



Disability Access and Anti-ableism

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Access Statement

OHA welcomes all participants. If you have any questions about accommodations or need any assistance to participate, please email or call: David Kennedy-Wong at david.kennedy-wong@oha.oregon.gov or 971-372-1909 (voice/text). All relay calls accepted.

Attending to your needs in this space

- Only share what you're comfortable sharing—no disclosures necessary
- Stay engaged through discomfort
- Take the lessons, leave the stories (but it's a work environment)
- Please feel free to step away for personal needs
- Have water or a beverage, and something to write with/on
- If a fidget outlet helps you be present in the space, have it with you

Learning Goals

- Understand how systemic ableism shows up, and its root causes
- Reflect on neurodiversity, and medical and social models of disability
- Identify different access needs, and ways to support them
- Apply body liberation concepts to thought processes about bodies

Systemic Ableism

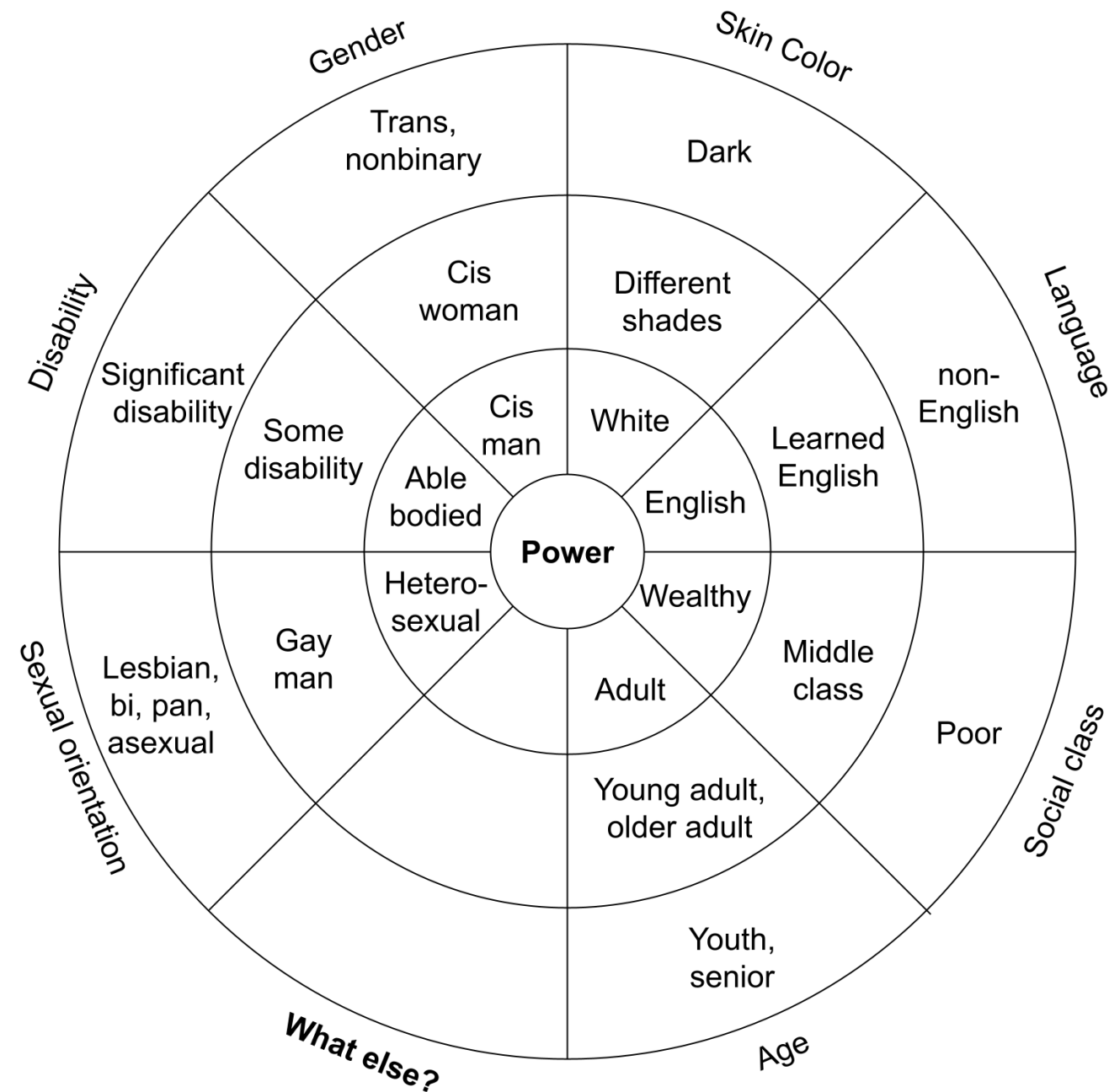
Ableism: "A system of assigning value to people's bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness."- Talila A. Lewis

- Cumulative and simultaneous impact
- Intersectionality

Intersectionality

The overlapping and connected impacts of different systems of oppression

- Different forms of privilege and oppression are not siloed, but related and compounding
- Coined by Kimberle Crenshaw



Understanding Root Causes of Ableism

- Fear
- Lack of exposure to people with disabilities
- Colonialism and eugenics
- Medical discrimination
- Social discrimination
- Capitalism; tying human value to productivity

Diversity of Disability

- Disability as an identity, culture, community
- Apparent and non-apparent disabilities impact how we show up to work every day
- Conflicting access needs
- Moving in and out of "able-bodied" status

How ableism shows up:

- Lowered expectations for parents and families
- Assumptions: surprise at what people do/don't/can/can't do
- Denying the spectrum of disability experiences, or intersectionality
- Invasive questions, invading personal space
- Reducing people to, or defining people by, their disability
- Reinforced bias in media
- Pity, or "inspirational", or "brave"
- Deficits-focused rather than strengths-focused

Ableism in the WIC Context

- Intersection between ableism and paternalism
 - Mandated reporting
- Power imbalance between service providers and families
- What supports could help families better navigate systems?

Inclusive Language

- Slow down. Pause.
- Read the room: allow for different processing times
- Avoid ableist language (e.g., "crazy", "blind spot", "deaf ears")
 - What unintentional messages are we communicating?
- Avoid making assumptions

Discussion Questions

- Can you recall a time when you have a judgmental thought about someone else's body/mind?
- Can you identify where some of those ideas came from?

Neurodiversity

- The differences and variations in how our brains develop, process, and function
- Neurodivergent: having a brain that functions differently from the "typical" brain
 - Often used in reference to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, mental health disorders, sensory differences, PTSD, etc.

Individual reflection: where

Neurodiversity: Environmental Adaptations

- The sensory environment
- The timely environment
- The explicit environment
- The predictable environment
- The social environment

Neurodiversity: Individual Supports

- Autonomy around disclosure
- Inclusive and considerate project management
- Communication styles
- Wellbeing and work-life balance
- Problem solving if things aren't going well

Reflections

- In what ways have you tried (consciously or unconsciously) to make other people "the same" as you?
 - What "mask" have we required of others? Of ourselves?
- What parts of their identity were erased by doing this?

Medical vs. Social Model of Disability

Medical model:

- Disability viewed as a deficiency that needs to be "fixed"
- Disability is because of the individual
- Hyperfocus on individual solutions

Social model:

- Disability viewed as a difference
- Disability is because of our societal systems and ableist infrastructure
- Focus on societal/structural solutions

Universal Design vs. Inclusive Design

Universal design:

- Design to be accessible to all people, to the greatest extent possible
- One-size-fits-all solutions, isolation
- Does not push infrastructural boundaries

Inclusive design:

- Human-centered design that is grounded in diversity
- Transparent commitment to inclusion
- Pushes boundaries of architecture and design of built environments

What Access Needs Might Look Like

- Scent-free spaces
- A range of seating options
- Free carer tickets to events
- No flashing or strobing lights
- Content warnings
- Low/reduced sensory spaces
- Wide doors and hallways
- Accurate captioning and transcripts
- Clear allergy labeling
- Assistive technology
- Time

Ableism Hurts Everyone!

- Revisit definition (productivity, desirability, etc.)
- Not seeking diagnosis, treatment, or accommodations for fear of stigmas or being "othered"
- We are all affected – but not equally!
- Value judgements

Ableism Traps

- Fitness culture
- Aesthetics/Beauty
- Entertainment
- Etiquette and "traditionalism"
- Lateral ableism

"The Body Is Not An Apology"

"Systems of oppression stand or fall based on whether humans uphold or resist them. 'We the people' have the power to uphold or resist body-based oppression"

- Sonya Renee Taylor

What are ways in which we might unintentionally uphold ableist dynamics?
What could we do to resist those dynamics in the workplace?

Ultimate Goal: Body Liberation

Actions and social movements that challenge systems of bodily oppression and notions of worth, and center radical love (of self, others, the world and the environment)

Body Liberation in Practice

- Uplift and center consent and autonomy
- Allow yourself and others to simply exist in public
- Question what you believe to be “universally normal”
- Practice unlearning ableist language and euphemisms
- Center humanity and interdependence: no one is disposable!

Resources

- [Sonya Renee Taylor](#) (book: The Body is Not an Apology)
- ["Who Belongs?" With Imani Barbarin \(18 mins\)](#)
- [Talila Lewis](#)
- [Alex Locust](#)
- ["Ugly Laws" PBS Video \(6 mins\)](#)
- ["10 Principles of Disability Justice" Sins Invalid](#)

Contact Us

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