Disability Culture in College

From Compliance to Culture

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About Me

Rebecca Cokley

U.S. Disability Rights Program Officer, the Ford Foundation

Presidential Appointee

AFOL

Grew up on a college campus

Mom ran a DSS Office

Welcome, wherever you are

On your path

Who are we talking about
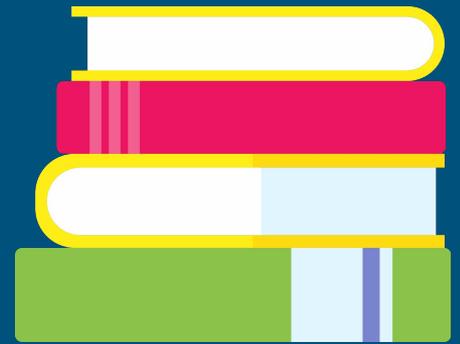
19% of male student on a college campus have a disability

20% of female student on a college campus have a disability

40% of undergrad students with disabilities who started in 2011 graduated with a bachelor's degree from the same institution by 2017, vs. 57% of students without disabilities.

Students with disabilities were more likely to experience financial hardships and food and housing insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic vs. students without disabilities.

Data from NCES

Students with disabilities are less likely to feel welcome on campus or supported by their institution than students without disabilities.

According to a 2020 survey, 70% of students with mental health disabilities were not registered to receive accommodations on campus.

One-third of students with mental health disabilities stated they were not aware they were eligible for accommodations.

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History of Disability on Campus

- History of segregation (physical and programmatic)
- Move towards integration
- DSS as an office started with a radical tradition, more wrap around services and equally centered culture with compliance as the latter was developed
- Complicated relationship between managing relationships with faculty and managing relationships with students
- Modern move to be inclusive of students with ID/DD

Movements Are Built on the Backs of their Youth....and that happens on Campus

-Rolling Quads at Berkeley

-Students at Hofstra

-Deaf President Now

-Creation of National Disabled Student Union

-UC Access Now campaign

The goal of disability rights was never "independent living"

It was *Interdependence*
-Ed Roberts

What do we mean by "disability"?

Impairment is a medical diagnosis

Disability is a social construct

Disability is an identity, community and culture

Inclusion is different than integration
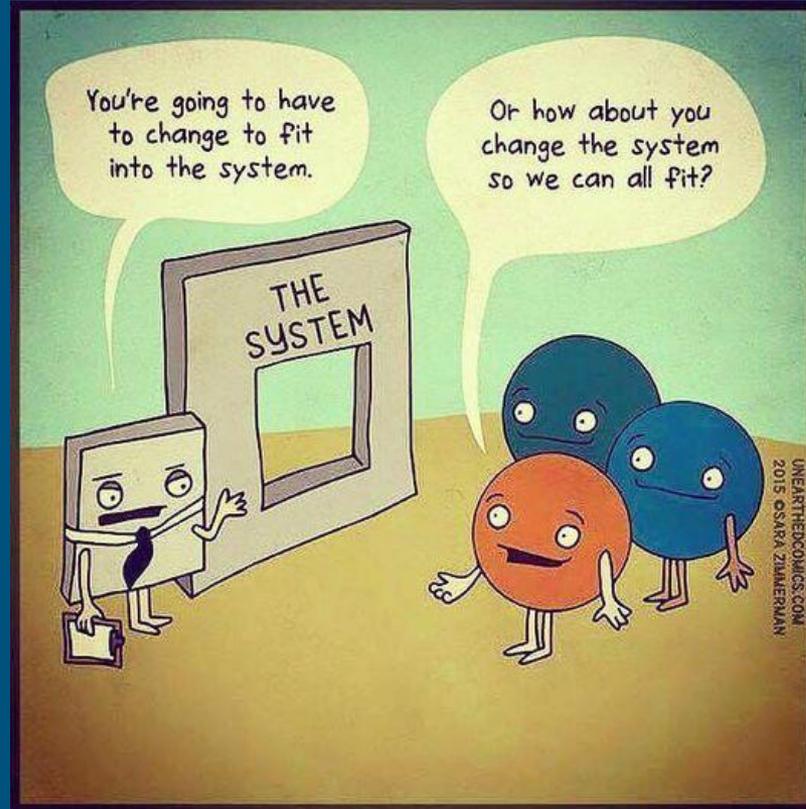
What Is Ableism?

ABLEISM

a·ble·ism \ ˈābə-ˌli-zəm \
noun

A system that places value on people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, excellence, desirability, and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, misogyny, colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person's language, appearance, religion and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and "behave."

You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

a working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis*; updated January 2021
*developed in community with Disabled Black & other negatively racialized people, especially Dustin Gibson

How do you build culture?

Addressing disability inequities AND addressing race and poverty

UNEMPLOYMENT

- Women with disabilities **less likely to work than men**

- Blacks with disabilities **70%** more likely to be unemployed

POVERTY

- Women with disabilities **25%** more likely to live in poverty

- Latinx with disabilities **30%** more likely to live in poverty

- Blacks with disabilities **60%** more likely to live in poverty

Disability integral part of diversity, equity and inclusion

- Disability status disproportionate by gender, race, ethnicity, class, and age

- Race, ethnicity and gender exacerbate inequities

- People with disabilities bring varied expertise

- Is this reflected in the work we do?

The Laborious Expectation of Education

- Self Narrating Zoo Exhibit
- Expecting the marginalized to educate us
- Having to operate off of a limited picture
  - *Never enough data*
- Traumatic voyeurism
  - Pushing those from marginalized communities to "share" for our education, with no regard/acknowledgement for trauma

Moving PAST the Minimum


Jennifer Lee Rossman ⬛♿🏳️‍🌈
@JenLRossman

We're disabled, Daniel, we're not werewolves.

Daniel Lawson @DanielLaw1998
Disabled parking should only be valid during business hours 9 to 5 Monday to Friday.
I cannot see any reason why people with genuine disabilities would be out beyond these times. ...

2:44 PM · 25 Apr 18

Moving from Reality to Justice
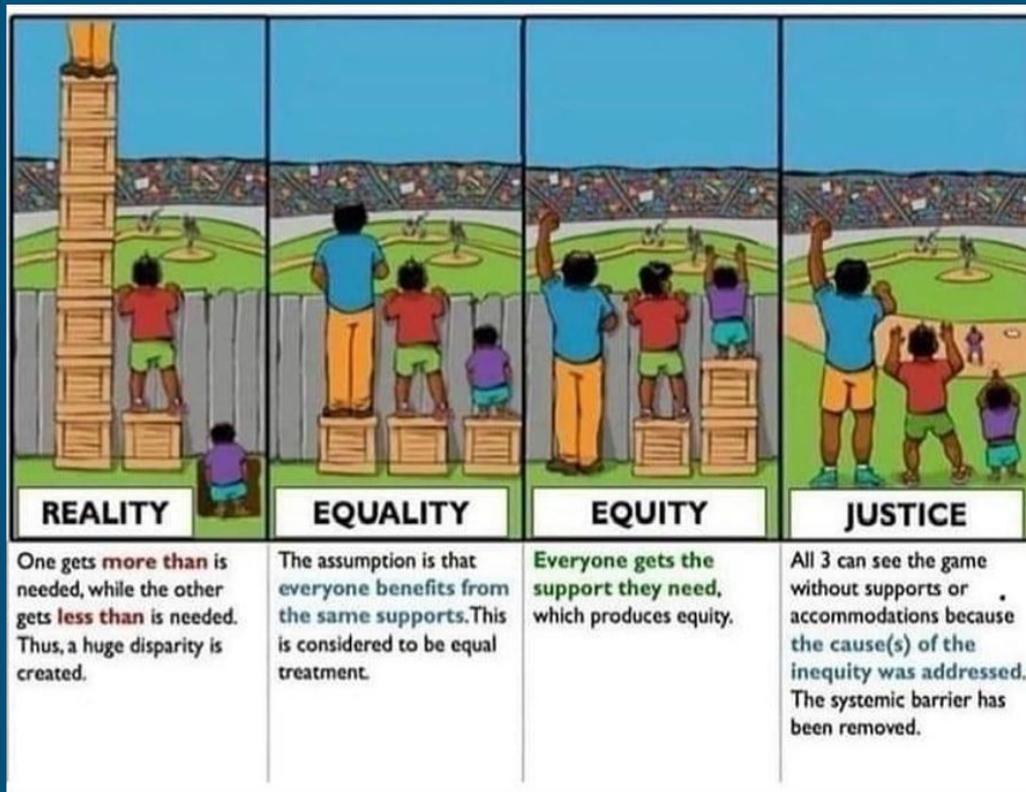
What does Justice look like?

SKIN, TOOTH, AND BONE
The Basis of Movement is Our People

A Disability Justice Primer
by Sins Invalid | Second Edition
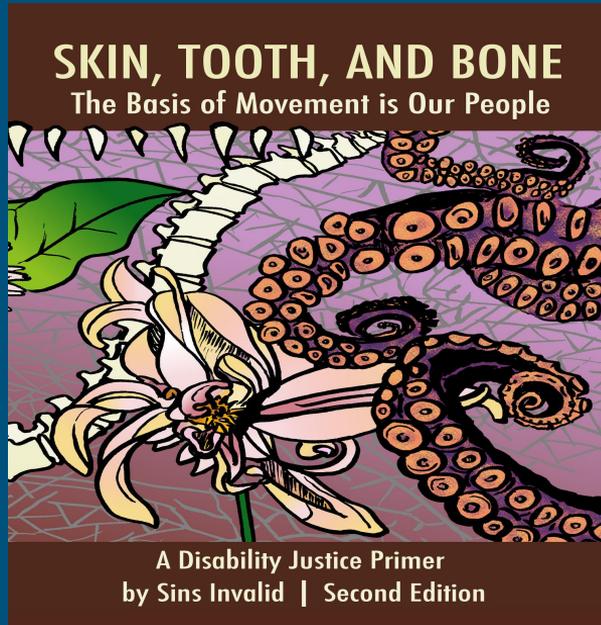
1. Intersectionality
2. Leadership of Those Most Impacted
3. Anti-Capitalism
4. Cross-Movement Solidarity
5. Wholeness
6. Sustainability
7. Cross-Disability Solidarity
8. Interdependence
9. Collective Access
10. Collective Liberation

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Storytelling as power

What is the history of disability at your institution?

Who are your alumni and what are they doing?

What are the fights/advocacy campaigns that you've had to initiate?

Creating a Pipeline of Leadership

- Connecting with local high school students with disabilities
- State Youth Leadership Forums
- Connecting current students with internships (WRP, AAPD)
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What Access IS and ISN'T.

■**Disability accessibility** advances disability inclusion. In a narrow sense, it is the technical requirements that allow the participation of disabled people in the physical space (ramps, doors, lighting, meeting room) or access to information (website, video captioning, or other technological accessibility).

■Accessibility is most powerful when tied to inclusive practices and policies that **welcome and celebrate the participation of disabled people** and not simply compliance with laws (i.e., training security staff on how to welcome and interact with disabled visitors, depicting people with disabilities on our website together with making it accessible).

■In the next phase of COVID, Accessibility **should** become more streamlined and more mainstreamed.

How can colleges help us?

- Create shared experiences
- Connect students to alumni with disabilities
- Serve as a place for gathering
- Think about opportunities for co-hosting

Contact me?

R.Cokley@fordfoundation.org
Twitter: @RebeccaCokley