

# Intersectionality and Disability: Bringing Our Whole Selves

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T-shirt design by @riotheatherrr

# Land Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that we are on the ancestral lands and traditional territories of the Puget Sound Coast Salish People.

To learn more about the importance of Washington's Tribal Nations, explore the [Since Time Immemorial Curriculum](#).

# Make Your Space and Experience

- Attend to your bodymind.
- Take breaks.
- Engage in ways that restore you.
- Center justice.
- Invite each other to go beyond our own experiences.
- Learning is everywhere, especially from each other.

# Multitude of Identities (and Boxes)

Non-exhaustive:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Socio-economic status
- Gender identity
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Body size/shape
- Age
- National origin
- Primary and/or first language
- Immigration status
- Religious or spiritual practices and beliefs
- Veteran status
- Disability



# Reflection Point: Boxes We Carry by Choice or Force

What are some of the ways you feel divided or have been divided and compartmentalized by others? Where, when, and how does it happen?



# What It Feels Like to Many of Us

“People want to truncate you... Sometimes you will make a bold statement, claiming the fullness of your being, and it will feel essential and groundbreaking. And then you will walk outside, or inside, and be reminded that the shortcut is back.” — *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons* by Imani Perry

# Explicit Focus Today: Race and Disability



# Intersectionality: *Not* Parallels

Kimberlé Crenshaw's work: People have individual identities that intersect in ways that impact how they are viewed, understood, and treated.

Mari Matsuda: "Ask the other question."

What is a  
disability?

# Disability: We Made It Up? Kinda, Mostly

- Disability vs. impairment
- Drawing of lines of normalcy, desirability, conformity (e.g., “transsexualism” in old DSM, disability and sexuality, amok)
- Starting points of power and design

**Today, my language:** Identity-first (“disabled”) language= reclamation of community and history

# Ableism: Not Just About Access

“A system of oppression that favors being ablebodied/ableminded at any cost, frequently at the expense of people with disabilities.”--  
Stacey Park Milbern



# From Disability Rights to Disability Justice

## DISABILITY RIGHTS

- **Civil rights legislation and policy** (often top-down action)
- A vital **civil rights framework** but it misses individual, cultural, and attitudinal shifts in perceptions and beliefs about disability
- Often **lacks attention to intersectionality**

## DISABILITY JUSTICE (DJ)

- **Grassroots movement** led by those most impacted (tenets developed by Patty Berne and Sins Invalid (2015))
- Promotes **interdependence and collective access**, living and caring for one another without shame
- Revolves around intersectionality, cross-movement, cross-disability

# Examples of Intersection of Ableism, Racism, Colonialism, and Other Oppressions

“This promise - that you will get more because they exist to get less - is woven throughout our entire society...” — **Ijeoma Oluo, [So You Want to Talk About Race](#)**



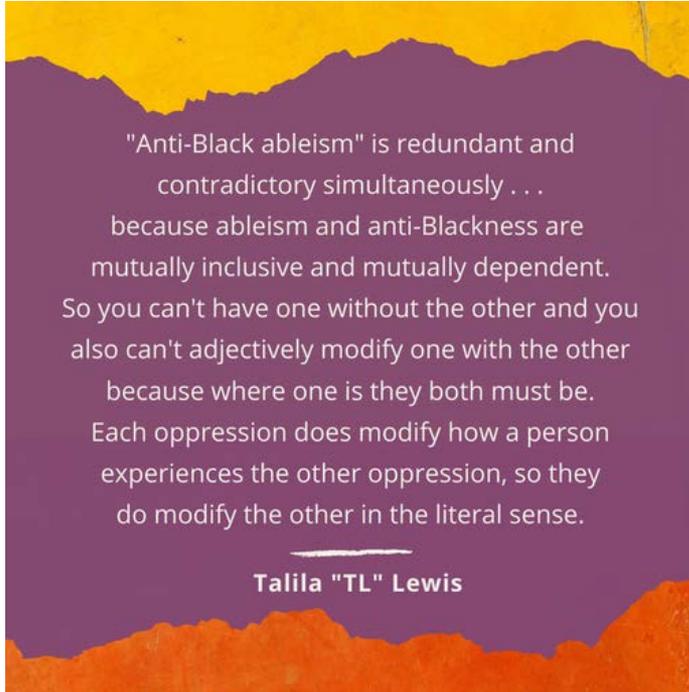
There's no me  
without you

# Intersectional Oppression and Pathologizing: Racism and Ableism

## *Normalcy*

- Marginalization (historically and currently)
- History of “disabling” POC
- Which lives “count”
- Outcomes (e.g., disproportionality, incarceration, police brutality) and investments (e.g., health, services, education)
- Extremes of representation
- Normalization and deviance (e.g., Native boarding schools, forced mental health)

# Ableism and Anti-Blackness



- Drapetomania
- Disproportionality of Black students in self-contained ed
- School-to-prison pipeline
- Sterilization
- Police brutality
- Fear of Black people and Black anger

# What Racism Looks Like Within Disability Civil Rights Movement

- White supremacy
- Heteronormativity
- Hierarchy of disabilities
- Cis White male leadership with more “socially acceptable” disabilities
- Focus on independence and autonomy: “overcoming”
- Lack of attention to linguistically diverse communities’ access needs





# Healing and Wholeness



# Reflection: What Will You Do to Create this Space for Yourself?

Imani Perry: “Claim your own summary, your own pithy capture of the ocean of who you are. And still, never mistake the shorthand for your whole self.”

# Reflection: How Will You Act in Solidarity to Foster this Space for Others?

Ijeoma Oluo: “When we identify where our privilege intersects with somebody else's oppression, we'll find our opportunities to make real change.”

# Stacey Park Milbern on Disability Wisdom and Interdependence

“We live and love interdependently. We know no person is an island, we need one another to live. . . We all need support. Hierarchy of what support is okay to need and what isn't is just ableism.

Go home and check on your neighbors. Rest. Reflect on why we must combat capitalism, racism, classism and ableism that thinks so little of humanity that some people are reduced to expected losses. There is a lot to do and it's going to take all of us.”

# Change, Not Tinker or Include.



Many of the photos today, including this one, are from: [Disabled And Here project page](#)

# Some Resources

- Vilissa Thompson: Ramp Your Voice: <http://rampyourvoice.com/welcome-to-ramp-your-voice/>
- Twitter: #disabilitytoowhite
- Imani Barbarin, Crutches and Spice: <https://crutchesandspice.com>
- Lydia Brown: Autistic Hoya: <http://www.autistichoya.com/p/about.html>
- Alice Wong: Disability Visibility Project: <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/about/>
- National Coalition for Latinx with Disabilities: <http://www.latinxdisabilitycoalition.com/>
- National Study on the Experiences of Natives with Disabilities: <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/major-survey-american-indians-disabilities-released/>
- Asians and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities of California: <http://apidisabilities.net/>
- Books, such as DisCrit, Disability Visibility, All the Weight of Our Dreams, Care Work
- And if you are interested in community art that looks at the intersection of POC, gender-nonconforming, and LGBTQ+ experiences: <http://www.sinsinvalid.org/>

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