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Advanced Certificate in Universal Design for Disability Housing

## Creating Accessible Outdoor Spaces

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**Accessible Outdoor Spaces:** Outdoor spaces designed and constructed to be inclusive and usable by all people, regardless of age, disability, or physical ability. This includes parks, playgrounds, trails, and other recreational areas that are accessible to everyone, including those with mobility impairments, visual impairments, and other disabilities.

**ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act):** A civil rights law in the United States that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The ADA mandates that all newly designed and constructed buildings, as well as altered portions of existing buildings, must be accessible to people with disabilities.

**Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs):** Devices used by individuals with hearing loss to improve their ability to hear and understand speech. ALDs include hearing aids, cochlear implants, and other devices that amplify or clarify sound. In outdoor spaces, ALDs can be used to provide audio descriptions of natural features, historical landmarks, and other points of interest.

**Braille Signage:** Tactile signs that can be read by individuals who are blind or have low vision. Braille signs are typically made of durable materials such as plastic or metal and are installed at a height that is easily accessible to people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

**Curb Cuts:** Sloped areas at the edge of a sidewalk that allow individuals using mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers to transition smoothly from the sidewalk to the street. Curb cuts are a simple but important feature of accessible outdoor spaces, as they help to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can move around safely and independently.

**Grading and Drainage:** The process of shaping and contouring the land to ensure proper water flow and drainage. Gratings and drainage are critical components of accessible outdoor spaces, as they help to prevent water accumulation and reduce the risk of slippery surfaces.

**Inclusive Playgrounds:** Playgrounds that are designed and constructed to be accessible and usable by children of all abilities, including those with physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities. Inclusive playgrounds typically feature a variety of accessible play structures, such as ramps, transfer stations, and adaptive swings, as well as sensory-rich elements such as tactile surfaces, musical instruments, and nature-based play features.

**Lighting:** The use of artificial light to illuminate outdoor spaces and make them safer and more accessible for individuals with visual impairments. Lighting can be used to highlight pathways, entrances, and other important features of outdoor spaces, as well as to provide overall illumination for activities such as walking, jogging, or playing sports.

**Parking Spaces:** Designated areas in parking lots or on streets where vehicles can be parked. Accessible parking spaces are required by law to be wider than standard spaces and to be located close to building entrances or other points of interest.

**Pathways:** Paved or unpaved surfaces that provide a safe and accessible route for individuals to travel through outdoor spaces. Pathways should be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and other mobility aids, and should be constructed of materials that are firm, stable, and slip-resistant.

**Picnic Areas:** Outdoor spaces designed for dining and socializing, typically featuring tables, benches, and grills. Picnic areas should be designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, with features such as accessible tables, firm and stable surfaces, and adequate lighting.

**Ramps:** Sloped surfaces that provide a smooth and gradual transition between different levels of an outdoor space. Ramps are a critical feature of accessible outdoor spaces, as they help to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can move around safely and independently.

**Restrooms:** Facilities designed for personal hygiene and sanitation. Accessible restrooms are required by law to be equipped with features such as grab bars, accessible toilets, and accessible sinks, and should be located in close proximity to other amenities such as picnic areas and playgrounds.

**Signage:** Visual or tactile markers that provide information about outdoor spaces, including directions, warnings, and other important messages. Signage should be designed to be easily readable and understandable by individuals with disabilities, with features such as large print, contrasting colors, and Braille or tactile elements.

**Social Distancing:** The practice of maintaining a safe distance from other individuals to reduce the risk of transmitting infectious diseases. In outdoor spaces, social distancing can be achieved through the use of wide pathways, spaced-out seating areas, and other features that help to ensure that individuals can move around safely and comfortably while maintaining a safe distance from others.

**Tactile Surfaces:** Textured or patterned surfaces that can be felt with the hands or feet, providing important information about the surrounding environment for individuals with visual impairments. Tactile surfaces can be used to indicate changes in direction, elevation, or surface type, and can be incorporated into pathways, sidewalks, and other outdoor features.

**Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSI):** Special paving stones or tiles that provide a tactile warning for individuals with visual impairments. TWSIs are typically installed at the edge of platforms, stairs, and other hazards, and provide a distinctive texture or pattern that can be felt with the feet or cane.

**Universal Design:** An approach to design that seeks to create products, buildings, and environments that are accessible and usable by all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors. Universal design is based on the principle of inclusion, and seeks to eliminate barriers and create opportunities for everyone to participate fully in society.

**Visual Impairments:** Any degree of vision loss that cannot be corrected with glasses or contact lenses. Visual

impairments can range from mild to severe, and can affect an individual's ability to perceive depth, color, contrast, and other visual cues.

**Wheelchair Accessible:** Describes outdoor spaces that are designed and constructed to be accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Wheelchair-accessible features may include ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and other elements that help to ensure that individuals with mobility impairments can move around safely and independently.

**Wildlife Viewing Areas:** Outdoor spaces designed for observing and enjoying wildlife, typically featuring viewing platforms, binoculars, and other amenities. Wildlife viewing areas should be designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, with features such as accessible pathways, viewing scopes, and tactile or auditory elements that provide information about the surrounding environment.

In summary, the glossary terms provided above offer a comprehensive overview of the key concepts and terms related to creating accessible outdoor spaces in the context of the Advanced Certificate in Universal Design for Disability Housing. From ADA compliance to wildlife viewing areas, these terms cover a wide range of topics that are critical to the design and construction of inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces. By understanding and applying these terms, professionals in the field of disability housing can help to ensure that all individuals, regardless of age or ability, can enjoy the benefits of the great outdoors.