

# Disability Justice

The Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) conducted a Community of Practice on Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Developmental Disabilities. In the final year of the project, the NCCC responded to interests and needs of the CoP state teams that asked for a focus on racial equity in intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) by creating a Racial Equity Learning Community. The NCCC team identified two terms — disability justice and intersectionality — and in partnership with persons with IDD, created a set of materials to define these terms and share what they mean within the context of their lived experience.

“Disability Justice is the cross-disability (sensory, intellectual, mental health/psychiatric, neurodiversity, physical/mobility, learning, etc.) framework that values access, self-determination, and an expectation of difference. An expectation of difference means that we expect difference in disability, identity, and culture. To be included and part of society is about being able to be our ‘whole self’ (all of our identities together). Disability Justice includes space for self-care, reflection, and hard discussions.

Disability Justice redefines beliefs about productivity, attractiveness, and the value of human life. Beyond challenging what is considered normal, Disability Justice addresses the deeply held fear of vulnerability by practicing the value and act of interdependence. The Disability Justice framework is practiced on an individual, cultural and societal level. It asks us to be responsible for both what we do to make change and how we go about doing the work to make it. The focus expanding from educating and advocacy around systems and attitudes, to working with other oppressed groups educating ourselves and creating solutions and community power that can serve everyone.”

*This definition of disability justice was created based on Disability Activist Collective notes. Edited 2014 and posted to <https://Disabilityj.Blogspot.com>*



**LEROY MOORE** is a Black disabled author, poet, founder of Krip-Hop Nation, consultant on race and disability, former co/founder & community relations director of Sins Invalid, UCLA Ph.D. student in Linguistic Anthropology, and co-contributor to the disability justice framework. Leroy shared his thoughts on disability justice with the NCCC.

“Disability Justice is a framework that comes from people of color who are not using a legal perspective. It is not an academic theory and it is not about civil rights. It challenges the model of disability because it includes issues related to race and other identities. Disability Justice was born out of communities of color that were excluded from the Disability Rights Movement. We must realize that Disability Justice is in its beginning stages and we must let it grow in the communities where it came from. Advancing Disability Justice has its challenges. For example, the Disability Rights Movement and even disability service networks are still dominated by White women, which keeps the voices of Black and Brown men with disabilities from being heard. To me, the important work of Disability Justice is to continue to define it as it relates to the world we live in today, and to include all voices.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence

Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities  
Center for Child & Human Development  
2115 Wisconsin Avenue, NW Suite 601  
Washington, DC 20007

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Voice: (202) 687-5387  
E-mail: [cultural@georgetown.edu](mailto:cultural@georgetown.edu)  
Website: <http://nccc.georgetown.edu>

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