

## Accessibility at River Valley Insight Meditation Community

It is our intention and value to be able to share the dharma with everyone who wants to be able to participate.

We are currently meeting outdoors, and you are welcome to bring whatever kind of meditation chair/cushion works for you. We ask that people refrain from scented products and use unscented insect repellants as needed. The parking lot is on the same level as our practice space, so wheelchairs would be able to be used.

The following was from our indoor space, which is not in use at this time:

### Seating

There are straight-backed chairs, and a variety of meditation cushions and benches available in the space. You are welcome to bring your own seating if you would be more comfortable doing so.

People who need to lay down in the hall are welcome to take 2 mats and a blanket to make a comfortable space for themselves. Please do not lay down in the hall unless you have a medical need, or unless you are invited to do so by a teacher.

### Hearing impairment

In order to increase accessibility, we are using Zoom closed captioning transcription. This should improve access for those who have a hearing impairment. Seats in the front of the room are reserved for those who are hard of hearing.

### Wheelchair/Mobility Access

The meditation hall is on the 3rd floor of the building, up 2 flights of stairs. There is a ramped entrance to an elevator at the back of the building off of the municipal parking lot. This parking lot is accessed through Masonic Street, and there are several handicapped spaces. The door is painted yellow, and is across from Iconic Café.

Unfortunately, because the elevator is used by other businesses it must be sent down when it is needed. To use the elevator please arrive 15 minutes before the program and text or call us at 1-413-570-0097. We'll bring the elevator down. There is a ramp inside the door leading to the elevator, and the elevator opens directly into the meditation center.

### Chemical sensitivity

We encourage everybody to use sent-free personal products and detergents, to reduce our exposure to unnecessary chemicals and help those in our environment who are sensitive. However, Shambhala practitioners do burn incense in the space, and have for years. We have been told by people who are chemically sensitive that this is likely absorbed by fabrics in the suite, and even with air purifiers which have carbon filters, it could cause problems for some people.

### Overhead lighting

In order to be able to hold hybrid programs using Zoom, we need to have the overhead lights on during the program. For people who are light-sensitive, please bring a hat to shield your eyes.

### Noise

Our suite is on the 3rd floor, above Main St. in Northampton. There will be a fair amount of street noise, which can be used as part of your practice. If, however, you have significant noise sensitivity, you can bring ear plugs.

### Foot gear

Most of the floor is hardwood, and shoes need to be left at the door, which could cause problems for people with foot or leg problems. Therefore, if you need to, you can bring a pair of indoor shoes or slippers to wear in the space. These need to be taken off before entering the meditation hall, unless you need them to walk. There will be shoe covers available by the front door for those who need to cover their shoes to wear them into the hall.

### Vaccination status

We encourage people to stay home if you have symptoms of illness. We encourage masking if you want to reduce the risk of spreading illnesses.

### Medical/other limitations

We understand that not everyone will be able to participate for the full length of time of a program. If you need to leave early, for whatever reason, please inform the teacher before the program starts. Just quietly replace your cushions and leave when you need to.