

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>



LYDIA X.Z. BROWN is a community organizer, policy expert and lawyer. Lydia shared their thoughts on disability justice with the NCCC.

“Disability Justice is a framework and praxis created in 2005-2006 by a coalition of Black and Brown and queer and trans disabled people. Disability Justice recognizes that we won’t win freedom, access, or justice for disabled people by appealing to governments, corporations, and privileged nonprofit institutions. As a community organizer who is also a policy expert and lawyer, Disability Justice has taught me that legal and policy advocacy can only seriously challenge systems of oppression when they are undertaken in concert with directly impacted communities as a supportive strategy for direct action and community building. Disability Justice reminds all of us that the real work isn’t just changing laws and policies but transforming social and cultural values and thus how we live.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) is grateful to Lydia X.Z. Brown for contributing to this Community of Practice (CoP), Racial Equity Learning Community resource by sharing their thoughts, reflections and expertise on disability justice.

The CoP was funded by the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Administration on Disability, Administration for Community Living, US Department of Health and Human Services. Cooperative Agreement 90DNDC0001-05-02.

COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

The materials and content contained on the NCCC's website are copyrighted and are protected by [Georgetown University's copyright policies](#). Permission is granted to use the material for non-commercial purposes if the material is not to be altered and proper credit is given to the authors and to the NCCC. Permission is required if the material is to be modified in any way or used in broad distribution. To request permission, use [this link](#).



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
Website: <http://nccc.georgetown.edu>

SUGGESTED CITATION

Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence (2022). Disability Justice. <https://nccc.georgetown.edu/cop>