



2026 Opportunity & Impact in Nursing Summit



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The Synergy of Disability Rights, Disability Justice, and Radical Access in Nursing Education & Practice

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Disability teach in!

Impairment: biological, physiologic condition of body/mind

Disability: socially constructed experience of navigating a society which disadvantages, excludes, and fails to accommodate for individuals with impairments

- Ex: vision and glasses (well-accessed, de-pathologized)

Ableism: Discrimination against disabled people

- Interpersonal, institutional/structural, internalized



Models of Disability

Medical or 'Individual' Model of Disability

- Locates pathology or deficit *within disabled individual*
- Seeks to fix or 'cure' the impaired body

Social Model of Disability

- Locates pathology or deficit *within environments that fail to accommodate for impairment or body/mind difference*
- Seeks to fix the deficient *environment* rather than the impaired individual





Spoken word poem on ableism and non-apparent disability: **I wish I knew how it would feel to be free**

- Content warning:
 - Trauma from lived experiences of ableism related to medicalized violence and mistrust of disabled people with non-apparent disabilities
- Audio warning:
 - Loud sound (~5 minutes)



- How might the mistrust of people with non-apparent disabilities manifest in nursing education and practice?
- Manufactured disability



Disability Rights & Disability Justice

(we need both!)

- **Disability Rights**

- Focuses on disability, institutional compliance with law/policy (ADA), and inclusion
 - Ex: anti-discrimination law in education, housing, and work, closed captioning
- Centers white, economically-privileged disabled American citizens

- **Disability Justice**

- Intersectional movement founded by BIPOC / queer disabled activists in Bay Area
- Centers disabled people with multiple, intersecting marginalized identities
 - Disabled people often unprotected by law such as incarcerated, undocumented, and/or racialized
- Moves beyond compliance/accommodation/inclusion to focus on radical transformation within individuals, cross-movement solidarity, collective liberation, and systems reimagination



10 Principles of Disability Justice

1. Intersectionality
2. Leadership of those most impacted
3. Anti-capitalist politics
4. Cross-movement solidarity
5. Recognizing wholeness
6. Sustainability
7. Commitment to cross-disability solidarity
8. Interdependence
9. Collective access
10. Collective liberation

Do not co-opt!

Disability justice centers

- 1) Interconnectedness of oppressions
- 2) Solidarity with movements that are politicized



Disability is Political

- **Language:** Person first vs. identity-first
- **Political Model of Disability**
 - Disability often manufactured through unjust systems of oppression
 - Inequitable distribution of resources that make disability livable



Nursing is Political



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Disabled Nurse National Solidarity Collective

- Disability justice scholar-activism
 - DJ political education
 - Systems reimagination
 - Community care
 - Mutual aid
 - Subversive art-making
- Cross-movement solidarity
- For all with shared politic and led by multiply marginalized disabled nurses



Let's collaborate, build, and be in community!

GRATITUDE / THANK YOU's

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