



Learning and Reflection Forum

January 25, 2018

2:00 - 3:30 p.m. EST

Exploring Intersectionality and Multiple Cultural Identities within Developmental and other Disabilities

Intersectionality is a social construct that was first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1991 in an article for Stanford Law Review. Ms. Crenshaw used intersectionality to describe overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination specially focused on Black women. Since this time, the concept of intersectionality has strayed from its feminist, legal, civil rights advocacy, and race theory roots. Intersectionality is currently being embraced by many in academia and human services, including within the network of individuals and organizations concerned with developmental and other disabilities.

The literature has defined multiple cultural identities in a variety of ways across groups. An example from this literature states that “People who belong to more than one cultural group must navigate the diverse norms and values from each of their cultural affiliations. Faced with such diversity, these individuals need to manage and organize their different and possibly clashing cultural identities within their general sense of self.”¹ The multiple cultural identities of people who experience developmental and other disabilities are often overlooked in our systems of services and supports.

This forum is designed to explore the concepts of intersectionality and multiple cultural identities within the context of developmental and other disabilities. It will feature the voices and first person experiences of people with developmental and other disabilities from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups.

Objectives

Participants will:

1. Examine the components of Crenshaw’s conceptualization of intersectionality and their relevance for people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Examine the concept of multiple cultural identities and the implications for people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities.
3. Delineate the leadership implications of intersectionality and multiple cultural identities for those leading cultural diversity and cultural and linguistic competence within their respective settings.

¹Yampolsky, M., Aminot, C., & de la Sablonnière, R. (2013). Multicultural identity integration and wellbeing: a qualitative exploration of variations in narrative coherence and multicultural identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 4, Article 126. Pp. 1 – 15. Accessed on 12/13/2017 from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3596806/pdf/fpsyg-04-00126.pdf>

References

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Jul., 1991), pp. 1241-1299. Accessed on 12/13/17 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1229039>

Gill, C. & Cross, W. (2010). Disability Identity and Racial-Cultural Identity Development: Points of Convergence, Divergence and Interplay. In F. Balcazar, Y. Suarez-Balcazar, T. Taylor-Ritzler, & C. Keys (Eds.), *Race, Culture, and Disability: Rehabilitation Science and Practice*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

¹Yampolsky, M., Aminot, C., & de la Sablonnière, R. (2013). Multicultural identity integration and wellbeing: a qualitative exploration of variations in narrative coherence and multicultural identification. *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 4, Article 126. Pp. 1 – 15. Accessed on 12/13/2017 from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3596806/pdf/fpsyg-04-00126.pdf>

Presenter Bios



Andy Arias has been an advocacy professional for over seven years. He has worked as a System Change Advocate and Program Manager for Orange County & Los Angeles. He is member of many boards and commissions related to creating greater visibility and advancement for diverse communities, especially the disability community. Andy is often hired speak and train at universities, high schools, and Congressional leaders on ADA compliance and the inclusion of people disabilities and others from diverse backgrounds and communities. He has received several awards for his presentations on LGBTQ diversity and disability equality.

Andy's experience and leadership gave him skills to develop and implement a youth programs that served over 150 young adults in Southern California helping them reach their dreams for independence. The curriculum for this program utilized today by specific County agencies. Andy excels in teaching students that nothing can get in the way of their dreams, as long as they use their disabilities as an asset.

Andy advocates in the entertainment industry by creating visible pathways as an actor and stand-up comedian. As an actor, Andy has had the pleasure of working with Tom Hanks, Mark Ruffalo and Hilary Swank on projects. He is often asked to consult with producers and directors in create greater media visibility of people with disabilities. He has also produced several small projects that have brought attention to persons with disabilities and the LGBTQ to community.

Andy's expertise extends to Federal government and corporate levels. His goal is to marry his policy work with his work in the entertainment industry to create a systemic lasting change.



Lydia Brown is a disability justice advocate, organizer, and writer whose work has largely focused on violence against multiply-marginalized disabled people, especially institutionalization, incarceration, and policing. They have worked to advance transformative change through organizing in the streets, writing legislation, conducting anti-ableism workshops, testifying at regulatory and policy hearings, and disrupting institutional complacency everywhere from the academy to state agencies and the nonprofit-industrial complex. At present, Lydia serves as

founding board member of the Alliance for Citizen-Directed Services, stakeholder representative to the Massachusetts One Care Implementation Council overseeing health care for Medicaid/Medicare dually-eligible individuals, and board member of the Autism Women's Network. Lydia recently completed a term as Chairperson of the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, serving in that role from 2015 to 2017 as the youngest appointee nationally to chair any state developmental disabilities council. In collaboration with E. Ashkenazy and Morénike Giwa-Onaiwu, Lydia is the lead editor and visionary behind *All the Weight of Our Dreams*, the first-ever anthology of writings and artwork by autistic people of color, published by the Autism Women's Network in June 2017.

Lydia is now a Public Interest Law Scholar at Northeastern University School of Law, where they serve as an active member of the Committee Against Institutional Racism (representing the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association), the Transgender Justice Task Force, and the Faculty Appointments Committee, and are a founding core collective member of the Disability Justice Caucus.



Angel Love Miles

Dr. Angel Love Miles research focuses on the intersections of race, class, gender and ability as they pertain to disparate social and economic outcomes for women and minorities with disabilities. She received her BA in English from Penn State University in 2003 and her PhD in Women's Studies from the University of Maryland College Park in 2016. Her dissertation entitled "Barriers and Facilitators to Homeownership for African American Women with Physical Disabilities" highlights how education, economics, architecture, and discrimination, combine with personal issues of identity and self-esteem to create barriers to homeownership for these women. She is

currently working on multiple collaborative projects with her mentors at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Drs. Joy Hammel and Fabricio Balcazar, as a NIDILRR Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Disability and Human Development and the Department of Occupational Therapy.