The Intersection of Disability, Trans Justice, and Black Liberation

Moderator:
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Speakers:
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Goals

• Provide foundational frameworks to better understand the interconnectedness of trans, disability and racial justice.

• Discuss strategies to advance health equity for Black, transgender and people with disabilities in HIV and viral hepatitis work.
• “Disability justice activists are engaged in building an understanding of disability that is more complex, whole and interconnected than what we have previously found. We are disabled people who are people of color; women, genderqueer and transgender; poor and working class; youth; immigrants; lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer; and more.”

• “I imagine a world where our organizing and activism is less segregated, where our movements and communities are accessible and don’t participate in the isolation of disabled communities. I imagine places where we fight for whole and connected people, families and communities.”

• -Mia Mingus, writer, abolitionist and community organizer
Bianca I Laureano is an award-winning educator, curriculum writer, and sexologist. She is a founding member of the Women of Color Sexual Health Network (WOCSHN) and ANTE UP! a virtual freedom school offering professional development training and certification. She has written several curricula and the sexual and reproductive justice discussion guide for the NYC Department of Health published in 2018 and is leading the curriculum development for the Netflix film Crip Camp which is rooted in disability justice principles available at www.CripCamp.com/curriculum. She is an AASECT certified sexuality educator and supervisor and in May 2020 was awarded an honorary doctorate from the California Institute for Integral Studies for her work in expanding the US sexuality field. Find out more about Bianca at her website BiancaLaureano.com and about ANTE UP! at www.AnteUpPD.com
Jaden Fields is an LA-based organizer, cultural worker, and educator. Jaden is the incoming Co-Director of Mirror Memoirs, an oral history and national organizing project that uplifts the healing and liberation of queer, trans, intersex, and non-binary Black, Indigenous, and people of color (QTIBIPOC) who are survivors of child sexual abuse. In his work with Mirror Memoirs, Jaden is an archive storyteller and played a pivotal role in co-designing Mirror Memoirs’ strategic vision, programs, and structure. His work within grassroots and nonprofit organizations has included designing and leading programs for trans folks to access health services, training government agencies to better serve transgender people, participatory action research, and policy advocacy at the city and county level.

Jaden was an inaugural member of the Los Angeles Transgender Advisory Council, a 2017 California HIV/AIDS Policy Research Fellow, and 2019 Echoing Green finalist.
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&

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NASTAD 2020
Agenda / Where We Are Going Today

- Introduction
- Part I:
  - Medical, Social, Justice Models of Disability
  - Stigma, HIV, and medicalization of disability
- Questions
- Part II:
  - Unpacking anti-Blackness
  - Childhood trauma at intersection of disability and gender
- Questions & Paths to Liberation
Medical Model of Disability

- Focus on diagnosis
- Physician is expert
- Finding a cure
- Views disabled people as “broken” and needing to be fixed
- Gatekeeping access to care
Social Model of Disability

- Disability Rights Movement
- Focus on social structures
- Asks is it someone’s disability or is it society that causes debilitating experiences?
- Disabled people speaking for themselves
- Focused on ableism
- Americans with Disabilities Act (bipartisan)
- Mainly racially white disabled people and wheelchair users
Justice Model of Disability

- Challenges medical model of disability
- Challenges and expands the social model of disability
- Created by sick and disabled Trans Queer BIPOC
- Erasure of TQBIPOC brilliance in academic writing
- Purchase Disability Justice Primer $7 PDF $26 large print copy includes shipping
  https://www.sinsinvalid.org/disability-justice-primer
Defining Ableism

A system that places value on people’s bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, intelligence, excellence and productivity. These constructed ideas are deeply rooted in anti-Blackness, eugenics, colonialism and capitalism. This form of systemic oppression leads to people and society determining who is valuable and worthy based on a person’s appearance and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and "behave." You do not have to be disabled to experience ableism.

A working definition by Talila "TL" Lewis in conversation with Disabled Black and other negatively racialized folk, especially Dustin Gibson; updated January 2020.

https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/ableism-2020-an-updated-definition
Disability Justice Principles

1. Intersectionality
2. Leadership of those most impacted
3. Anti-Capitalism
4. Cross-Movement Organizing
5. Wholeness
6. Sustainability
7. Cross-Disability Solidarity
8. Interdependence
9. Collective Access
10. Collective 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 WHOLESNESS
   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.
Stigma, Language, and Disability

- Ableism is anti-Black
- Resistance to claiming disability is a form of ableism
- Derogatory terms coined and used by the broader community (e.g., to describe people who take PrEP)
Stigma, Language, and Disability

- Note how there are limited reports on BLM protests spreading SARS-COVID-19
- Note how POTUS is positioned as being ‘strong’ with diagnosis i.e. Eugenics
- 26 Ways to be in the Struggle Beyond the Streets created by TQBIPOC
  https://issuu.com/nlc.sf.2014/docs/beyondthestreets_final
Questions
Unpacking Anti-Blackness

- Anti-Blackness is a pandemic
- Anti-Blackness strategically dehumanizes Blackness
- Systemically strips black people of bodily autonomy
- Transphobia is rooted in anti-Blackness
Pathologizing and Criminalizing Blackness

● Drapetomania
● Dysaesthesia Aethiopica
● War on Drugs vs. Opioid Epidemic
● Black uprisings = Riots and Looting
NOIRCRATICIDE

noun; verb
the systematic destruction and erasure of Black peoples and cultures by the state, those acting in service of the state, and those educated or empowered by the state.

Etymology:
- noir, of or relating to Black peoples;
- -crat, of, by, through or relating to the state;
- -cide, denoting a person, substance, action, thing that kills. Similar: genocide, extermination

a working word and definition for continued dialogue by Talila "TL" Lewis, July 2020
Impacts of Childhood Sexual Trauma

- ACEs and negative health outcomes
- Child sexual abuse is a pandemic
- 1 in 4 female-assigned children, 1 in 6 male-assigned children will experience sexual violence by age 18
Impacts of Childhood Sexual Trauma

- Gender non-conforming children up to 6 times more likely to experience sexual violence by age 18
- Invasive and medically unnecessary surgeries on intersex babies and children
- State institutions as a site of violence for QTIBIPOC children
Medical Model of Transphobia

- Enforces the gender binary
- Gatekeeping access to care
- Medical transition is the “cure” for Gender Dysphoria
- Systemically strips trans/non-binary/intersex people of bodily autonomy
Impacts of Transphobia

- 31 reported murders of trans and non-binary people so far this year
- Increased experiences of homelessness and housing instability due to gender identity
- Increased experiences with the carceral systems
The experiences of Black Trans Disabled People

- Carceral response to mental health crisis
- Gaslit and not believed by medical industrial complex
- Increased police surveillance and violence
- Lack of access to reproductive justice (i.e. Eugenics)