

Disability is Diversity

April 10, 2025

Presenters:

Zack Siddeek, MSW

Dai Ratsamy, MA

Eric Matthes





Welcome!

We would love to know who is here today!

Please take a minute to tell us your role/s.

About this series

This presentation is part of a series of workshops we are doing this spring as part of the [Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network](#).

This is a statewide collaboration between the [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction](#), WestEd, and education partners across Washington state.

One of these partners is the [Family Engagement Collaborative](#), and The Arc of King County is part of this collaborative. This spring we are hosting workshops to help educators learn more about disability and ways to support families, and help families learn more about inclusive learning and ways to navigate the special education process.



Produced by The Arc of King County for the state's Inclusionary Practices Technical Network.



Produced by The Arc of King County for the state's Inclusionary Practices Technical Network.



Produced by The Arc of King County for the state's Inclusionary Practices Technical Network.



Who we are ...

The Arc of King County promotes and protects the rights of people with intellectual or other developmental disabilities (IDD) so we can all live, learn, work and play in the community.

The Arc is driven by the fundamental belief that everyone deserves to write their own life story. That means:

- Real access to education
- Meaningful employment
- Quality healthcare
- Genuine community connections

At our chapter, we offer information and family support, systems navigation, education & civic engagement support. We also run a supported living program for adults with IDD.

We help (or refer!) on any topic. The most common are special education, housing, and Medicaid long-term supports.

<https://arcofkingcounty.org/>



Need assistance? ask@arcofkingcounty.org

Today's presenters:

Zack Siddeek, MSW, zsiddiek@arcofkingcounty.org

Dai Ratsamy, MA, dratsamy@arcofkingcounty.org

Eric Matthes, ematthes@arcofkingcounty.org



Community Agreements

- Use “I” statements
- Together we know a lot
- Respect Confidentiality
- Take care of yourself



Agenda

- Disability and Civil Rights
- Visible and Invisible Disabilities
 - Respectful Language
 - Models of Disability





**"INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT
TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE."**
Martin Luther King, Jr.

**DISABILITY RIGHTS
ARE CIVIL RIGHTS**

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.

Historical Context

Institutionalization

VS

Community Based Services



Residential Habilitation Centers

Washington operates the following four institutions for people with developmental disabilities⁵:

Fircrest

Shoreline, WA
Established in 1959
200 ICF beds
92 NF beds

Rainier

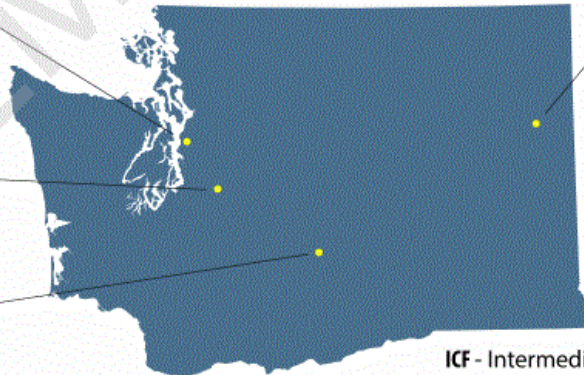
Buckley, WA
Established in 1939
370 ICF beds

Yakima Valley

Yakima, WA
Established in 1958
160 NF beds

Lakeland Village

Medical Lake, WA
Established in 1914
190 ICF beds
93 NF beds



ICF - Intermediate Care Facility
NF - Nursing Facility



THE MANY FORMS OF DISABILITY



THE NEW
...R-WORD...
is
★ Respect ★

RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

© Randy Glasbergen
glasbergen.com



"I'm not disabled or differently-abled or specially-abled or exceptionally-abled. I'm an accountant in a wheelchair."

PERSON FIRST?

THESE ARE SOME CHILDREN WITH AUTISM.



THESE ARE SOME AUTISTIC CHILDREN.



SUBUPCOMIX.WORDPRESS.COM

HI, MY NAME IS DAN.
I LIKE TO BE REFERRED
TO AS AN AUTISTIC.



GOT IT!




@DAN95

"PERSON FIRST
LANGUAGE" ?

WHY NOT ASK
THE PERSON
FIRST ?



WWW.BITSTRIPS.COM



How we **THINK**
about disabilities
affects how we **TREAT**
people with
disabilities.

“Models” of Disability

Moral	Capitalist/ Economic	Medical	Inspiration	Social
<p>Thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punishment, sin • Perpetual child • Pity, tragedy • Menace, threat • “Freak,” undesirable • Burden <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isolation & segregation ○ Containment & control ○ No support ○ Charity 	<p>Thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability • Undesirable • Burden • Cost too much • Not worth it <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isolation & segregation ○ Containment & control ○ No support ○ Discrimination 	<p>Thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken • Incomplete • Not good enough • “Special” <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Fix it” ○ “Be like everyone else” ○ “Hide it” 	<p>Thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift from God • “Special” • Exceeding expectations • Death is better than disability <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demeaning ○ Non-human ○ Focus on the nondisabled 	<p>Thoughts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability as diversity • Social perceptions • Strengths-based • Part of identity <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empower ○ Accommodate ○ Person-led

MORAL

Thoughts:

- Punishment; sin
- Perpetual Child
- Pity/Tragedy
- Menace/ Threat
- "Freak"/ Undesirable
- Burden

Action:

- Isolation & Segregation
- No support
- Charity



Capitalist/ Economic

Thoughts:

- Inability
- Undesirable
- Burden
- Cost too much
- Not worth it

Action:

- Isolation & segregation
- No support
- Discrimination

CORONAVIRUS

People With Intellectual Disabilities May Be Denied Lifesaving Care Under These Plans as Coronavirus Spreads

Disaster preparedness plans in Washington and Alabama say people with cognitive issues are a lower priority for lifesaving treatment. Disability advocacy organizations have asked the federal government to clarify the plans.

by Amy Silverman, Arizona Daily Star, March 27, 5 a.m. EDT



MEDICAL

Thoughts:

- Broken
- Incomplete
- Not good enough
- “Special”

Action:

- “Fix it”
- “Be like everyone else”
- “Hide it”

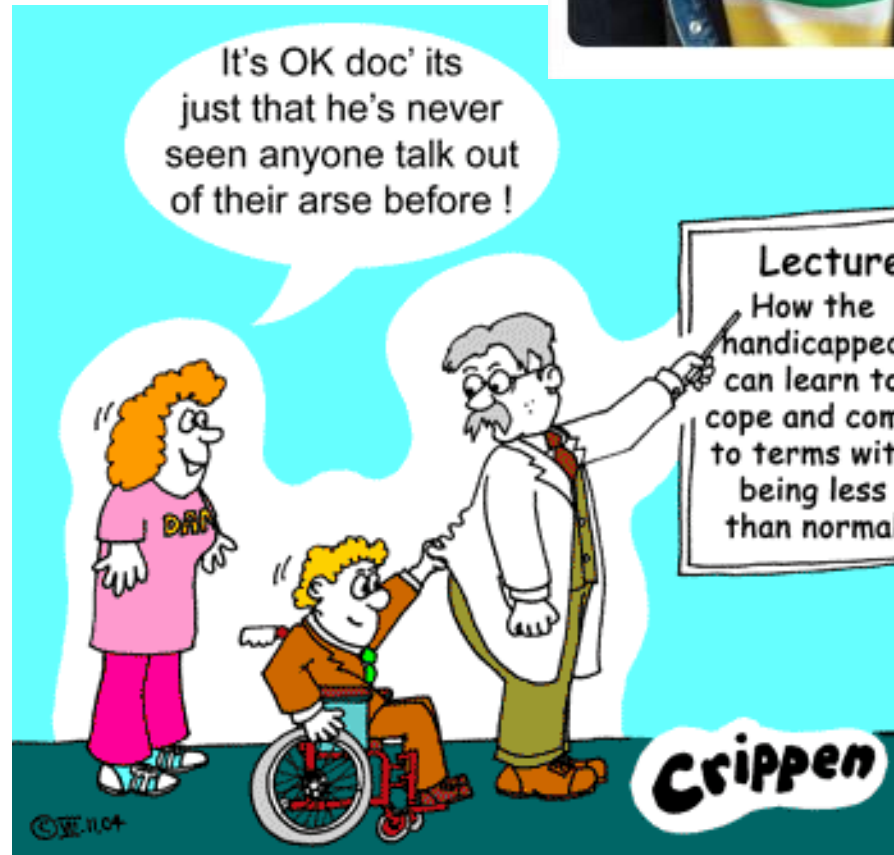


Let's wipe out cancer, diabetes and autism in his lifetime.



Seattle Children's[®]
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Research Institute



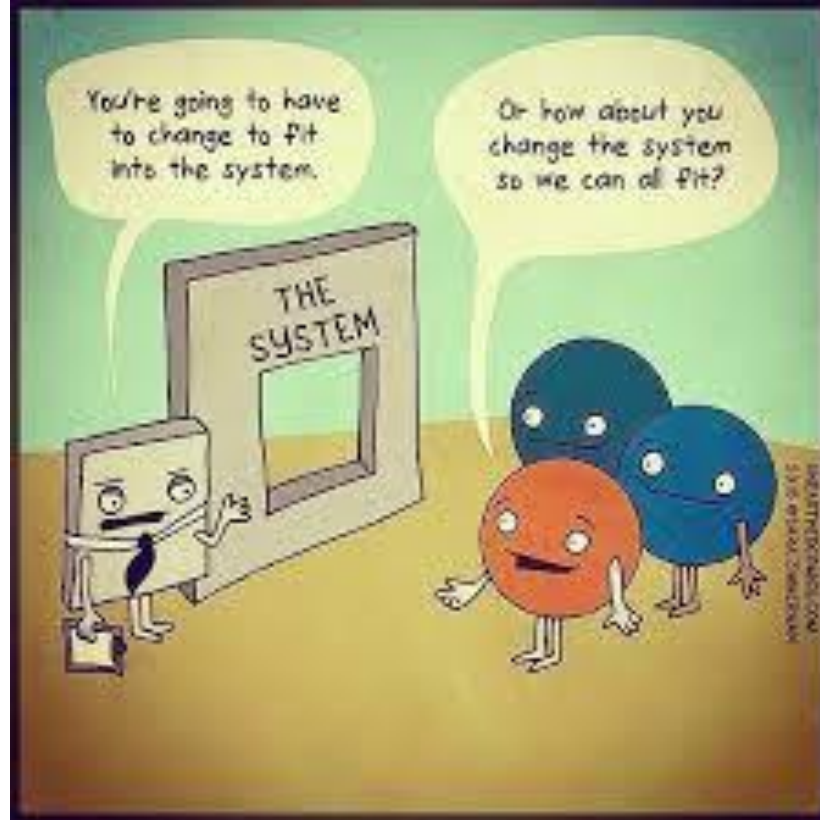
StickmanCommunications.co.uk
Copyright © Hannah Ensor 2017



SOCIAL

Thoughts:

- Disability as diversity
- Social perceptions
- Strengths-based
- Part of identity



Action:

- Empowerment
- Accommodate
- Person-led



INSPIRATION

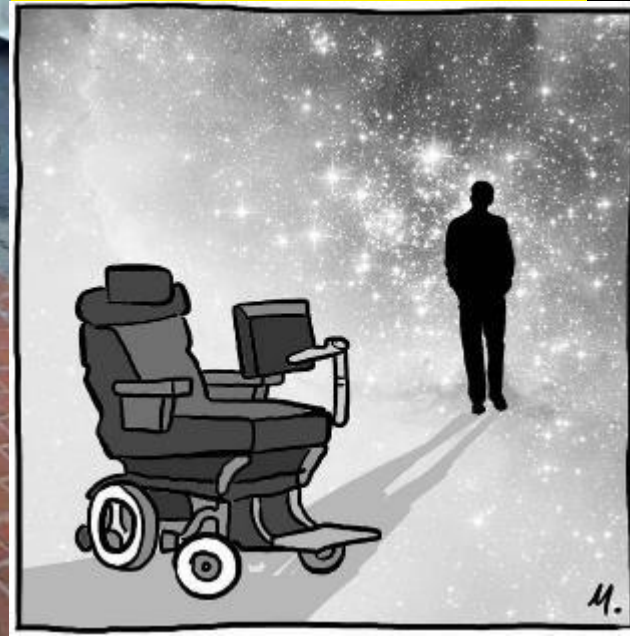
Thoughts:

- Gift from God
- "Special"
- Exceeding expectations
- Death is better than disability

Action:

- Demeaning
- Non-human
- Focus on the non-disabled

"That quote, 'the only disability in life is a bad attitude', the reason that's bullshit is ... No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs has ever made it turn into a ramp. No amount of standing in the middle of a bookshelf and radiating a positive attitude is going to turn all those books into braille."
— Stella Young



BUT SERIOUSLY THOUGH



WHAT WAS YOUR EXCUSE?



Absurdabilia

November 24, 2016 · 🌐

The power of the love of a father for his disabled daughter has become a tear-jerking internet sensation.

Brave little Kenzie Carey cannot walk or talk and is confined to a wheelchair - but that did not stop her Dad Mike from putting a beaming smile on the 12-year-old's face as he danced with her at a local pageant. ❤️



What this Dad does for his ailing daughter has the internet in tears

- ✓ Got out of bed
- ✓ Remembered my name
- ✓ Brushed my teeth
- ✓ Went outside
- ✓ Made eye contact





UNIVERSAL DESIGN



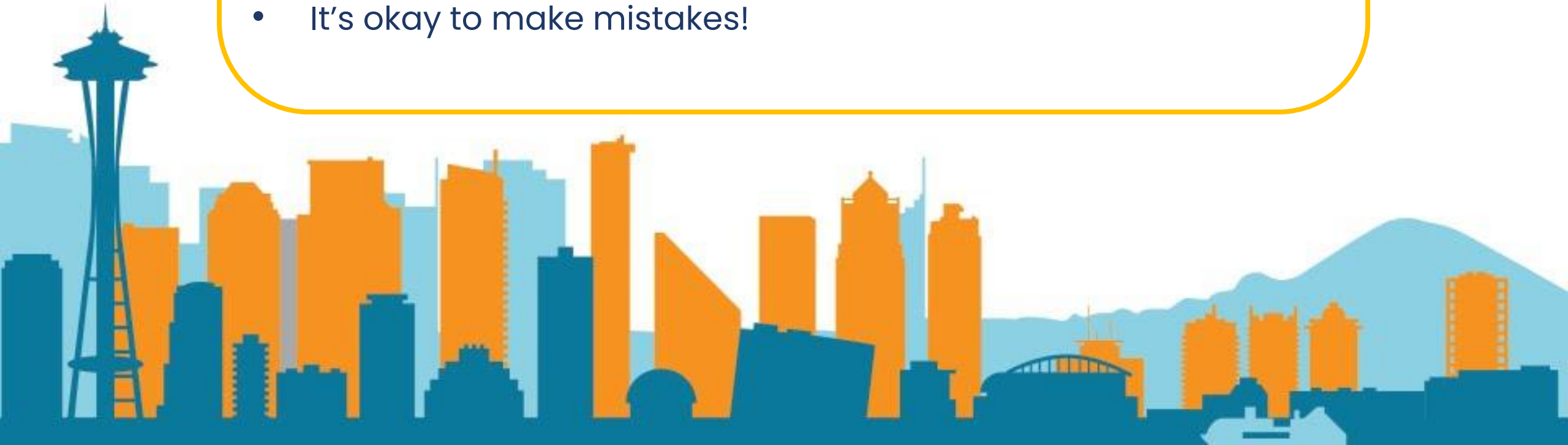
Making design accessible to everyone in society

Group Conversation

1. How does disability come up within your work?
2. What are ways that your team could be more inclusive?
3. How can The Arc help you?
4. Questions?

Things you can do:

- Challenge assumptions, attempt to understand the situation
- Be flexible and open minded
- If there seems to be a problem, ask how you can help
- Allow time
- Overall, be kind, compassionate, and non-judgmental
- It's okay to make mistakes!





Before you go...

Please let us know what you thought of today's presentation.

Your feedback allows us to understand and improve upon our training.

If you can't access the poll onscreen, please complete this version. Thank you!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CQ977QN>