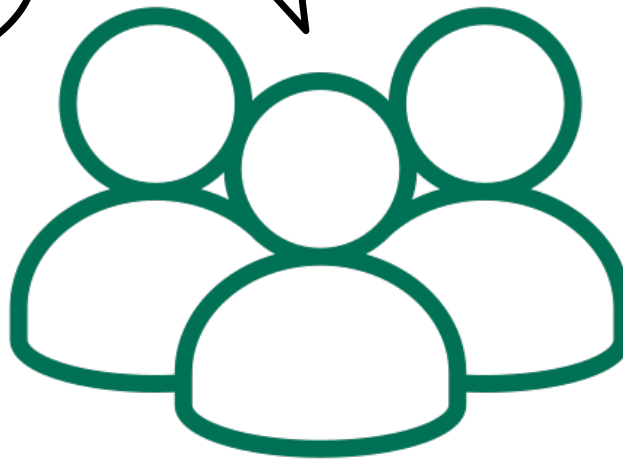
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# In 2002, we heard concerns from our staff.

“No one’s asked for accessibility features. We don’t need it.”

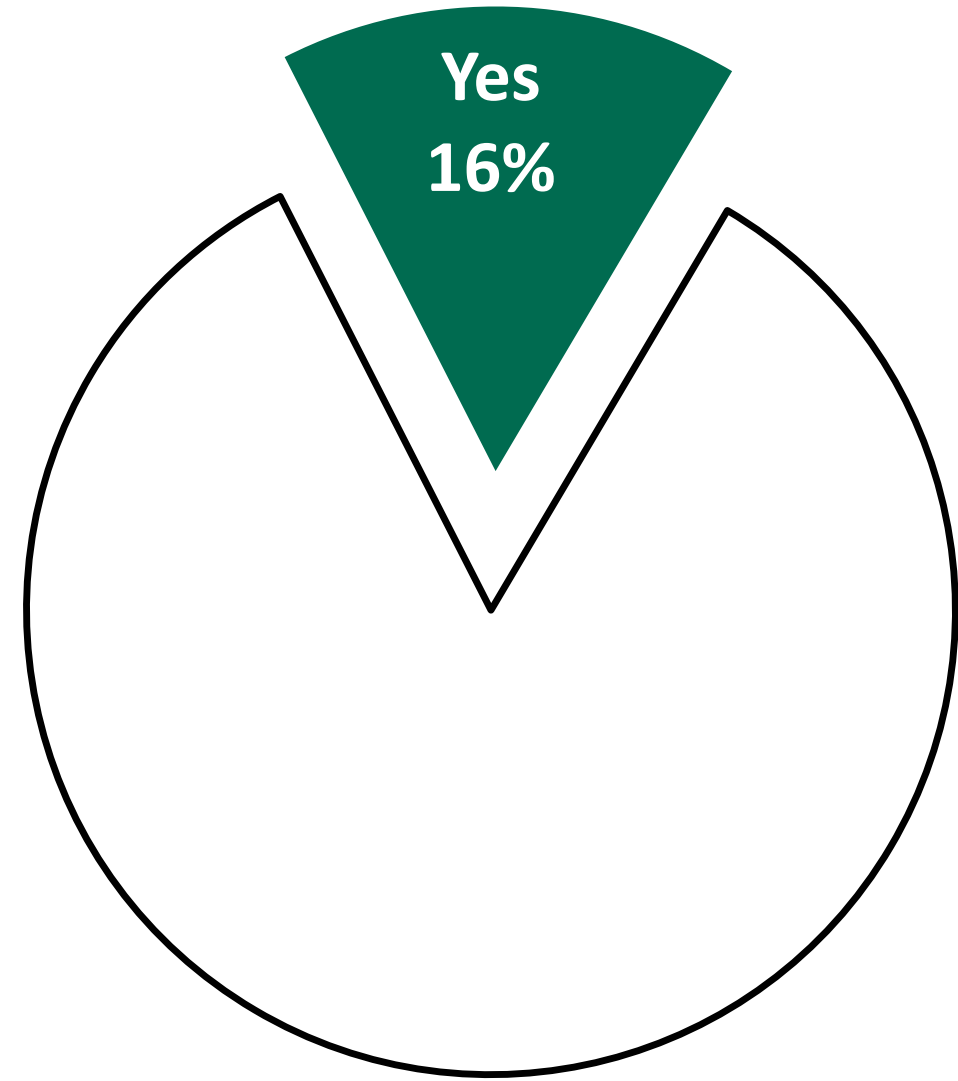
“No one really uses [alt-text]”!

“It’s really not something we have time for right now.”



So, we conducted a survey:

**Have you had  
training on  
accessibility in  
past year?**



# Then we took action.

2022  
○

**Created  
pilot  
accessibility  
trainings.**

2023  
○

**Measuring  
results.**

2024  
○

**Decide if we  
can offer to  
others.**





# Over the summer, we designed a series of monthly workshops.

**Plain  
Language**

**Event  
Accessibility**

**Accessible  
Design and  
Readability**

**Accessible  
Web Design**

**Universal  
Design for  
Learning**

**Accessible  
Word  
Documents**

**Accessible  
PowerPoint  
Documents**

**Accessible  
Multimedia**



# Our resources

**\$1,000 budget** for hiring two local disability groups to each teach a workshop.

**Survey software, Zoom, captioning & ASL interpreters** paid for by UVM.

**About 11 hours to create each workshop.**



(certified accessibility specialist)



(project management and data)



(willing to support new ideas and teach a workshop)



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# Each workshop was flexible, and inclusive.

- ✓ Held on Zoom, with captioning and ASL interpretation available.
- ✓ Offered twice, on different days of the week and at different times of the day.
- ✓ Available as a captioned video recording and transcript along with the slides.



# Each workshop was bite-sized.

- ✓ Assumed audience had little or no previous knowledge.
- ✓ Covered only a few topics with lots of examples.
- ✓ Went slowly, with time for questions.
- ✓ Stopped after 45 minutes.



# Each workshop ended with the same advice:

Choose one thing to work on at a time

You are encouraged to ask for help

Resist the freakout:  
Accessibility is hard,  
and it's a process.

Get feedback from people with disabilities

Don't be afraid to ask for what you need



We made all materials available outside of workshops.

go.uvm.edu/  
accessibility



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uvm.edu

CDCI Accessibility Resources | Center on Disability and Community Inclusion | The University of Vermont

MENU CENTER ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION

CDCI Accessibility Resources

Accessibility is not optional.

Everyone is welcome. And that means making sure that events, presentations, publications, and websites are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability.

BASIC ACCESSIBLE DESIGN GUIDELINES

AN INTRODUCTION TO ACCESSIBLE MEDIA: CAPTIONS AND TRANSCRIPTS

ACCESSIBILITY: THE BASIC BI  
An Introduction to Accessible Multimedia: Captions and Transcripts

'Does my multimedia need to be accessible?'

YES.

https://www.uvm.edu/cess/cdci

Accessibi Resources

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES HOMEPAGE

WEB ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBLE MEDIA

ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

GET HELP WITH ACCESSIBILITY

UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 2023: Accessible Events 101
- Date TBA: Introduction to Inclusive Language
- Date TBA: Accessible Presentations

For registration information contact Audrey Homan

And here's what happened:

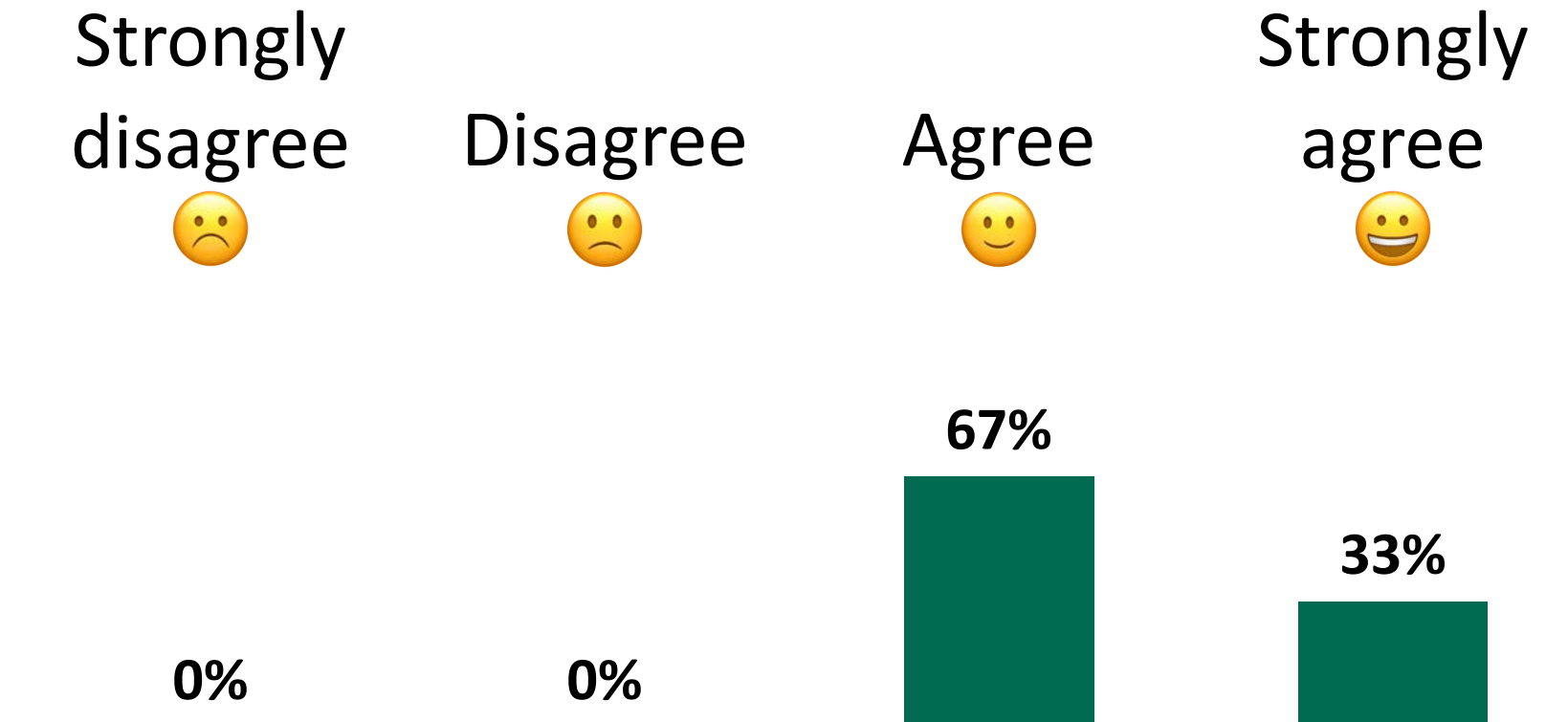
94%

of CDCI staff attended at  
least one workshop.



# Did it change attitudes?

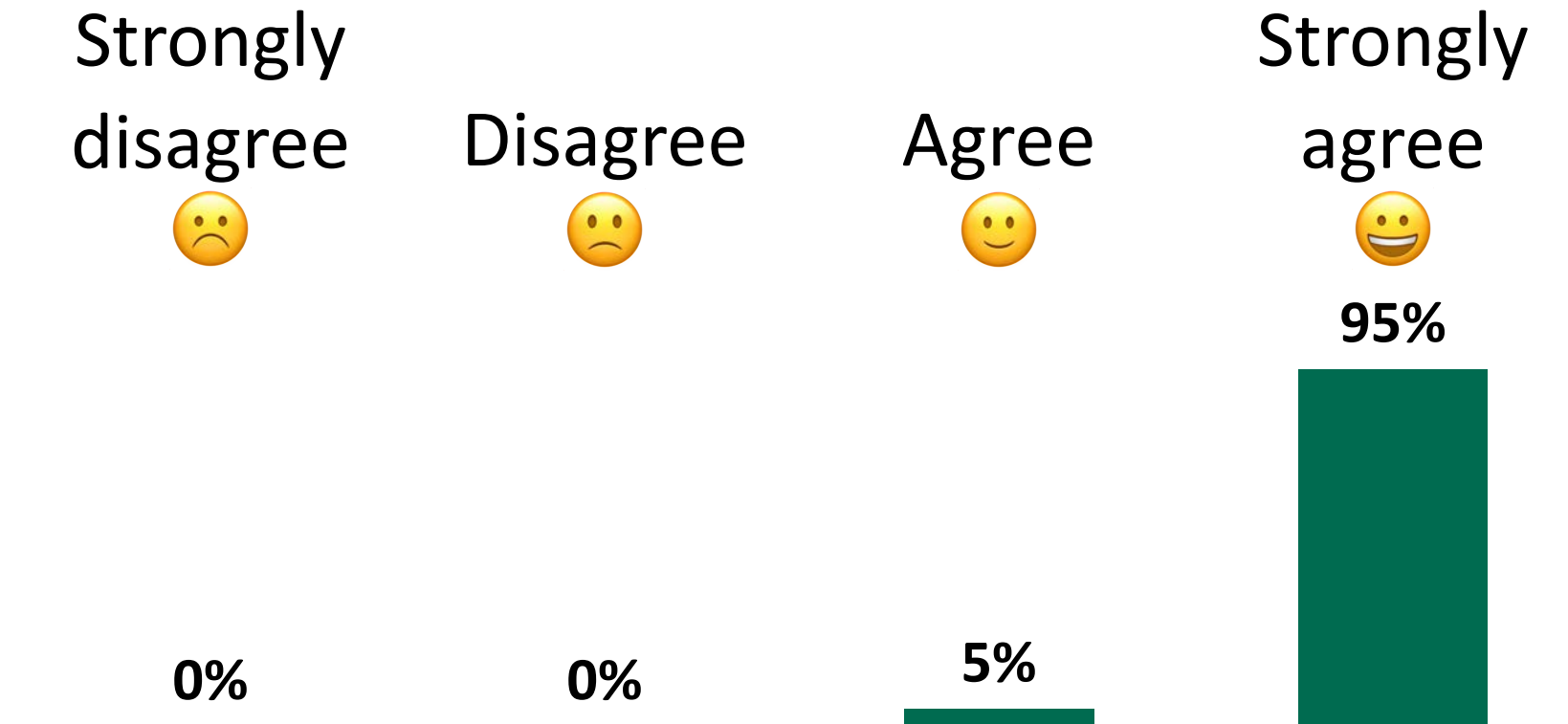
I believe accessibility is *relevant* to my work. (**Before training**)





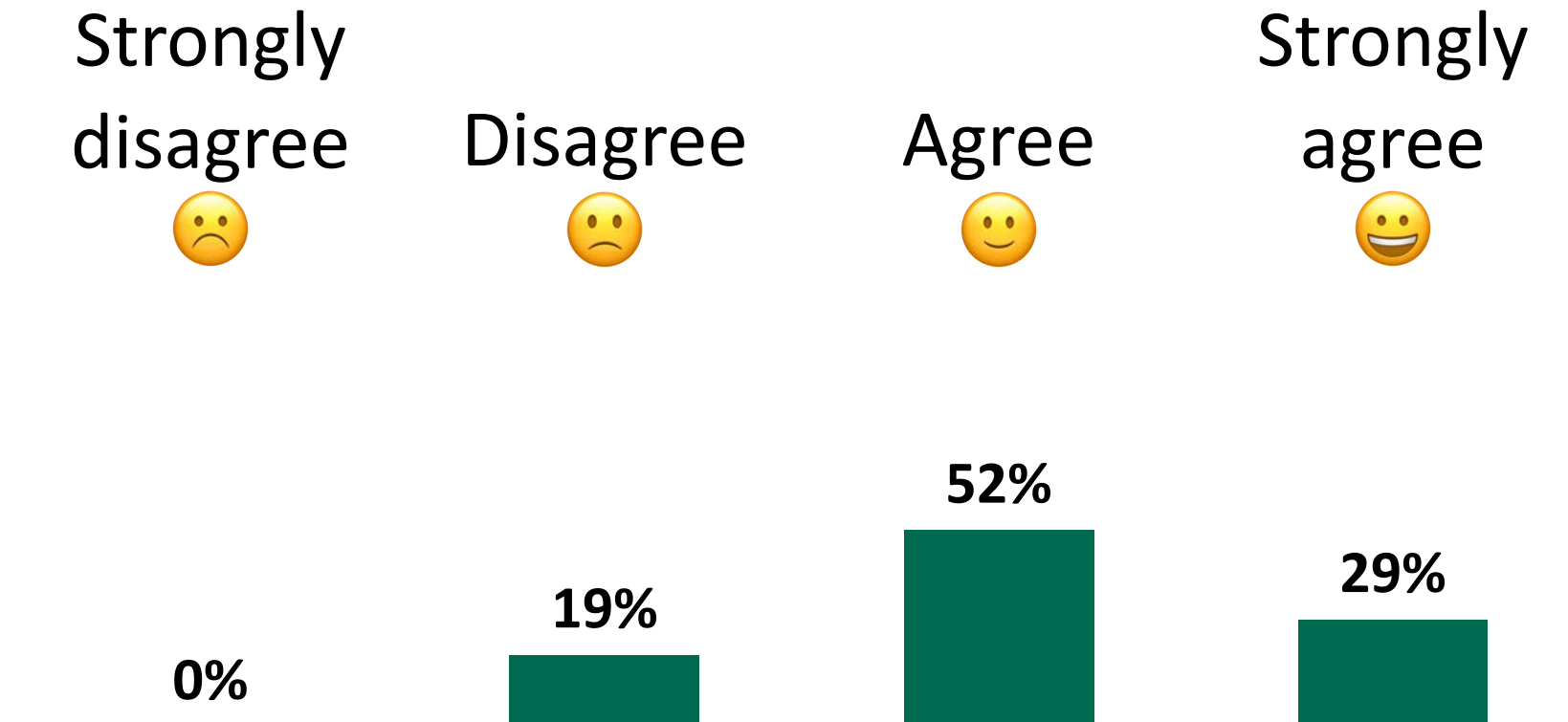
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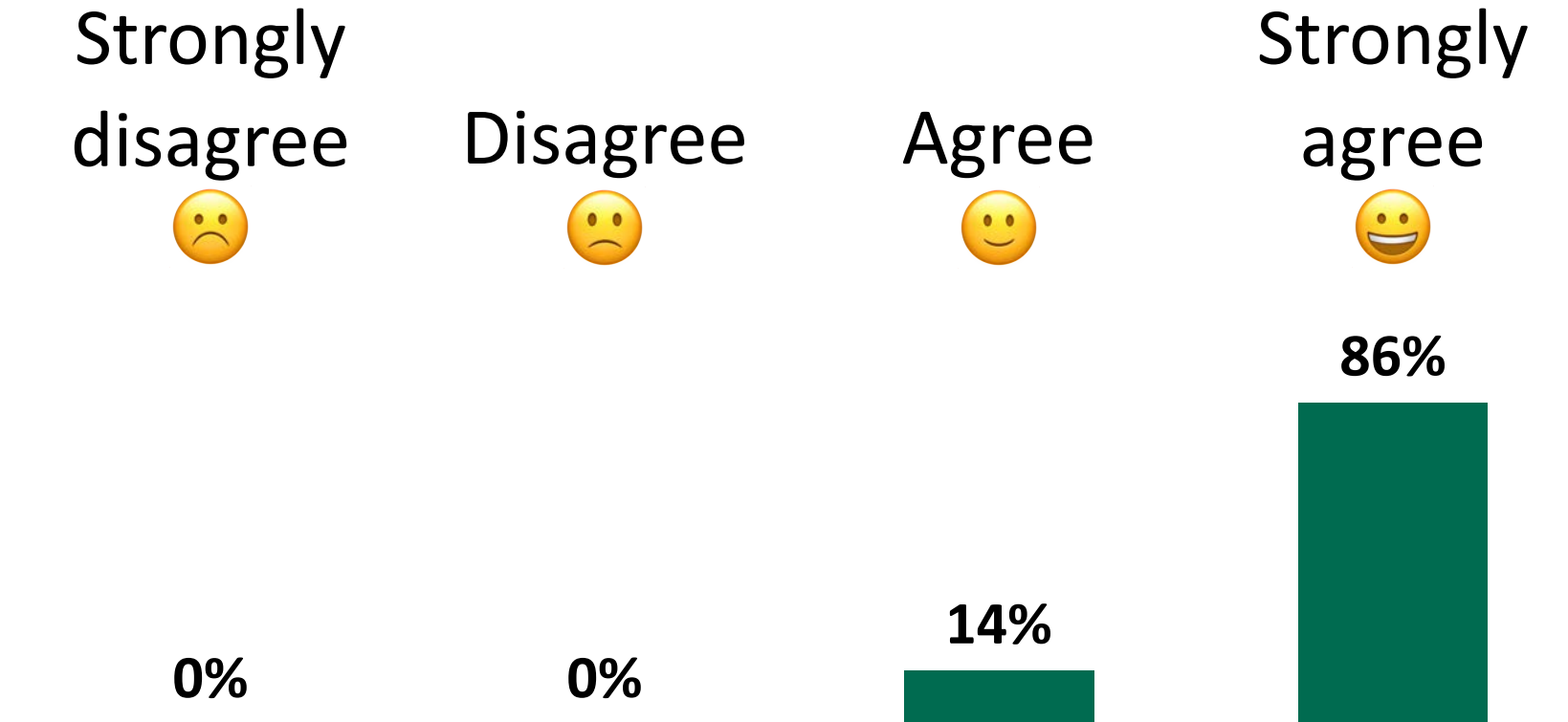
# Did it change attitudes?

I believe accessibility is *feasible* in my work. (**Before training**)



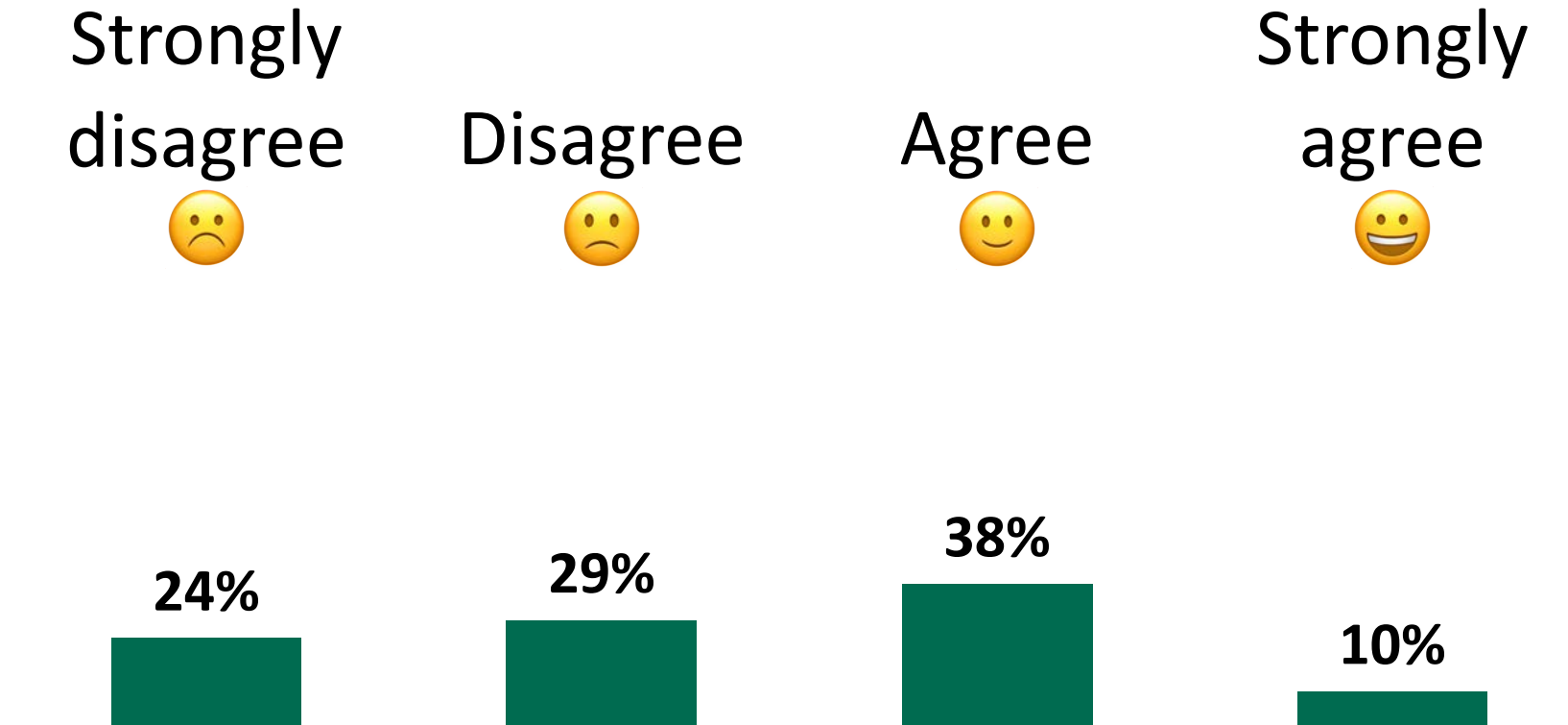
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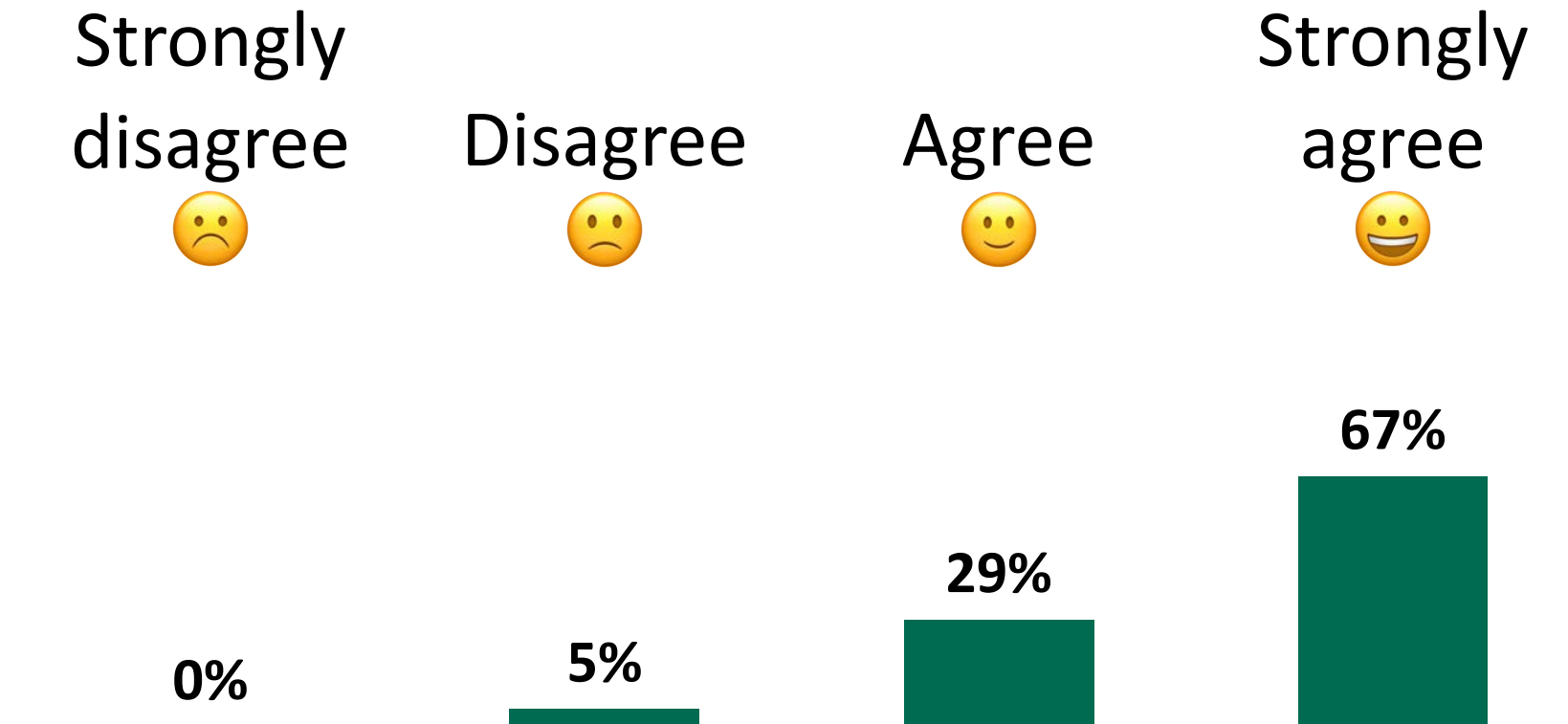
# Did it change what people do?

I use accessible design in my work. (Before training)



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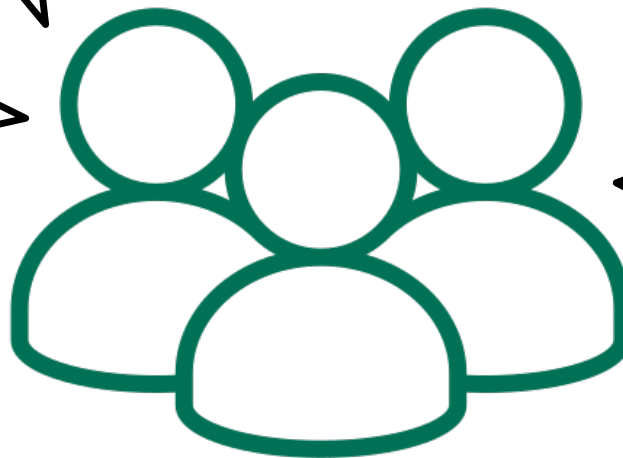
# What motivates you now?

To make sure all families understand our materials!

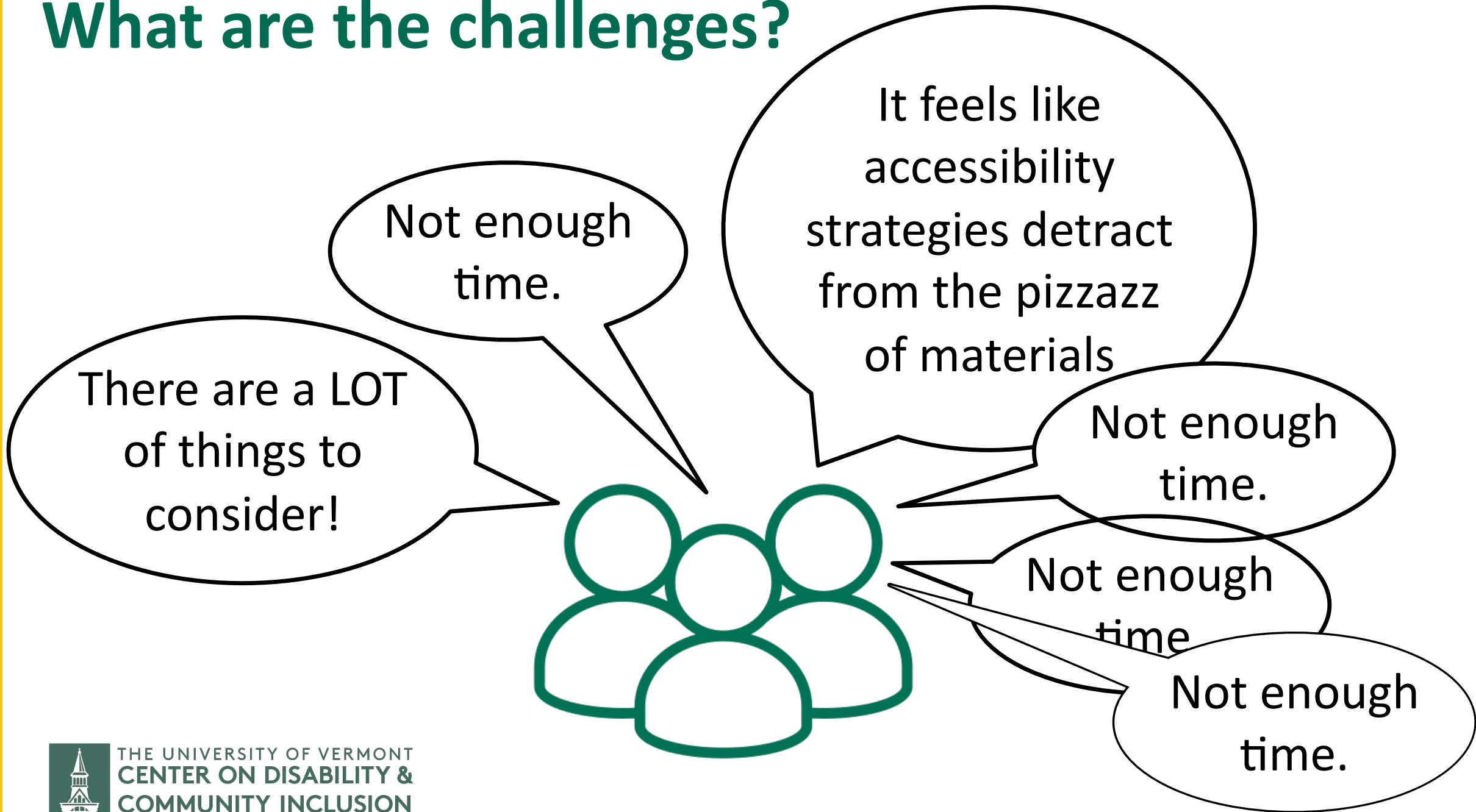
I think it's important that we model the behavior we'd like to see in the field.

It's at the heart of Disability Studies and Social Justice

To be the best ally-in-progress I can be



# What are the challenges?



# And that lack of time keeps showing up in the work.

"There are a lot of moving parts...  
The accessibility part is not always  
my priority."

--CDCI staff member, October 2023





# What will you try next?

- Reduce complex language in reports and emails.
- Develop accessible video lessons.
- Translating more documents for families and schools.
- Attend more workshops.



# Our next steps:

A new round of accessibility workshops this year!

- Plain Language (again)
- Inclusive Language, Inclusive Communities
- Accessible Events



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# Let's talk about it...

1. What have you tried at your center?



2. What challenges  
have you faced  
trying to change  
attitudes?



3. How do we get  
more people to use  
accessible  
practices?



## In summary:

Choose one thing to work on at a time

You are encouraged to ask for help

Resist the freakout:  
Accessibility is hard,  
and it's a process.

Get feedback from people with disabilities

Don't be afraid to ask for what you need



# Questions?



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# Thanks for your time.

Access this presentation online:

- as a web page
- as a .pdf
- or narrated audio

