

The background of the entire page is a watercolor wash. It starts with a pale yellow at the top, transitions into a vibrant orange in the middle, and ends with a deep, dark red at the bottom. The texture is soft and painterly, with some darker, more saturated areas at the bottom.

Skin, Tooth, and Bone

*The Basis of Movement is Our People:
A Disability Justice Primer*

Thanks:

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Foreword

We dedicate this offering to disabled, queer and trans people of color who live in rebellion knowing we were never meant to survive (A. Lorde).

We wrote this disability justice handbook because so many activists and organizers essentially were calling anything disability justice. It felt problematic...white academics and activists were co-opting our language before we, as disabled people of color, even had an opportunity to craft a framework or develop a praxis. We needed to put out a specific framework that articulates a need for disability justice to be led by disabled people of color, moreover queer and gender non-conforming disabled people of color. This work felt imperative and time sensitive.

As we were thinking about creating a statement on disability justice, we were also engaging in frequent conversations with a national network of disability justice activists and friends in movement. (Thank goodness for technology). We wanted to share and signal boost their brilliance. We also heard from them requests for concrete writings and tools that could be shared within their communities. Many of the quotes you will find in this handbook, mostly noted as “teeth”, are from these luminaries.

What is Disability Justice, you ask? When creating this document, we debated giving a specific definition of disability justice. We know many are seeking one and yet find ourselves in a stage where this definition is still being developed. To us, the entirety of this text, posters, and images is our definition of disability justice. The book is organized with three components: “bones”, text critical to our work; “teeth”, words and thoughts from disability justice activists; “skin”, the images we seek out and wrap ourselves in.

Just as disability justice is an emerging practice, this book is a work in progress. We hope you will engage with the text and share your thoughts on the content, format, and accessibility. We consider this “version one” and will be seeking out feedback to incorporate into an updated copy, so please don’t hesitate to share with us any and all feedback. You can reach us at info@sinsinvalid.org and via social media.

Come, join us as we work towards disability justice.

In Community,

Stacey Milbern, on behalf of the Sins Invalid team

ALL BODIES ARE UNIQUE AND ESSENTIAL.

**ALL BODIES ARE WHOLE. ALL BODIES HAVE
STRENGTHS AND NEEDS THAT MUST BE MET.**

**WE ARE POWERFUL NOT DESPITE THE COMPLEXITIES
OF OUR BODIES, BUT BECAUSE OF THEM.**

WE MOVE TOGETHER, WITH NO BODY LEFT BEHIND.

THIS IS DISABILITY JUSTICE.



Disability Justice – A Working Draft

By Patty Berne, Executive Director of Sins Invalid

Supported by Stacey Milbern, Aurora Levins Morales and David Langstaff

In recent years, on websites, on flyers and in informal conversations, I've witnessed people add the word "justice" onto virtually everything disability related — from disability services to advocacy to disability studies — while doing nothing to shift either process or end goal, thinking that the word change alone brings that work into alignment with Disability Justice.

Not so. What follows is a working draft definition of Disability Justice, a living document that will grow and change along with our emergent movement. It marks a point of departure rather than a destination. It is an invitation to those of us working on disability issues to continue to support one another to find a language as powerful and expansive as our movement's vision.

I'd like to start off with a quote from Aurora Levins Morales' book *Kindling*:

“There is no neutral body from which our bodies deviate. Society has written deep into each strand of tissue of every living person on earth. What it writes into the heart muscles of five star generals is distinct from what it writes in the pancreatic tissue and intestinal tracts of Black single mothers in Detroit, of Mexicana migrants in Fresno, but no body stands outside the consequences of injustice and inequality...What our bodies require in order to thrive, is what the world requires. If there is a map to get there, it can be found in the atlas of our skin and bone and blood, in the tracks of neurotransmitters and antibodies.”

Next Stage in Movement Evolution

Prior to disability rights, if people with disabilities were mistreated, there were no legal repercussions. Most public places weren't accessible and it was expected disabled people would not participate in society. There was phenomenal and historic work done by disabled people and allies to develop disability rights in the U.S., and it had many successes in advancing a philosophy of independent living and opening possibilities for people with disabilities. The US Disability Rights Movement established civil rights for people with disabilities. Like other movements, the current Disability Rights Movement includes advocacy organizations, service provision agencies, constituency led centers, membership-based national organizations, as well as cultural and academic spaces.

And, like many movements, it is contextualized within its time and left us with “cliff-hangers”: it is one strategy of many needed to combat ableism; it is single issue identity based; its leadership has historically centered white

“We cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism and capitalism, each system co-creating an ideal bodymind built upon the exclusion and elimination of a subjugated “other”...”

— Patricia Berne, *Sins Invalid*

experiences; its framework leaves out other forms of oppression and the ways in which privilege is leveraged at differing times and for various purposes; it centers people with mobility impairments, marginalizing other forms of impairment. At its core, it centers people who can achieve rights and access through a legal or rights-based framework, which we know is not possible for many disabled

people, or appropriate for all situations. The political strategy of the Disability Rights Movement relied on litigation and the establishment of a disability bureaucratic sector at the expense of developing a broad-based popular movement. Popular movements often begin by people developing political consciousness and naming their experiences. Rights-based strategies often address the symptoms of inequity but not the root. The root of

disability oppression is ableism and we must work to understand it, combat it, and create alternative practices rooted in justice.

While a concrete and radical move forward toward justice for disabled people, the Disability Rights Movement simultaneously invisibilized the lives of peoples who lived at intersecting junctures of oppression – disabled people of color, immigrants with disabilities, queers with disabilities, trans and gender non-conforming people with disabilities, people with disabilities who are houseless, people with disabilities who are incarcerated, people with disabilities who have had their ancestral lands stolen, amongst others.

In response to this, in 2005, disabled activists of color, originally queer women of color incubated in progressive and radical movements that did not systematically address ableism – namely, myself and Mia Mingus, soon to be joined by Leroy Moore, Stacey

“We know that we are powerful not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them.”

— Patricia Berne, *Sins Invalid*

Milbern, Eli Clare and Sebastian Margaret – began discussing a “second wave” of disability rights and ultimately launched a framework we called Disability Justice.

Given the isolation enforced by ableism and classed boundaries, many of us have often found ourselves as agents of change within respective communities and isolated from in-person community with other disabled people of color or queer or gender non-conforming crips. Many of us have found “liberated zones” that celebrate our multiple identities online instead. In many ways, Disability Justice is a developing framework that some call a movement. We are still identifying the “we” – sometimes in fluid spaces and sometimes in each others’ hoped and spoken words, touching each other through the echoes of those we mentor close by.

Given this early historical snapshot, I assert that Disability Justice work is largely done by individuals within their respective settings, with Sins Invalid, the NYC-based Disability Justice Collective, Seattle’s Disability Justice Collective, and Vancouver’s Disability Justice Collective being notable exceptions. Some voices may emphasize a particular component of the framework over another, as can be expected in all early movement moments. However, what has been consistent across Disability Justice - and must remain so - is the leadership of disabled people of color and of queer and gender non-conforming disabled people.

Disability Justice activists, organizers, and cultural workers understand that able-bodied supremacy has been formed in relation to other systems of domination and exploitation. The histories of white supremacy and

ableism are inextricably entwined, both forged in the crucible of colonial conquest and capitalist domination. One cannot look at the history of US slavery, the stealing of indigenous lands, and US imperialism without seeing the way that white supremacy leverages ableism to create a subjugated “other” that is deemed less worthy/abled/smart/capable. A single-issue civil rights framework is not enough to comprehend the full extent of ableism and how it operates in society. We cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism and capitalism. Each system benefits from extracting profits and status from the subjugated “other.” 500+ years of violence against black and brown communities includes 500+ years of bodies and minds deemed “dangerous” by being non-normative – again, not simply within able-bodied normativity, but within the violence of heteronormativity, white supremacy, and gender normativity, within which our various bodies and multiple communities have been deemed “deviant,” “unproductive,” and “invalid.”

A Disability Justice framework understands that all bodies are unique and essential, that all bodies have strengths and needs that must be met. We know that we are powerful not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them. We understand that all bodies are caught in these bindings of ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state and imperialism, and that we cannot separate them. These are the positions from which we struggle. We are in a global system that is in-

compatible with life. There is no way stop a single gear in motion — we must dismantle this machine.

Disability Justice holds a vision born out of collective struggle, drawing upon the legacies of cultural and spiritual resistance within a thousand underground paths, igniting small persistent fires of rebellion in everyday life. Disabled people of the global majority — black and brown people — share common ground confronting and subverting colonial powers in our struggle for life and justice. There has always been resistance to all forms of oppression, as we know through our bones that there have simultaneously been disabled people visioning a world where we flourish, that values and celebrates us in all our myriad beauty.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do Disability Justice activists say that a civil rights frameworks is a critical, but fairly limited framework? When was a time when I saw that “rights” were not enough?
- What do I see as the “next step” to create liberation for disabled people?
- Why must the Disability Justice Movement be led by disabled people of color? Disabled queer and gender non-conforming people?

10 Principles of Disability Justice

by Patty Berne & the Sins Invalid family

From my vantage point within Sins Invalid, where we incubate both the framework and practice of Disability Justice, this burgeoning framework has ten (10) principles, each offering new opportunities for movement builders:

1. Intersectionality. We know that each person has multiple identities, and that each identity can be a site of privilege or oppression. The mechanical workings of oppression and how it outputs shift depending upon the characteristics of any given institutional or interpersonal interaction; the very understanding of disability experience itself is being shaped by race, gender, class, gender expression, historical moment, relationship to colonization and more.

2. Leadership Of Those Most Impacted. We know ableism exists in the context of other historical systemic oppressions. We know to truly have liberation we must be led by those who know the most about these systems and how they work.

3. Anti-Capitalist Politic. We are anti-capitalist as the very nature of our mind/bodies often resist conforming to a capitalist “normative” level of production. We don’t believe human worth is dependent on what and how much a person can produce. We critique a concept of “labor” as defined by able-bodied supremacy, white supremacy and gender normativity. We understand capitalism to be a system that promotes private wealth accumulation for some at the expense of others.

4. Cross-Movement Solidarity. Necessarily cross movement, Disability Justice shifts how social justice movements understand disability and contextualize ableism, lending itself toward a united front politic.

5. Recognizing Wholeness. We value our people as they are, for who they are, and understand that people have inherent worth outside of capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience. Each person has an internal experience composed of their own thoughts, sensations, emotions, sexual fantasies, perceptions, and idiosyncracies. Disabled people are whole

“Disability Justice is fundamental in disrupting how we define a productive member of society. DJ also clearly challenges gender roles in terms of what it means to be a traditional male.”

— Lateef McLeod

people.

6. Sustainability. We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long-term. We value the teachings of our lives and bodies. We understand that our embodied experience is a critical guide and reference pointing us toward justice and liberation.

7. Commitment To Cross-Disability Solidarity. We value and honor the insights and participation of all of our community members. We are committed to breaking down ableist / patriarchal / racist / classed isolation between people with physical impairments, people who identify as “sick” or are chronically ill, “psych” survivors and those who identify as “crazy”, neurodiverse people, people with cognitive impairments, and people who are of a sensory minority, as we understand that isolation ultimately undermines collective liberation.

8. Interdependence. Before the massive colonial project of Western European expansion, we understood the nature of interdependence within our communities. We see the liberation of all living systems and the land as integral to the liberation of our own communities, as we all share one planet. We attempt to meet each other’s needs as we build toward liberation, without always reaching for state solutions which inevitably then extend its control further over our lives.

9. Collective Access. As brown/black and queer crips, we bring flexibility and creative nuance to engage with

each other. We create and explore new ways of doing things that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity. Access needs aren't shameful — we all have various capacities which function differently in various environments. Access needs can be articulated within a community and met privately or through a collective, depending upon an individual's needs, desires, and the capacity of the group. We can share responsibility for our access needs, we can ask that our needs be met without compromising our integrity, we can balance autonomy while being in community, we can be unafraid of our vulnerabilities knowing our strengths are respected.

10. Collective Liberation.

How do we move together as people with mixed abilities, multi-racial, multi-gendered, mixed class, across the orientation spectrum — where no body/mind is left behind?

“Instead of building a shared identity, Disability Justice builds identities out of a shared politic, working to build what our people are practicing...a shared and central power analysis that seeks, creates, demands a different kind of relationship to power and resources, so that resources actually get directed to those who have less.”

— Leslie Frye

This is Disability Justice, an honoring of the longstanding legacies of resilience and resistance which are the inheritance of all of us whose bodies or minds will not conform. Disability Justice is not yet a broad based popular movement. Disability Justice is a vision and practice of a *yet-to-be*, a map that we create with our ancestors and our great grandchildren onward, in the width and depth of our multiplicities and histories, a movement towards a world in which every body and mind is known as beautiful.

INTERSECTIONALITY
LEADERSHIP OF THOSE
MOST IMPACTED
ANTI-CAPITALISM

cross-movement organizing

wholeness

sustainability

cross-disability solidarity

INTERDEPENDENCE

COLLECTIVE

& collective

ACCESS *Liberation*

10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE

1

INTERSECTIONALITY *"We do not live single issue lives" --Audre Lorde*

Ableism, coupled with white supremacy, supported by capitalism, underscored by heteropatriarchy, has rendered the vast majority of the world "invalid."

2

LEADERSHIP OF THOSE MOST IMPACTED

"We are led by those who most know these systems." --Aurora Levins Morales

3

ANTI-CAPITALIST POLITIC

In an economy that sees land and humans as components of profit, we are anti-capitalist by the nature of having non-conforming body/minds.

4

COMMITMENT TO CROSS-MOVEMENT ORGANIZING

Shifting how social justice movements understand disability and contextualize ableism, disability justice lends itself to politics of alliance.

5

RECOGNIZING WHOLENESS

People have inherent worth outside of commodity relations and capitalist notions of productivity. Each person is full of history and life experience.

6

SUSTAINABILITY

We pace ourselves, individually and collectively, to be sustained long term. Our embodied experiences guide us toward ongoing justice and liberation.

7

COMMITMENT TO CROSS-DISABILITY SOLIDARITY

We honor the insights and participation of all of our community members, knowing that isolation undermines collective liberation.

8

INTERDEPENDENCE We meet each others' needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over our lives.

9

COLLECTIVE ACCESS As brown, black and queer-bodied disabled people we bring flexibility and creative nuance that go beyond able-bodied/minded normativity, to be in community with each other.

10

COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

No body or mind can be left behind -- only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.

Access Suggestions for a Public Event

What makes an event accessible, and who is it accessible to? Free time, money, childcare, transportation, availability of interpreters, wheelchair access, use of fragrances, food options, and so many other things determine who shows up to an event, and who isn't able to.

This guide is intended to help you think through some ways to engage a spectrum of people with and without disabilities in doing a public event. But please note, these suggestions are not comprehensive! Each item will hopefully prompt you to think through the cascade of access barriers in the world and how we can best disrupt them to create "liberated zones" from disability oppression. Many of the suggestions may also be useful within organizational processes as well. We'd love to hear your additions/feedback at info@sinsinvalid.org.

General Guidance Regarding Access

Access for all community members takes time as well as com-

mitment.

In general, the more lead time the better for making a gathering or event more accessible to more people, so the longer in advance you consider these issues, the more likely you can address them. Improving access is always a process in development and we've got to start where we are! So wherever you are is a great place to start – and please incorporate what you can from these suggestions and next time incorporate a little more :-)
This is how we grow together...

We live in a capitalist ableist world.

That means that unfortunately there is often a price tag that goes along with access. Individuals with disabilities should not be responsible for this cost. If you're an organization with a budget, pay attention to what gets prioritized. Know that some access needs may be expensive and have Plan B's to ask for help in securing that service/agency/etc if your budget can't reflect what you want.

As with other forms of oppression, we are steeped in ableism and likely are going to reinforce and/or replicate it despite our thinking ahead.

And, as with other forms of oppression, we need to be non-defensive when receiving feedback. Defensiveness creates unnecessary barriers to cross movement building. Regrettably, people leave movement building / community building or stop attending events when met with defensiveness, so please be receptive to feedback and give thanks for the gift that it is.

Remember, everyone has needs to make an environment accessible to them, and people will definitely know best what their specific needs are!

So in general, your promotional material should state what access needs have been addressed (i.e. ASL interpretation, wheelchair access, etc) and state that people can write or call to request specific access needs. If you can, ask people what they need to participate – that’s a great place to start!

Access needs can be shared and talked about without shame :-)

We can’t assume that our friends or colleagues or even our families will know our access needs (that we need to be warm or we’re in pain, that we need information given to us in this way or that, that we’re feeling tired on a given day so we can’t walk far, etc). At Sins Invalid, we try to practice speaking up about what our access needs are, in the hopes that perhaps others can help meet those needs.

Access support can be shared.

Encourage people to think about what access needs they have, and also what access needs they can help meet for others. Some access needs may be specific, and may need a person skilled in a particular field (i.e. an ASL interpreter or certain types of personal care), but other types of access support can be shared (i.e. note-taking or making plates of food).

Try to hold compassion in the process.

Sometimes, even with the best planning, some access

needs go unmet. A little humility goes a long way in holding the frustration ableism creates.

Have an access committee for planning purposes and a person or two from that committee in the role of “access coordinator(s)” on the day of the event if you anticipate the gathering to be more than 15 people.

They can handle access planning before hand and address access related issues on the day, help trouble shoot, and in general be thinking about it and available to respond.

Specific Access Items to Consider Include

Different Forms Of Outreach

Some people respond best to talking, some people to reading, some to face to face interactions. How are you communicating about the gathering? People often use email and Facebook, but perhaps incorporate phone trees, texting and face to face invites if you can!

For written material, try to use Arial or other plain, sans serif fonts, at least 14 point font, black ink on white non-glossy paper, and check out these links for additional suggestions please visit <http://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/> or http://www.un.org/webaccessibility/1_visual/13_colourcontrast.shtml

Non-Visual Options

Audio describers describe action for folks who are visually impaired. Will this be helpful for participants in your event? Is a trained Audio Descriptor available for your event? If not, is someone who can see and describe (without commentary) available to do informal audio description? Also, if you are giving directions to the gathering site, can you think through how best to explain it to a person with a visual impairment?

Bathrooms

Folks may well need to use the restroom during your event. There are long histories of trans and gender-queer people being harassed and in danger when they go into bathrooms, and equally long histories of folks with mobility impairments not being able to access bathrooms due to architecture, and still more history of folks with chemical injuries getting ill from the chemicals used in cleaning bathrooms. If possible, it's helpful to actually go to the public site, see the bathroom and speak with the management. Is there a toilet that is in a bigger stall, that is lowered and/or with a grab bar for folks with mobility impairments? If not, make sure to let folks know in advance of the get together so they can take care of business at home! Is there a "gender neutral" bathroom? If not, can you hang a sign on one for the day that says "Gender Neutral"? Does the site use unscented cleaning products? If not, can you provide them with unscented products and ask them to use them, starting a week before the event?

Non-Auditory Options

It's important to arrange for ASL interpretation at public events, and to announce to folks that there is ASL interpretation in your promotion if you do have it. Sign language interpretation is a skill acquired with many years of training; unless you are close personal friends with someone who's an ASL interpreter who regularly offers to donate their services, DO NOT assume that you can just get someone to do it for free or cheap at the last minute. Book your ASL interpreter well in advance and pay them. If relevant to the event, get them a script of what will be said ahead of time so they can do their job well.

Food Options

If food is part of the gathering, it's great to have multiple options – vegetarian, vegan, high protein (including meat), gluten-free, sugar free, etc. Post ingredients somewhere visible and read them outloud before people start serving. If people have food allergies or dietary restrictions, invite them to let others know what they can eat. If possible, let people know in advance if there will/will not be food for the group so people can plan accordingly.

Wheelchair And Other Mobility-Related Access

We've all seen the little blue wheelchair symbol, but that doesn't help to break down mobility needs. Good things to consider include: Is there a working elevator? Are there steps or a steep slope in the building so that access may be limited? For folks where distance can be an issue, is Point A far from Point B? Say how many steps

there are, whether they are steep, and whether there's a railing. It's also helpful to include information about the availability of parking. If there are doors to open and close to enter the site, are they heavy? If there is a bell or buzzer, who will or won't be able to reach it? Are there enough chairs for people? Are there wide chairs? There can be a lot of elements to trouble shoot, which is a good reason to have an access coordinator on the day of.

Scents And Chemicals

Can participants be encouraged to avoid scented products (commercial detergents, shampoo, soap, perfume) before the event? Is the space free of air fresheners, scented soaps, and other scented products? For outreach materials, consider a phrase like this "In order for beloved community members with chemical injury to attend, please don't use fragranced products." Given the way that scent moves, consider a fragranced area and a scent free area in your event. For guidelines on how to make your event accessible to people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS), please visit <http://vanessahuang.com/fragrance-free/>.

Video Conferencing Or Live Streaming

Do folks need to be in the room? Sometimes not, and you can provide the option of Google chat or Skype for meetings, or live stream the event, for those who can't be there in person.

Lighting

Fluorescent lighting can trigger seizures and can make spaces inaccessible for people with sensory issues and/or neurological diversity. Are other options (like lamps) available? Has there been discussion of flash photography? If not, ask for consent from all participants as the flash can trigger seizures in some.

Structured Schedules And Awareness Of Time

When organizing, it's always good to be aware of time – it's important that people know the schedule and that you try your best to stick to it (with flexibility) – for lots of reasons! Attention and information processing needs, pre-scheduled transportation, schedules with assistants, childcare schedules and more can be elements that may impact someone's ability to stay for the event. We can never assume people can stay an hour later if we're late on schedule! If there have to be schedule changes, let people know and be as clear about them as possible.

Language access

Everyone communicates in the way most familiar to them. When you are inviting people to the gathering or having the discussion, will everyone know what you are saying? Are you using words most people will know? If not, can you explain those terms? Check in with folks – would it be helpful for people to say their name before they speak? Are interpreters (e.g. ASL, Spanish, Tagalog, etc) possibly available for the event for community members who have a language other than English as their first language?

Access to quiet space

It can often be helpful to have a space where people can go if they need to be alone/with less stimulation. Do you have the space and flexibility so that people can step back if they are getting overstimulated or tired?

Transportation

How are people arriving? Can people rideshare? Is there public transportation that would dovetail with the time of the viewing? Does paratransit need to be called?

Identities and experiences

Are folks aware of people's preferred gender pronouns (not everyone goes by he/she or him/her, and we can't assume based on presentation)? Similarly, remember that not all disabilities are visible, and some people may choose not to disclose a disability.

Transparency

Be upfront about remaining known barriers.

Some of this guide has been adapted (with permission and gratitude) from Cripchick's blog at <http://blog.cripchick.com/archives/2910>.

**WE ARE POWERFUL NOT DESPITE THE
COMPLEXITIES OF OUR IDENTITIES,
BUT BECAUSE OF THEM.**

**ONLY UNIVERSAL COLLECTIVE ACCESS CAN
LEAD TO UNIVERSAL, COLLECTIVE LIBERATION.**

THIS IS DISABILITY JUSTICE.



Sins Invalid Statement on Police Violence

originally released on Thursday, September 4th, 2014

Sins Invalid is a disability justice-based performance project centering disabled artists of color and queer / gender non-conforming disabled artists. Our work celebrates the embodied humanity of disabled people, and we understand all bodies live in a multitude of very real social, political, economic and cultural contexts.

As an organization led by disabled people of color and queer / gender non-conforming people with disabilities, we live with high rates of state violence, from forced institutionalization, to ongoing police brutality and the murder of Black and brown disabled people.

We witness the horror of a deadly chokehold placed on Eric Garner, a Black man with multiple disabilities, by the NYPD. Our hearts break for Kayla Moore, a fat black schizophrenic trans woman suffocated by police in her home in Berkeley, after her friends called the police for help. Similar to Eric Garner, Kayla's killers tried to blame her death on "obesity." We hear the cries of Ezell Ford's mother when she realized that her son with

mental health disability was shot by LAPD while walking home. We stand with Lashonn White, a Deaf queer Black woman who was running toward police for safety, and instead tased by police and jailed for three days without access to an interpreter. We embrace the memory of Victoria Arellano, an under-documented trans woman living with AIDS, who died in an ICE facility in Los Angeles as a result of being denied medical care. We feel rage with the family of Kajieme Powell, a Black man with a mental health impairment, who was shot by St. Louis police within seconds of their arrival, for stealing two sodas and a package of pastries.

We know that modern day police forces are direct descendants of the “slave patrols” employed to police and control the bodies and labor of enslaved African people and violently repress their resistance to slavery. We recognize that Black and brown people with disabilities are pipelined from “special education” to incarceration of one form or another.

We acknowledge that disabled people who are Autistic, who are Deaf, who live with mental health impairments, or cognitive impairments, epilepsy or movement disorders, are at highest risk of being assaulted by police, and that this is deeply compounded when we are further marginalized by homelessness, transphobia, and white supremacy.

We do not see training as a viable solution, since it

leaves intact the fundamental belief of the police that their purpose is to “control the situation.” As people with disabilities, our bodies and minds are not controllable and cannot always comply — this must be understood. Our bodies and minds are not criminal. We are unique and we celebrate our complexities.

We strongly oppose Urban Shield and all programs that seek to militarize police departments through paramilitary training and military equipment, as they serve to further dehumanize communities of color and poor and working class communities as “domestic enemies.” Increased militarization of the police leads directly to increased police violence, particularly against disabled people of color.

We grieve that people with disabilities have largely been ignored and dismissed as key leaders in resistance to state violence by the US Left, perpetuating the silencing of our stories and maintaining barriers to a united front.

It is within the context of disability justice that **WE SUPPORT JUSTICE FOR MICHAEL BROWN** of Ferguson, Missouri. It is within the context of disability justice that **WE OPPOSE URBAN SHIELD**. It is within the context of disability justice that we hold true that **ALL COMMUNITIES ARE VALUABLE**, and that **BLACK LIVES MATTER**.

DISABILITY JUSTICE

means
resisting
together
from solitary cells
to open-air
prisons

TO
EXIST
IS TO
RESIST

MICAH BAZANT & SINS INVALID

Suggestions for Mobilizations

This work is ideally done from a deeper political commitment to disability justice, or at minimum a critique of ableism and an understanding of consent; otherwise paternalism and abuse can masquerade as “access support.”

- Always have a Disability Point Person. Announce them from the mic; have them wear an armband for visibility. Their skills should include a disability justice framework, problem solving, and good listening.
- Announce that the event will be fragrance free; ask people who are heavily scented to self-segregate.
- Generally speaking, written text offers an additional mode of communication.
- To support accessibility for folks that are DHoH / for those who can't hear the mic
 - Have an ASL interpreter at the mic
 - Use slips of paper to communicate the nuts and bolts of logistics (possibly with chants, to communi-

cate destinations, the National Lawyers Guild's #, etc.)

- Have ASL interpreters in the crowd
- Organize push wheelchairs in advance for people who may need them; announce from their availability from the mic
- Organize low stimulation spaces near the main gathering space (e.g. a room, or tent); announce from the mic
- Organize childcare and changing stations; announce from the mic
- Organize multilingual translation services; announce from the mic
- Have the tactical team spread throughout mobilizations (e.g. the four quadrants)
- Rent walkie-talkies. More information = better access. Be mindful that police escalation needs to be communicated with participants in a calm manner, and will impact some more than others.
- Provide chairs (folding chairs, mobile bleachers, etc.) for rallies / gatherings where people can expect to be standing for 20 min or more. Announce their location from the mic and explain that they are for people with disabilities, elders, and others who cannot stand for a length of time.

- At a march:
 - Do a march route run-through with mobility in mind – possibly seated in a wheelchair or in an abandoned shopping cart (e.g. looking for grids, grassy areas, hills, holes, etc.)
 - Invite people with disabilities if they would like to set the pace of the march by being at the front
 - Give an auditory description of the march route beforehand
 - Make an announcement before the march regarding the destination and distance of the route, so that folks can choose to meet the march there.
- DO NOT “direct” folks with mobility impairments to where you think they should be; you can offer respectful suggestions; no one should be hurried along - ideally the slowest pace should set the pace of the march; no one should touch people or their mobility devices without their consent.
- Organize a car or van to drive elders and people with disabilities from the beginning to the end of the march. Provide seating at the destination.
- Have distinct tactical and safety teams
- Police liaisons should be communicating with police that there are participants with disabilities (and elders, pregnant folks, etc) and that the march intends to respect that pace.

- Be aware that cops will often target folks with disabilities as perceived “weak links”; cops target folks at the end of actions as energy dissipates.

“If people don’t see your identify as a political identity rooted in the systemic, if our identities are just medicalized, what do you do, put energy into proving that your oppression is real?”

— Kiyaan Abadani

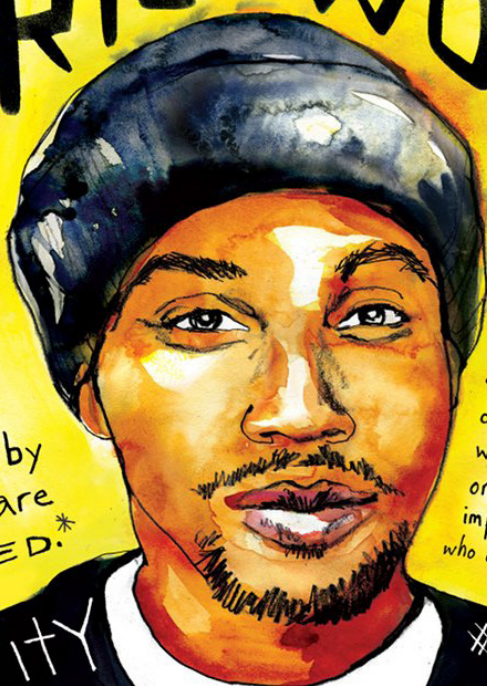
JUSTICE FOR MARIO WOODS

OVER
50%
of People
KILLED by
POLICE are
DISABLED.*

*No comprehensive federal data is collected, but available reports show at least half of those killed by police have psych disabilities. These statistics do not include people with mobility, sensory, or developmental impairments or people who are otherwise neurodivergent or sick/chronically ill.

DISABILITY
JUSTICE
NOW

#BLACK
DISABLED
LIVES
MATTER



SINS INVALID + MICAH BAZANT

Why We Commit to Mixed Ability Organizing

We all have bodies, hearts, and minds. We all have needs and capacities, strengths and vulnerabilities. A disability justice approach to mixed ability organizing means coming together across difference and inequality to build another, more liberated world. We work with and through the complexities and messiness that inevitably arise in this coming together. We patiently create new practices through dialogue and experimentation, trial and error. A disability justice approach to mixed ability organizing offers new forms of interdependence. We create mutual indebtedness so that nobody is left behind.

Mixed ability organizing requires us to identify and bridge between different capacities, orientations, and relationships of power. It means paying attention to and being honest about complexities of embodiment, and developing practices capable of attending to that complexity. For instance, while people with different disabilities may share a common experience of oppression under ableism, it can also be true that particular organizing contexts can provide for the access needs of some and not others. A particular meeting space may

present difficulties for people with mobility impairments, while a particular style of conducting a meeting may present difficulties for people with emotional or cognitive impairments. These complexities play out not only across dis/abilities, but across race, gender, sexuality, class, and so on. For mixed ability organizing to honor the principles of Disability Justice, it must be able to take stock of, engage with, and work through these complexities.

A Disability Justice approach to mixed ability organizing asks more of people than simply acknowledging their oppression or privilege; it asks us to move beyond the disembodiment (state of being disconnected from one's body) that

we have been socialized into under ableism. It doesn't help anyone to pretend that we don't have differing bodies, minds, and hearts, desires, needs, and limits – we most certainly and fabulously do. A Disability Justice orientation names ableism as a fictitious and violent ordering of bodily difference that our movement works to unmask and undo, but it also recognizes that we

““What I really appreciate about disability justice is how it informs how can we live our everyday life, how we can connect with each other. And that is really important to me, especially talking about interdependence and breaking isolation.””

— Akemi Nishida

currently exist in the world as it has been structured by ableism. Therefore, mixed ability organizing means engaging the tensions between living in this system (which categorizes us, limits us, disables us, and pits us against each other), while also resisting it. The tension between these two facts will be an enduring feature of the struggle for Disability Justice.

What does it mean for people to actively take stock of their capacities, forms of embodiment, and relationships to institutional power? Sometimes it could mean being honest about our physical, cognitive, or emotional limitations, and asking for the kinds of support we need. It could also mean recognizing that ableism has over-valued our perceived bodily or mental capacities in ways that can profoundly obscure the strengths and creativity people with disabilities hold. At other times it might mean challenging internalized ableism and embracing what our bodies or minds do have the capacity for. Or it could mean learning to honestly identify and use our relative privileges in order to support collective access and Disability Justice movement-building. However, it's also important for those working within mixed ability organizing contexts to recognize the ways in which using our relative privilege can inadvertently reproduce the violence and hierarchies of ableism, racism, patriarchy, cissexism, classism, etc. The leadership of disabled people of color and queer, trans, and gender-nonconforming people with disabilities should *always* be at the center of disability justice movement-building.

Mixed ability organizing means nurturing old and inventing new ways of holding and supporting one another. We create loving interdependence that supports our struggles against a world that relies upon myths of individualism in order to justify systems of exploitation. We collectively develop an awareness of our respective needs and capacities, of what and how we're giving and receiving, without succumbing to tit-for-tat accountings of our debts to one another. As the black radical poet and theorist Fred Moten might put it, these debts are truly incalculable. See, for instance, the chapter "Debt and Study" in Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (NY: Minor Compositions, 2013). How could one possibly quantify the myriad ways we might lend our bodies, minds, and hearts in service to one another?

At the same time, mixed ability organizing means being attentive to the ways that power plays out in our labors with and for one another, even as we try to create new forms of collective care. Who is doing what kinds of labor, how much, for how long, and how do these facts map onto gender, race, and other instances of difference and power, often in unacknowledged ways? For example, are female socialized or fem-identified people carrying the bulk of the emotional labor of the organizing? Have we come to imagine non-disabled people as the "givers" and disabled people as the "receivers" in ways that replicate ableism? Are people of color doing the majority of the work while white people receive more attention as "leaders"? Mixed ability organizing

means working toward collective *accountability* rather than strict *accountings*; *reciprocity* rather than *receipt*; it means interrogating the ways power shapes the flow of our incalculable debts to one another, the unevenness in our mutual indebtedness, without ever assuming that we could (or would even want to) settle our accounts, so to speak.

Disability Justice encompasses and embraces all bodies, minds, hearts, and forms of embodiment. This emergent movement is unquestionably of, by, and for disabled people of color and queer, trans, and gender-nonconforming people with disabilities, as we are subjected to the greatest violence of ableism, and therefore have the greatest stake in its abolition. Simultaneously, Disability Justice is ultimately about re-imagining and reinventing *all* of our relationships with one another, as well as with our own bodies and minds; it is about transforming the very material and psychic frameworks that designate some bodies and minds as normative, valuable, and acceptable and others as deviant, worthless, or dangerous. As such, we *all* have a stake and role to play in disability justice, in dismantling ableism and building toward a world where all bodies and minds are recognized and treated as valuable and beautiful. We still have a very long way to go, but we have each other to hold, and be held by, through the journey.

Principles of Mixed Ability Organizing

Or “From each according to [their] ability, to each according to [their] need.”

Mixed ability organizing requires a commitment to:

- Valuing people as they are, for who they are.
- Valuing both the process and the products of our work.
- Knowing that black and brown / queer crips bring flexibility and creative brilliance to our pursuit of accessible ways to engage with the world and each other.
- Exploring and creating new ways of doing things that go beyond able-bodied/able-minded normativity. We are well worth the effort it takes to create a mixed ability process.
- Valuing the insights and participation of all of our community members and therefore committing to breaking down ableist / patriarchal / racist / classed

isolation of people with disabilities. Isolation ultimately undermines collective liberation.

- Remembering that moving together doesn't mean we all move in the same way; valuing and adoring all the ways that we show up.
- Acknowledging that everything is not equally accessible for everyone at all times.
- Finding roles for each member of a community that are rooted in self-determination, active consent, and the needs of the collective.
- Recognizing the brilliance of our communities, and supporting and challenging each other to express that brilliance in ways that make sense for us.
- Challenging and dismantling the multiple systems of oppression that have socialized us to be comfortable with mere acceptance from, and assimilation into, an able-minded / able-bodied normativity; being aware of the dangers of reproducing this complacency.
- Acknowledging that there is an iterative process of supporting each other, developing our skills, and developing our leadership, meaning this is a constant process with many stages and we don't always get it right the first time.
- Acknowledging that we all can act as allies to one

another in different ways across abilities, but that we need to be intentional about our institutional positions and other types of power; making sure that we are organizing with, and not for, one another.

- Committing to our collective stake in ensuring access and striving to be accountable to each other; knowing that we will make mistakes, and asking each other for understanding and patience as we create this road together.

“Building relationships in itself is a political revolutionary act in the context of the isolation of ableism.”

— Lateef McLeod

“I see the DJ movement as slow and gentle and very forceful.”

— Sandie Yi

Disability Liberated

by Patricia Berne, David Langstaff and Aurora Levins Morales

This poem and text below accompanied our performance and installation in March 2015 at the Disability Incarcerated Symposium at U.C. Berkeley.

Come. You. Yes, you.
Tonight we are gathering stories, ours, yours.
Each of us with our bundles of sticks, each of us with
our strands of cord.
The word in your pocket is what we need.
The song in your heart, the callous on your heel.

Come out of the forest, the woodwork, the shadows to
this place of freedom
quilombo, swamp town, winter camp, yucayeque
where those not meant to survive laugh and weep
together
share breath from mouth to mouth, pass cups of wa-
ter, break bread
and let our living bodies speak.

Our history is in our bodies what we do to breathe,
how we move, the sounds we make
our myriad shapes, our wild gestures

far outside the boundaries of what's expected
the knowledge bound into our bones, our trembling
muscles, our laboring lungs
like secret seeds tied into the hair of our stolen ances-
tors
we carry it everywhere.

Come beloveds from your narrow places
from your iron beds, from your lonely perches
come warm and sweaty from the arms of lovers
we who invent a world each morning
and speak in fiery tongues.

Come you with voices like seagulls
dissonant and lovely, with hands like roots and twigs.

Come limbs that wander and limbs like buds and
limbs heavy as stone
come breathless and swollen and weary, fevered and
wracked with pain.

Come slow and heavy, come wary and scarred, come
sweet and harsh and strong. Come arched with plea-
sure, come slick with honey
come breathless with delight.

We say with our feet, with our backs and hands
no life belongs to another, our bodies are not acreage
livestock, overhead, disposable tools.

We hum as we travel, songs heavy with maps that

*lead us back to ourselves
singing you, yes you, are irreplaceable.*

*Here we are, and here we are fruitful
our stories flower, take wing, reproduce like wind-
blown seeds.*

*No surgeon's knife can cut the lines of spirit. Our
family tree remains.*

*– from "Listen, Speak" in Kindling: Writings On the
Body by Aurora Levins Morales*

Disability Liberated is not a passive grieving, but a furious mourning, an elegy to all that we have lost, and a promise to fight like hell for all that survives.

Disability Liberated was born out of collective struggle. We sought first and foremost to pay homage to the countless disabled lives that have been lost to the violence of able-bodied supremacy, whether that loss be corporeal – souls robbed of their very embodiment by state, vigilante, or, too often, intimate violence – or the loss of freedoms through incarceration in prisons or other disciplinary institutions. Our understanding of able-bodied supremacy has been formed in relation to intersecting systems of domination and exploitation. The histories of white supremacy and ableism are, after all, inextricably entwined, both forged in the crucible of colonial conquest and capitalist domination. We

cannot comprehend ableism without grasping its interrelations with heteropatriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, and capitalism, each system co-creating an ideal bodymind built upon the exclusion and elimination of a subjugated “other” from whom profits and status are extracted.

Disability Liberated keeps these connections front and center, drawing upon the legacies of cultural and spiritual resistance within vodou that confronted and subverted colonial powers along a thousand underground paths, igniting small persistent fires of rebellion in everyday life. In an historical moment in which Black communities around the country have been rising up against police violence and asserting claims to worth, dignity and power, disabled people of the global majority – black and brown people – share common ground in our struggle for life and justice. 500+ years of violence against black and brown bodies includes 500+ years of bodies and minds deemed dangerous by being non-normative – “deviant”, “unproductive”, “invalid.” We know that there has always been resistance to all forms of oppression, as we know through our bones that there have simultaneously been disabled people visioning a world where we flourish, that values and celebrates us all in our diverse beauty.

Disability Liberated is an intervention into a landscape of absences. For if the ruthless violence of able-bodied supremacy were not bad enough, we also find ourselves confronted with the myriad ways in which

ableism renders this violence invisible. Seldom do we find mainstream discussions of the fact that people with disabilities are disproportionately subjected to police

“Disability Justice struggles to redefine a “productive person” has the potential to up the bar around all labor struggles and the organization of work for everybody.”

— Aurora Levins Morales

with disabilities into jails, prisons, and institutions such as “nursing homes,” “psychiatric facilities,” and “rehabilitation centers” that the volume *Disability Incarcerated* rightly names as sites of segregation and confinement within a vast and growing “carceral archipelago.” Just as we can trace the origins of the police to slave patrols, the coercive warehousing of people with disabilities and the rampant violence visited upon us today is rooted in eugenics, forced sterilization, and outright genocide.

violence, nor do we hear of the scores of children with disabilities that are abused, neglected, even caged as unhuman, murdered by their families or “care-givers” for failing to perform able-bodiedness. Similarly invisible is the callous herding of people

Disability Liberated is a rebellion against attempts to invisibilize this violence, an honoring of the longstanding legacies of resilience and resistance which are the inheritance of all of us whose bodies or minds will not conform. As such, we acknowledge the fact that Disabil-

ity Liberated takes place on stolen Chochenyo Ohlone land, which is a site of the ongoing colonizing acts of the University of California – right here, where you sit and stand and read this text is only yards away from a whole host of stolen artwork, cultural artifacts, and essentially on top of ancestral Ohlone people, stored in drawers, detained awaiting “cataloguing”. The University of California is blatantly trampling upon the rights of Native communities to dignified mourning, in violation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act passed by the US Congress in 1990. Alfred Kroeber, after whom this building is named, is the colonizing anthropologist who wrote that Ohlone tribes were “extinct so far as all practical purposes are concerned” (The Handbook of California Indians, 1925), single handedly terminating their ability to obtain federally recognized status, making the Ohlone peoples landless. These actions disdain the humanity of Native communities and are a part of normalizing 500 years of settler-colonial violence and genocide of the indigenous peoples of this continent.

We feel the historical weight of our accumulated losses and Sins Invalid wishes to acknowledge the enormity of loss that confronts Native communities, and to express our solidarity with Native students and community groups that are struggling for the just repatriation of what is rightfully theirs. While we grieve what has been lost, we also celebrate we who remain, and struggle towards what is yet-to-be. Disability justice is a vision and practice of this yet-to-be, a map that we create with

our ancestors and our great grandchildren onward, in the width and depth of our multiplicities and histories, a movement towards a world in which every body and mind is seen as valuable and beautiful.

*We unwrap our tongues, we bind our stories, we choose to be naked
we show our markings, we lick our fingers, we stroke our bellies
we laugh at midnight, we change the ending
we begin, and begin again.*

– from “Listen, Speak” in *Kindling: Writings On the Body* by Aurora Levins Morales

Our Saucy Selves: Disability Justice & Sexuality

An Interview with Patty Berne and Neve Be(ast), conducted by Cory Silverberg

So how is Disability Justice related to sexuality?

PB: Most justice based movements don't actually address the lived experience of the body, they address an archetypal idea of a body. Of course in justice movements we address demographics, but we address bodies as an abstraction, not in real time, in complex and realistic ways – what we need and offer as people who parent, or as people older than 40, as people with disabilities, as people that are overworked, or as people who don't have access to food or don't have time to eat because we're holding down 3 gigs.

Disability Justice is a practice and a framework in which disability is understood both as an embodied experience and a socially constructed experience. When we

were initially framing Disability Justice (DJ) we wanted to make sure we reflected the practice elements, that DJ was not put out as just a collection of ideas and hypotheticals set in lyrical language but that it had a practice which respected the ways in which disabled people with multiple ways of being in the world could engage in movement building. And the robustness of our lives includes our sexualities.

One of the ways that disabled people are oppressed is through the negation of our sexualities as a means of denying the viability of our bodies, including our potential reproductive viability. We can see this through directly eugenic policies like “assisted suicide” (which is complex, I know) and through the general public dread of what it means to expose the nude disabled body. We started Sins Invalid with the understanding that sexuality anchors us into conversations about the body and of our embodiment.

My experience of people in their power, including people with non-normative or non-conforming bodies, is that we are hot – super hot in fact! It’s super sexy to see people engaged with their lives, doin’ themselves!

NB: I’m moved by that piece about negating our sexuality as a means of denying our bodies’ viability. It’s negating our agency, our ability to make choices, and our right to make choice! An important point of intersection between DJ and sexuality is the issue of choice. I think about reproductive justice and eugenics, and

wonder about people's question of whether people with developmental disabilities can consent to sex. Having a DJ lens about sexuality and consent is incredibly important because it centers the full humanity of the disabled person. It's like being asked the question: How do you have sex in a wheelchair, how does your wheelchair play into sex? I mean, I love wheelchairs, and I love to see them in porn or cinema or performance art. But I'm looking for disabled PEOPLE, not wheelchairs. It tells us that people don't understand disability experience, and that the metaphor of the wheelchair as a symbol is taken literally.

I think a lot about what is the actual intersection between DJ and sexuality, and it is not just about the tools we use to access sex or the tools we use to make the world more accessible to us. DJ is a framework through which we can be more consensual in accessing sex, it's a better way to approach sex, better than an ableist combative gendered heteropatriarchal approach to sex, or a patriarchal rape culture or hook up culture to access sex.

What's so awesome and amazing about DJ as it's been laid out is that it's inherently intersectional as a framework and movement. So we're working with feminism and gender justice, we are thinking about immigrant justice and land rights and indigenous sovereignty and rights to agency and consent and choice. And communication of access needs for all disabled people all the

time. So liberation in the context of DJ includes the right to sexual pleasure and choice and desire for all types of disabled people.

There is an attitude in white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, ableist culture towards sex and sexuality that we are combatants in a war of sex. There's an idea that we have almost trick each other into sexual success, and I think that really sucks – not in a good way – that we have to communicate in a coded dance that's not accessible to everyone. The goal is not to communicate what you want and need, what you're up for and down for, whether for yourself or another person. DJ practiced in a sexual context advocates for communication that works for everyone around sexual desire and what we do when we're sexual.

What do immigrant rights have to do with sex?

NB: For me what land rights have to do with sexuality and disability is that we are living in rape culture and a settler colonial culture, and they're not distinct, they are the same culture. This culture is founded upon the mistaken belief that white cis heterosexual able bodied men have the right to own, rape and pillage the land and bodies of indigenous people, of all people who are not white cis heterosexual able bodied men, in a competi-

tion amongst white cis heterosexual able bodied men in pursuit of the accumulation of power.

How we treat the land is how we treat each other. How we understand who this land belongs to is how we understand who our bodies belong to. When we operate on the assumption that colonialism and imperialism are best, we also operate on the assumption that rape and non-consent are best.

PB: Yes, yes, yes and a big Fuck No to the colonial settler values based on violence and the ripple effects of colonial settler psychology!

How is sex with a disabled person the same or different than sex with a non-disabled person?

PB: Sex is different every time you have sex, and different with every different person you have sex with. Maybe what's being asked here is, is it worth the effort to have sex with a disabled person, is it worth the effort or the risk? Can I please them, will they please me?

NB: Will I learn things about their body or my body that will freak me out and forever change my attitude toward sex? People think there is a standard for sex. That it is both vanilla and acrobatic, that it is spontaneous and insidiously communicated, that it could acci-

dentally or on purpose result in the production of embryos. That it is consensual, people want it, but are not supposed to have to communicate that they want it or understand that their partner wants it.

PB: Good sex does not equal the heteropatriarchal understanding of sex, with an off the shelf penis, off the shelf vagina, straight off the porn rack, with anyone – and certainly not with a disabled person!

Is the term “disabled sexuality” useful in any context?

PB: I don't know about that term, but the term crip sex resonates for me, just as queer sexuality does, in that it implies consciousness of non-normative bodies and non-normative expressions of sexuality.

NB: So this is a trick question in that DJ as framework for one's life would help a person NOT ask that question in the same way [laughter]. The major difference between having sex with a disabled person and a non-disabled person is that with a disabled person you can't make assumptions. You have to ask questions. You have to be prepared that whatever ingrained or assumed outcome you imagine (say everyone getting completely naked, or having an orgasm) is not going to happen for everyone, and also that not everyone wants it. You have to be willing to let go of expectations and come up with new possibilities. Because really, ableism can

happen in a sexual interaction between a disabled person and a non-disabled person. It's possible to be ableist in bed.

But in terms of tips and techniques, the tip is communicate, ask questions, get consent, learn new things!! Pleasure looks different for different people.

What do you want people to know and understand about disability and sexuality?

NB: I get asked this all the time, because so much of my work is in the realm of sexuality, and since I'm disabled, people assume that I have a message to convey. People even ask "What do you want to prove?". I like having sex and I want to keep having it and I like having it publicly. I think what I do want to convey about disability and sexuality is that neither are an anomaly, and they aren't an anomaly when they occur at the same time. I mean, we're taught to think of disability as an anomaly, but in reality disabled people are the largest group of marginalized people on earth. And it's incredible that we have this idea of disability as singular and rare and personal, but really we should be understanding disability as a huge social concept. It should be understood that when you say disability and sexuality you are speaking about very very broad topics. I would love to see disability and sexuality as broad topics, as opposed to some narrow niche understanding of human experience.

NEVE BE(AST) (aka Lyric Seal) is a bud, an outburst, descended from many rivers and people, including the Nile, The Mississippi, the South Branch of the Raritan, and the author of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, Neve has never stopped swimming, or becoming real. The Beast called Neve, in their current form, is a black, gross femme, queer punk writer, dancer/actor, and sacred/creative accessible space maker for all occasions. They are an adult and alt art film performer and director, sex and love coach, wedding officiant, accessible event consultant and planner, columnist for *Maximumrocknroll*, contributing writer for *Everyday Feminism*, and proud queer family builder and crew starter for those who like to roll deep. Neve co-founded Oakland's Blueberry Jam with Ali M-O, an integrated improvisational dance lab for women and nonbinary people. *littlebeasthood*. [tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/); [Twitter/Instagram@littlebeasthood](https://twitter.com/littlebeasthood)

PATRICIA BERNE is a Co-Founder, Executive and Artistic Director of *Sins Invalid*. Berne's training in clinical psychology focused on trauma and healing for survivors of interpersonal and state violence. Her professional background includes offering mental health support to survivors of violence and advocating for LGBTQI and disability perspectives within the field of reproductive genetic technologies. Berne's experiences as a Japanese-Haitian queer disabled woman provides grounding for her work creating "liberated zones" for marginalized voices. She is widely recognized for her work to establish the framework and practice of disability justice.

