ASEQ – EHAQ

ECO-JOURNAL

November 2026

EHAC • ASEC

Beyond Awareness: What Meaningful MCS Inclusion Looks Like

Awareness can start a conversation; however, meaningful inclusion determines what happens next. Can a person enter a building, attend an appointment, take part in an activity, or feel part of the community without encountering limitations that affect their health?

For people living with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), the answer often depends on everyday choices about products, spaces, communication, and lodging. Moving past awareness means making accessibility a part of how we plan, operate, and respond.

Turn Guidelines into Regular Practices

A fragrance-free policy requires so much more than just a sign on the door. People need to understand what it means, why it matters, and how to comply. This includes staff, visitors, contractors, and anyone responsible for cleansing or preserving a space. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety emphasizes that education, communication, and ongoing implementation are required to build a scent-free workplace policy.

To put this into practice, organizations can include fragrance-free information in appointment reminders, event invitations, staff training modules, and communications with suppliers. By making this a requirement, organizations can seamlessly incorporate the policy into daily operations.

Make an Accessibility Plan in Advance

Plan well in advance of an invitation to participate. Consider the products being used, cleaning times, and potential sources of exposure before hosting the event. Give participants a clear way to express and communicate their needs, if necessary.

Don't promise a fragrance-free environment without taking clear steps to ensure the space is safe for those with MCS. By being thorough and accurate, you can give participants a chance to decide whether they can safely attend.

Have an Open Ear

Being able to have respectful conversations is a big part of meaningful inclusion. If someone feels comfortable sharing an exposure concern, listen carefully and ask how you can help make the space safer.

Accommodating people on an individual level is necessary, as everyone has different needs and limitations. The Canadian Human Rights Commission notes that scent-free policies are an essential accommodation measure; however, it's also important to be open to other adjustments.

To start, a great question to ask is, “What barriers are you facing, and what can we do together to address them?”

Encourage Flexibility and Connections

To make participation more inclusive, remote options, additional arrangements for appointments, and additional choices for meeting locations can be beneficial. This should open doors for more conversations, information, and opportunities.

Check with the individual if this accommodation works for them. It’s not enough that they are able to log in; they should also be able to meaningfully participate, feel heard, and be part of the community.

Be Accountable

Accessibility and inclusion are ongoing responsibilities that we are all required to uphold. Make sure that people have an easy way to communicate concerns and barriers, have a plan for

responding to these concerns, and follow up to find out whether the changes have helped the situation. Those living with MCS should be part of the creation of policies, practices, and improvements.

Through simple everyday actions, meaningful MCS inclusion can grow. This includes taking concerns to heart, making necessary changes, improving access, and limiting exposures. Each step is a chance to make participation more reliable, respectful, and inclusive.