

Bringing All of
Ourselves to Work

The Evolution of Disability
Justice at DABC

Looking "Too Good"
to Have a Disability

transition

The Magazine of Disability Alliance BC

DISABILITY JUSTICE

*"In disability justice,
no one is dispensable
and no one is left behind.
Our liberation is
interdependent and
tied together."*

Tuyết Anh (Judith) Nguyễn



**Thank you
for helping
us grow.**



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editorial

The Evolution of Disability Justice at DABC

by DABC's Equity and Inclusion Committee

Disability Justice is about recognizing that ableism affects people with disabilities in different ways, especially as it relates to other intersecting identities and causes of oppression including gender, race and sexuality.

When DABC decided to devote this Transition to Disability Justice, it raised a lot of initial discussion within our planning team. “What does Disability Justice mean?” “How is it different from disability rights?”

Disability Justice is about recognizing that ableism affects people with disabilities in different ways, especially as it relates to other intersecting identities and causes of oppression including gender, race and sexuality.

For example, Asians with disabilities may face ableism that is compounded by racial discrimination. One of our staff members who lives within these intersections had this to say about experiencing multiple forms of discrimination:

“When the pandemic started, there was a lot of hate directed towards people of Asian descent. As an Asian person with a disability, I had already learned not to stand out so that I wouldn't get picked on, but things became much worse.”

The Evolution of Disability Rights

The disability rights movement, grounded in its motto “nothing about us, without us” started gaining momentum in Europe in the early 1990s.¹ Historically, much of the advocacy in the disability rights movement has been by white people with disabilities due to systemic barriers to IBPOC representation.

This early work has also been criticized for advocating within an ableist system, rather than working to dismantle the ableist structures which create barriers to people with disabilities in the first place.

Like many other social justice movements, concepts and attitudes on disability rights have evolved over time.

The Disability Justice movement is a part of this evolution. It forces us to question these ableist structures and asks us to see people with disabilities as whole human beings whose identity cannot be separated from their “ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state, religion, and more.”²

In fact, the origins of the Disability Justice Movement focused on centering the voices of Indigenous people, Black people and People of Colour (IBPOC) with disabilities within disability rights discourse (for a glossary of terms, please see page 21). To honour this, we feature perspectives in this issue that have too often been ignored.

You will also see the “10 Principles of Disability Justice” created by Sins Invalid and we wish to give particular emphasis to principle 10: “Collective Liberation: No body or mind can be left behind – only moving together can we accomplish the revolution we require.”³ Ultimately, disability rights and Disability Justice are best served by bringing together the voices and perspectives of people with disabilities of all varying intersectional identities.

Expanding Our Understanding of Diversity

Within the disability sector itself, there is a diversity of perspectives which represent specific types of disability. In government and public stakeholder committees across the province, this diversity is often represented, providing input that enriches the discussion.

However, we must go further than this. We need to recognize that when only the voices of white people with disabilities are representing disability issues, they will fail to bring the perspectives from people with disabilities who face other multiple, intersecting forms of oppression. Remediating this crucial

gap is central to the Disability Justice movement.

It's important to add that, through greater integration of Disability Justice principles in our own work, DABC intends to expand who is included in disability discourse, not restrict it. If you do not see yourself reflected in some of the concerns and life experiences expressed in this Transition remember that creating room for these concerns and experiences will not take away from yours.

Looking Inward

In November 2020, DABC established an internal Equity and Inclusion Committee comprised of staff from different departments, with a diverse range of identities.

The purpose of the committee is to recognize the ways that DABC needs to do better to support people with disabilities with intersecting barriers, to address intentional or subconscious ableism and sanism, and to extend our solidarity to other marginalized groups impacted by oppressive structures including colonialism, systemic racism, transphobia, gender inequality, heterosexism and social inequality.⁴

Since mid-2021, we have been going through an equity and inclusion audit with an external consultant. We recognize that our previous actions as an organization have not always been equitable and inclusive. We have work to do to improve equity within our own organization, with our clients and with

Like many other social justice movements, concepts and attitudes on disability rights have evolved over time. The Disability Justice movement is a part of this evolution.

our wider network, as well as in our interactions with external stakeholders. This is an ongoing process that requires sincere and thought-provoking discussion and action, so DABC can continue to evolve in the same way as the disability rights and justice movements.

We reached an important milestone in this work in November 2021: publishing our solidarity statement at disabilityalliancebc.org/solidarity-statement. You can also read it in this Transition.

We hope you enjoy reading the many perspectives and stories from our contributors in this edition. We are grateful to them for sharing their unique and compelling voices.

References

¹ <https://vidaindependente.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Nothing-About-Us-Without-Us-Disability-Oppression-and-Empowerment-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf>

² <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/news-1/2020/6/16/what-is-disability-justice>

³ <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>

⁴ <https://justicetrans.org/en/about-us> 



I TRANSITION

The views and opinions expressed within the pages of TRANSITION are not necessarily those held by the total membership or Board of Directors. The material presented is meant to be thought-provoking and to promote dialogue.

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What does Disability Justice Mean to Me?

by Harmony Bongat

I was introduced to Disability Justice through a friend a few years ago. I had just received a diagnosis of fibromyalgia and my visual impairments were worsening, as were my mental health issues.

I was stuck in a medical system that left me feeling hopeless. My circle of non-disabled friends didn't understand what I was going through. My family minimized my anguish, inundating me with toxic positivity,

telling me "I'd get through it" or "I'll get better." Everyone around me offered unsolicited advice. I felt confused, scared and lonely — I wasn't being comforted or supported.

One day, I started attending a group support meeting called Chronically Queer and was introduced to the Disability Justice movement. To me, Disability Justice means: compassion, kindness, resilience and community.

“ One day, I started attending a group support meeting called Chronically Queer and was introduced to the Disability Justice movement.



An ableist society says, "You are not welcome." Disability Justice says, "We want you here."

Disability Justice understands that, as a disabled, queer, Filipino, solo parent, living in poverty, my experience as a person with a disability is different from the experiences of many other people with disabilities.

Within the medical system, for example, female, queer, people of colour are just not given the same standard of care as white, straight, cisgender men.

I minimize my emotions and mask or hide my queerness. I'm often asked inappropriate questions or not taken seriously.

And, worst of all, I have no choice but to be entangled within this system. It's disheartening and exhausting, and wears away at my dignity and self-worth.

But, within the Disability Justice movement, I am given back what the health system and other systems of care have taken away. It sees my lived experience as a wealth of knowledge that I can share knowing it will be valued.

Furthermore, people with disabilities who are not able to "sustain gainful employment" (their words), like myself, must undergo scrutiny in applying for financial assistance. I must show just how disabled I am by divulging details I know will be scrutinized without the compassion and empathy I need—all this, despite having doctors' diagnoses of chronic conditions I will have for the rest of my life.



Disability Justice reminds us to take care of ourselves first. I am reminded that I don't need to be at the front lines to be part of the movement.

People with disabilities know that disability labels come with negative stigma, perpetuated by systems of oppression that all of us are living under. But in a room of people with disabilities, there is joy and comfort and excitement! Other people with disabilities just get it (get US), understand and sympathize. There is an air of excitement and community. We can work together for social change, and, at the same time, talk about everyday life.

We talk about movies where a character with a disability is a well-rounded person, not one that exists for the benefit of someone else. We play board games where everyone can participate, regardless of their level of functioning.

We try to meet everyone's lighting, seating, scent and sound needs. We offer food or go to restaurants where everyone can eat, regardless of dietary restrictions, paying attention to how much meals cost. We know a lot of us have been through trauma, so we use content and trigger warnings before talking about difficult subjects.


Creating inclusion can be as easy as asking someone if they have what they need and, if they don't, working with them to see how you can help — and giving that help in a way that doesn't infantilize, shame or "other" them.

Within the Disability Justice movement, we purposefully engage with others and share what we learn about our conditions, symptom management techniques, self-care treatments, mental health resources and self-advocacy measures.

Disability Justice reminds us to take care of ourselves first. I am reminded that I don't need to be at the front lines to be part of the movement. I want to know that I can make a difference and that I contribute whatever I can to fight ableism. Just existing each day as a person with a disability means that I'm doing enough.

Right now, one of my contributions is my story. I share it in the hope that it will be listened to and — right now — that is enough.

Chronically Queer is a support group for anyone who is 2SLG-BTQIA+?; and who has a disability, chronic condition and/or mental health issue. Come and join us: <https://www.canbc.org/queer/chronically-queer/>.

HARMONY BONGAT IS A DISABILITY JUSTICE ADVOCATE AND EDUCATOR THROUGH CREATING ACCESSIBLE NEIGHBOURHOODS (CAN), AS WELL AS A RESEARCHER OF 2SLGBTQIA+ HISTORY. 

HOW TO CONNECT WITH DABC SERVICES

The DABC office is still closed and our staff are continuing to help clients remotely. Please see the contact information for our core programs below. Thank you for your patience and stay safe.

Advocacy Access

If you need help with provincial disability benefits or CPP Disability, contact Advocacy Access: advocacy@disabilityalliancebc.org 604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)

Tax AID DABC

If you are a person with a disability who needs assistance filing your income taxes, contact Tax AID DABC: taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org 236-477-1717 or 1-877-940-7797 (Toll-free)
Book an appointment online at <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>

Access RDSP

If you need help with the Disability Tax Credit or Registered Disability Savings Plan, contact Access RDSP: rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org 604-872-1278 or 1-800-663-1278 (Toll-free)
<https://www.rdsp.com/supports-and-services/>

Disability Law Clinic

Our Disability Law Clinic can help with legal issues related disability rights: LawClinic@disabilityalliancebc.org (236) 427-1108



DABC'S ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS

Supporting Disability Justice through Community Grants

| by Danielle Gauld

There are amazing, innovative organizations around BC that are integrating Disability Justice into what they do. DABC has been proud to support some of them through our annual Accessibility Projects Grants introduced during BC's first Accessibility Week in May of 2018.

DABC was selected by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to distribute this funding as part of their goal to improve accessibility throughout the province.

We hope and expect that the Accessibility Project grants will be available again in 2022! Please check our website at <https://disability-alliancebc.org/program/accessibility-projects> for details.

Here are just some of our 2021 grant recipients who will be doing Disability Justice work. And, read about one of our 2020 recipients on the next page.

Coastal Research, Education, and Advocacy Network (CREAN), Therapy Sessions for Youth with Disabilities, Victoria, BC

Mental health is now more important than ever, especially for youth of colour with disabilities who are often left out of conversations regarding mental health. These youth have also been experiencing a lack of access to social and cultural activities and racial trauma, as well as COVID-related stresses and lockdowns.

CREAN will expand their existing free art therapy program for youth aged 13-18, including both online and in-person sessions. The workshops will be led by a licensed art therapist and will support the youth to engage with race and disability as intersecting facets of identity.

Powell River Brain Injury Society, Our People, Our Place: A History in Art, Powell River, BC

The Powell River Brain Injury Society has long recognized the power of art to heal. This project will enhance personal and community pride in the local brain injury population through inviting the organization's clients and local First Nations artists to collaborate on a mural installation. The mural will depict the history of the Powell River community, in order to create a generational legacy that includes people living with acquired brain injury.

Vines Art Festival Society, Mobilizing Land, Vancouver, BC

Vines is a festival which centers artists with land-based cultural practices and prioritizes Indigenous, Black and immigrant artists. The project will offer art mentorships for people with disabilities seeking opportunities in the arts, particularly those who are interested in land, water and relational justice.

Six emerging artists living with disabilities will be mentored by more established artists living with disabilities. They will be paid to perform at Vines Art Festival at the end of their mentorship and will continue receiving support from the Vines community for years to come.

DANIELLE GAULD IS DABC'S ACCESSIBILITY PROJECTS GRANTS COORDINATOR. DANIELLE HAS WORKED IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS. SHE LIVES WITH CHRONIC PAIN AND ILLNESS, AND IS EXCITED TO BE WORKING IN AND WITH THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY. SHE LOVES TAKING PHOTOS, AND SPENDS AS MUCH TIME AS SHE CAN NEAR THE WATER. T

Accessibility Grant Recipient Update

VocalEye Descriptive Arts was one of DABC's 2020 Grant Recipients. Their unique mission is to provide descriptive arts services to the Blind community through a range of tools, from live description, to touch tours, to sighted guides. You can learn more about VocalEye at <http://www.vocaleyeye.ca>.

BY DEANNA GESTRIN, VOCALEYE INTERN

During my time at VocalEye, I've discovered they have been serving the community in many empowering and connective ways since 2009. They provide live description of arts and cultural events, accessible support materials, weekly newsletters, touch tours, Theatre Buddy sighted guides, describer training, workshops and accessibility consultation.

Collaboration is woven into every aspect of VocalEye's planning, programming, and implementation. Accessibility barriers identified through consultation instigate the development of improved services such as free online programming and subsidized ticket prices for events.

It's refreshing to see diversity in Almost Live, VocalEye's weekly online Zoom event. Programming includes artists, performers and creators from the BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ and disability communities.

As a First Nations woman, I'm proud that VocalEye creates space for weekly land acknowledgments and recognition of Indigenous culture.

As my internship with VocalEye has progressed, so has my view of diversity in the arts. Almost Live is

Programming includes artists, performers and creators from the BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ and disability communities.

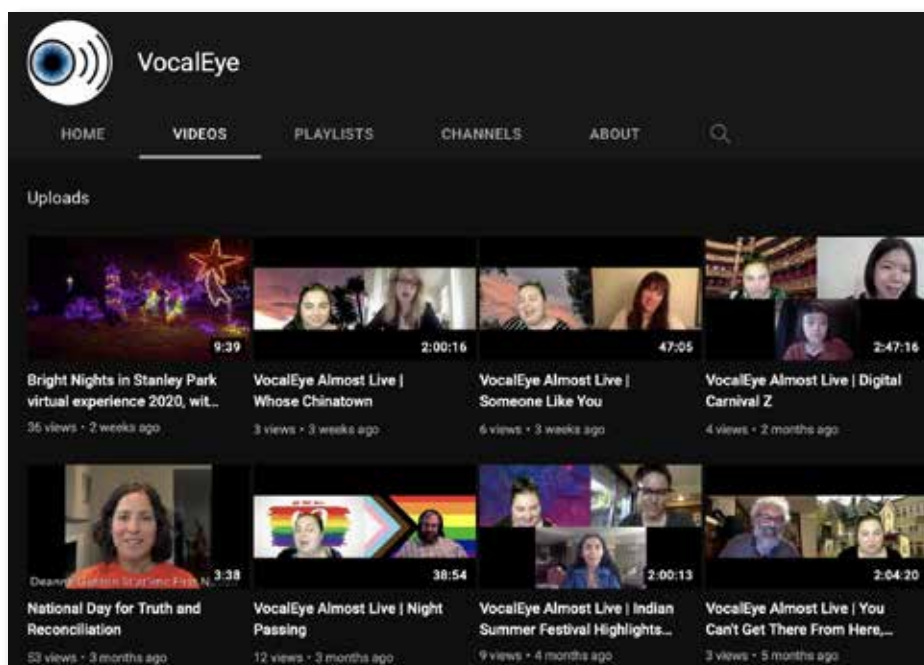
also a way to experience VocalEye's mission and vision. This "accessible art adventure" program was developed as the pandemic forced people into their homes and onto screens. Almost Live events are hosted by Amy Amantea, who is an artist, performer and member of the blind community.

Each week, theatre performances, disability arts, documentary films, virtual art tours, dance, opera, musical performances, storytelling or festival highlights are streamed for community members from various time zones. Amy invites guest artists to discuss their work, and audience members can ask questions and offer reflections.

The event begins with a lively "virtual lobby," a time for greetings and chit chat, and concludes with a community jamboree where mics are unmuted and audience members socialize freely.

It is heartwarming to witness the support and appreciation shared by community members as they discuss art and culture, and share experiences and resources with each other.

Most events are recorded and posted on the VocalEye YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/vocaleyeful>) so content can be revisited and enjoyed anytime. **T**



Supporting People with Intellectual Disabilities Experiencing Violence

We are creating two guides about gender-based violence for people with intellectual disabilities.

by Karen Martin

In April 2021, Disability Alliance BC (DABC) received funding for the Inclusion in Practice project to identify challenges, gaps and solutions to better serve people with intellectual disabilities experiencing gender-based violence.

We are partnering with Inclusion BC and Ending Violence Association of BC, and working with self-advocates on our project advisory committee.

In the fall of 2021, DABC held two focus groups with frontline workers from anti-violence services and representatives from the community living sector. Some of the most important issues participants raised with us are:

- Education is key: for the anti-violence and community living sectors, as well as individuals. Cross-training between these sectors is important.
- People need to be aware of resources in the community that can support individuals with disabilities who have experienced gender-based violence and need help.


- The anti-violence sector and the community living sector need to work together so individuals are not passed from service to service and still not getting the supports they need.
- The anti-violence sector has very little specialized support for people with disabilities.
- There are still misconceptions of disability in the broader public.

Based on what we learned from the focus groups, DABC and Inclusion BC are developing a practical resource guide, with an accompanying training module to enable service providers to enhance their supports and improve outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities.

We are also creating an information guide for people with intellectual disabilities about gender-based violence. The primary focus is on domestic/intimate partner violence and sexual assault services.

This project is generously funded by the Ministry of Public Safety.

If you would like to know more about the project, please contact Karen Martin, karen@disability-alliancebc.org.

KAREN MARTIN IS COORDINATOR OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION PROJECTS AND TRAINING AT DABC. 



Justina and Juby

dabc staff updates

DABC's Co-executive Director of Operations, **Justina Loh**, started a year of maternity leave in December 2020. We were incredibly lucky to have one of our experienced staff step into those many duties, and even shepherd us safely through the challenges of working during a global pandemic.

The Board, staff and volunteers give a huge thank you to **Karen Martin** who provided a stable presence for us during the unsettling times we faced this year.

Karen will resume her role as DABC's Coordinator of Inclusion in Practice Projects.

A big welcome back to Justina! We've missed her many talents and her energy this year, and look forward to having her back with us.

10 Principals of Disability Justice by Sins Invalid

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.”

Leadership of those most impacted

“We are led by those who most know these systems.” – Aurora Levins Morales

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.

Commitment to cross-movement organizing

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

Recognizing wholeness

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

Sustainability

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

Commitment to cross-disability solidarity

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

Interdependence

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

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.

Collective liberation

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

■ Visit Sins Invalid at <https://www.sinsinvalid.org>.

Bringing All of Ourselves to Work

by Cat Hains and Tai Jacob

What would happen if we allowed people living with disability and neurodiverse people (and indeed, all people) to bring a fuller version of themselves to work, to mix the “personal” with the “professional?”

During a community consultation, a community member remarked that our research (and our work) at JusticeTrans was devoid of spirituality and that, when we leave spirit out, we do a disservice to ourselves and our work.

This comment initially spurred us to consider how to integrate spirituality into our research. The effect cascaded and, in a way, gave us permission to bring spirituality into the workplace, too.

As staff of varied religious backgrounds, we weren’t quite sure how to do this! Eventually, we carefully introduced a workplace tarot practice, drawing on deeply personal tools to reflect on organizational challenges.

Having a workplace tarot practice has given us the space to reflect, vision, and be transformed by the labour we do. It has given us permission to bring more of ourselves to our work.

As trans staff working on trans legal and justice issues, the labour we do is inevitably deeply personal. Rather than erecting barriers between our work and personal lives, we create

boundaries with our work that allow us to be deeply connected with it while also respecting our capacities and limits. Often, these boundaries look like setting limits at work to prevent burnout.

One way we are trying to do this is by exploring and developing a pilot “80% Policy” that allows staff to work anywhere from 80%-100% of their hours per week while still receiving full pay.

The boundary of not working at 100% capacity 100% of the time is meant to create a flexible, understanding and accommodating workplace that can adapt to varying staff capacities.

JusticeTrans decided to explore an 80% policy after our colleagues at Common Weal Community Arts in Saskatchewan told us about their own 80% policy.

Flexible boundaries also look like stepping away from work that is harming us, and taking on more work when we have the capacity.

Beyond pulling tarot, our organization also has other practices that make space for our personal, emotional and spiritual needs to be supported in our work.

We provide the option to have conversations about how intense research activities affect us, and host a Support Space to discuss how we feel or to just decompress and relax together.

We are a small and accommodating team and, when someone needs to step back from their duties for any reason, we are able to quickly adapt and adjust.



What would happen if we allowed people with disability and neurodiverse people (and indeed, all people) to bring a fuller version of themselves to work, to mix the “personal” with the “professional?”

As trans people, and as labourers in the non-profit industrial complex, we are often in a state of reaction and exhaustion.

Project-based grant cycles and the lack of core funding for 2SLGBTQ+ non-profit organizations means constantly writing grants and developing project proposals to secure our own jobs.

It’s no secret that non-profit organizations can exploit their workers’ passion, and breed poor mental health and burnout.

In a workplace where 100% of the core team identifies as trans and neurodiverse, it is critical we counter these patterns through conversations and, more importantly, workplace practices.

Before writing this article, we pulled the Temperance tarot card. Temperance is about alchemy—the practice of turning lead into gold. It can be more broadly understood as a practice of turning something flawed into something precious. Temperance is not just about moderation, self-control or the lack of extremes.

Author and tarot expert, Rachel Pollock, tells us that “the word ‘temperance’ derives from the Latin

‘temperare’ which means ‘to mix’ or ‘to combine properly,’ and if we look at the card we can see the figure pouring liquid from one cup into another, mixing them. The person who has released [their] inner self is characterized not only by moderation but an ability to combine the different sides of life.”

We are often told to separate our personal life from our work life, to “leave life at the door,” so we can be as productive and focused as possible while we labour.

But for people with a disability and neurodiverse people, whose needs are often considered “personal” and an inconvenience in the workplace, this might not be possible. It could

also perpetuate this unnatural separation that has not served us well.

As trans and neurodiverse people, we are used to being told there is something wrong with us. As an organization of trans and neurodiverse workers, we do the labour of reminding each other that we are precious.

Activist and tarot illustrator, Cristy C. Road says, “Temperance loves herself, her broken bones, her healed parts, and her humanity... Temperance asks you to forgive yourself with every break, but to try with every new morning.”

As workers doing labour in community, we will inevitably be told that we can be doing better. As workers

with a disability, we will inevitably reach our limits and need to step back and rest.

As a workplace, we look out for each other, remind each other to eat, drink water and rest, give each other permission to take care of ourselves and each other, and work to always do better for our communities. We create a small space for visioning a more just world for trans people and people with disabilities, a world where we can feel our preciousness, a world that we actually want to live in.

CAT HAINS AND TAI JACOB ARE JUSTICETRANS’ PROJECT AND RESEARCH OFFICER AND HEAD OF RESEARCH AND PROJECT MANAGER, RESPECTIVELY. [JUSTICETRANS.ORG/EN](https://justicetrans.org/en) 

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dabc's solidarity statement

DABC's Equity and Inclusion Committee was created in November 2020. One of the committee's first actions was to follow up on the commitments we made in our June 2020 blog post responding to anti-black racism following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

We recognized that this incident was one of many that highlight systemic oppression within our society, particularly following the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2019, and the identification of 215 unmarked graves of children found at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation in June 2021.

Our solidarity with marginalized groups must extend beyond a blog post about a recent event. It should be integrated into our wider mission and values as an organization.

To do so, we must ensure that the underpinning values of our organization have an intersectional lens that focuses on confronting and dismantling the structures of oppression and marginalization which affect the disability community.

The solidarity statement that follows reflects this.

Disability Alliance BC's mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence, and as equal and full participants in the community.

We recognize that people with disabilities will face barriers to accessing services, inclusive participation and justice because of their specific disability or health condition, including those who have disabilities deemed "invisible" by the public.

We also recognize that people with disabilities may face additional barriers due to intersecting forms of oppression and marginalization, including: colonialism, systemic racism, transphobia, gender inequality, heterosexism, and social inequality. All of these forms of oppression and marginalization create added barriers to equal and full participation in the community.

We believe that advocating for disability rights must include recognizing and celebrating the intersectional identities amongst people with disabilities, and which actively calls for decolonization, racial justice, 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, gender equity and social equity.

We also find it incredibly important to acknowledge and express gratitude for the historical and ongoing labour of the disabled queer community (in particular, queer femmes), women of colour and non-binary folks, whose work has paved the way for Disability Justice in our communities.

This labour has long supported our mission as an organization, but has often been undervalued, unacknowledged and appropriated by us and the rest of the disability community. This labour has not been given the proper recognition it

should, and therefore we will commit to making space for, and giving due credit to, those in marginalized groups who actively advocate for justice which has also directly or indirectly advanced disability rights.

Our previous actions as an organization have not always been equitable and inclusive. The ways in which we have prioritized issues within the disability community and have interacted with clients with diverse backgrounds have at times created significant harm.

In February 2020, a DABC representative spoke to the media about the protests carried out by Wet'suwet'en land defenders, noting that the protests were making it difficult for some clients to access the DABC office and other medical appointments. This statement failed to uphold the values of intersectionality and brushed over the colonial violence, displacement and oppression that many Indigenous communities face. It was a mistake we are deeply sorry for and will not repeat.

In prioritizing some issues faced by the disability community over others, not only do we undermine real issues faced by other marginalized communities, but we also fail to reflect the needs of people with disabilities facing intersecting barriers. Disability issues should not be treated as separate from issues faced by other marginalized communities as they are inherently intertwined.

It is important to us that the role we play within the disability community and the programs and projects we deliver are not complacent in perpetuating systems of discrimination and oppression. In order for us to uphold the dignity and respect

of Indigenous people, Black people, people of colour (IBPOC), 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and other marginalized groups in the disability community, we must be actively working towards dismantling systems of discrimination and injustice.

We respect and serve all individuals with disabilities regardless of their race, citizenship, social status, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodivergence, employment within stigmatized economies such as sex work, and lived experiences with drugs and addiction. However, our services and programs remain targeted in assisting people with disabilities who need it the most: those with low or no income.

We recognize the ways in which social and health inequities disproportionately affect IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and other marginalized groups in the disability community, and it is integral to us that our organization goes beyond assisting these clients, but to advocate towards wider systemic change that ensures people with disabilities live a dignified life, out of poverty.

We strive to do better, and to do so, we must first listen, learn and then make change. To that end, we have commissioned an external agency to conduct an audit of our organization to identify ways in which we can become more equitable and inclusive. From there, we are developing action points to proactively work towards this goal.

In the meantime, our organization has identified an initial list of actions we will work towards to improve the experiences of IBPOC,



It is important to us that the role we play within the disability community and the programs and projects we deliver are not complacent in perpetuating systems of discrimination and oppression.

2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized individuals with disabilities:

- We will examine biases in our own hiring practices. While DABC has promoted the hiring of people with disabilities since the inception of our organization, we acknowledge that we must do better at hiring people with disabilities from diverse backgrounds. This is not only to ensure that our staff reflect the diversity of individuals that we serve, but also to commit ourselves to approaching hiring as a way of undoing historical employment discrimination faced by IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized individuals in our province.
- We will make space for the voices of IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized individuals with disabilities in our internal and external engagement processes. We will commit to understanding more keenly the issues uniquely affecting these marginalized groups so that we can better tailor our services and programs, as well as our systemic advocacy. We will actively seek out their consultation, participation and representation.
- We will work towards incorporating decolonizing language in all of our communications, as well as incorporating Reconciliation Actions suggested by First Nations in BC.
- We will foster a workplace environment which removes implied assumptions about a person's gender and sexual orientation.
- We will call upon the organizations we partner with, as well as the facilitators and organizers of events and meetings in the disability community, to ensure that their work is inclusive of IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized groups' participation and representation.

This above list of actions is not exhaustive; it will certainly be expanded upon following reflection on our equity audit, and further and continuous collaboration and feedback from members of the IBPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, as well as individuals facing gender and social inequality.

We commit to standing in solidarity with IBPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and other marginalized individuals in the disability community with more than just words, but with action. **T**



Educating Doctors about the RDSP

I by Dr. Gary Bloch

Years of working with people who experience disability, most of whom live in poverty and without secure housing, have convinced me that I must address their social situations directly to improve their health.

A 48-year-old with multiple sclerosis, a 24-year-old with leukemia, an 18-year-old with Down's Syndrome, a 35-year-old with recurrent bouts of severe depression.

These are all patients of mine, each one with a unique story, each one working hard to improve their health and standard of living with their disability.

And each one has a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

I am a family physician, not a financial advisor. My training prepared me to deal with MI, RA, MDD and CRF, not EI, CPP, DTC or RDSP.

But years of working with people who experience disability, most of whom live in poverty and without secure housing, have convinced me that I must address their social situations directly to improve their health.

In my family health team, conversations about "treating poverty" through accessing income supports have expanded to include a Social Determinants of Health Committee and income security specialists.

At the foundation of my work addressing poverty, however, lies a basic intervention—to connect my patients with the income support systems that will improve their income security, and prevent them from falling into deeper poverty.

The disability income security system in Canada is large and complex, but there are certain key benefits that require a physician's input to access. These include provincial social assistance disability support programs, Canada Pension Plan-Disability and the Disability Tax Credit (DTC).

We see applications for these programs on a regular basis. What physicians often aren't aware of, however, are the programs people with confirmed disability qualify for that can have a major impact on income and life security. One of the most important, and under-accessed, of these programs is the RDSP.

Very low-income patients can access large grants to build their savings. People able to contribute their own funds can access up to a 300% match in government funds.

Like an RRSP, but for people with disabilities, this program allows individuals living with disabilities within certain age limits to save money for the future and to access significant government subsidies. Any individual who qualifies for the DTC can open a RDSP.

While some outreach has been done by government and disability advocacy organizations, many people living with disabilities have no idea RDSPs exist.

This is where front-line health providers can play a huge role in guiding their patients to this program. First, assist with the application for the DTC. Once qualified, advise patients to open a RDSP.

Physicians often find ourselves caught up in the day-to-day struggles of our patients who live with disabilities. But we can also enable our patients to look to and plan for their futures. Approaching middle and older age with a disability, with no financial security, will decrease health and well-being. Disability income support programs, and especially forward-looking, subsidized savings programs like the RDSP, offer stress relief, security and ultimately increased hope for a comfortable future.

Please see the clinic's initiatives on social determinants of health and health equity on this page: <https://unityhealth.to/social-determinants-of-health/>.

GARY BLOCH IS A FAMILY PHYSICIAN WITH ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL AND INNER CITY HEALTH ASSOCIATES AND AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO. HIS CLINICAL, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY INTERESTS FOCUS ON THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL RISKS TO HEALTH. HE IS AN AMS PHOENIX FELLOW AND A SENIOR FELLOW WITH THE WELLESLEY INSTITUTE. T

Other Benefits of The Disability Tax Credit (DTC)

Contact DABC's Access RDSP Staff at Local: 604-872-1278, Toll-free: 1-800-663-1278 or rdsp@disabilityalliancebc.org.

You may know that being approved for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) can enable you to open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP). But did you know about the other benefits and credits it can help you access?

If you're employed

The DTC will allow you to claim:

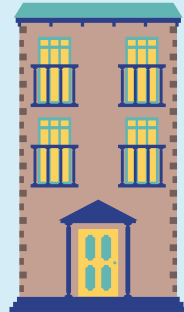
- Up to **\$713** through the supplement to Canada Workers Benefit (CWB)



If you own a home

You may be eligible for:

- Home Buyer's Amount of up to **\$5,000!** People with DTC do not have to be first-time home buyers
- The Home Accessibility Tax Credit, which covers certain expenses concerning accessibility-related renovations



If you have children

The DTC can help you claim:

- The Disability Amount for Children
- The Child Disability Benefit amount of **\$2,886**
- Increased child care deductions
- Age limit extension to Children's Fitness and Art amount (no longer available after 2016, but may be claimed for the previous year)



If you have medical or caregiver expenses

The DTC can allow you to claim:

- Certain medical expenses (can also claim a Disability Supports Deduction) **e.g. Attendant Care Services**
- Caregiver Credit: People with DTC do not have to provide another supporting document from medical practitioners

If you have a trust

The DTC might help you save on the taxes you pay on your earnings through:

- Eligibility for qualified disability trust status
- Preferred beneficiary election option

If you're a full-time student

The DTC can allow you to claim:

- Certain education-related benefits, such as the **\$500** Scholarship Exemption



www.rdsp.com

Access RDSP
Change your tomorrow today



Envisioning the Journey of Disability Justice

by Tuyet Anh (Judith) Nguyen, DVAT

The art therapist in me asks the question, “What does Disability Justice look like?”

The first vision that reflected my reality and Disability Justice values as a person of South East Asian diaspora with neurodivergence was Nais Tây Du Ký, the Vietnamese-dubbed version of the classic Chinese novel, Journey to the West.

Written by Wu Cheng'en, Journey to the West is an epic about a legendary monk and his supernatural

disciples — a trickster monkey king, a pig, a sand river creature and a dragon-horse. They are on a pilgrimage to India to retrieve copies of the Buddhist sutras or scriptures. Along the way, every conflict, request for aid and interesting encounter is an opportunity to learn about and embody these teachings with the help of enlightened creatures.

As a genderfluid person, I feel an immediate kinship with certain spiritual guides, beloved mythological

legends and role models for community care. Quán Âm is a bodhisattva — a Buddhist term for someone who attains enlightenment, but chooses to stay in the earthly realm to support others on their paths to enlightenment.

This value is mirrored in Disability Justice, where no one is dispensable and no one is left behind. Our liberation is interdependent and tied together.

Tôn Ngộ Không is another guide, a shapeshifter and someone who undergoes complex growth. While always down for challenging unjust authorities, this rebel with a heart of gold gradually learns to appreciate his own quirks with grace and handle difficult ethical situations with different tools.

Disability Justice is multi-issue politics that respects various intersectional ways of being and doing.

The social corruption in the Journey to the West is resolved by a ragtag team of individuals which, to me, means this is possible for us in our world. Our current societies need to reform or abolish their ableist, racist, transphobic, classist infrastructures and oppressive institutions to represent and accommodate everyone with equity and dignity.

As I grow and move through this world, my vision of justice expands with that of disability advocates, artist-activists and my beloved friends who share these visions and values. Sharing time and space with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (she/her and they/them) and Mia Mingus (she/her) has deepened my understanding, dreaming, and building of Disability Justice into our world.

“Disability Justice is multi-issue politics that respects various intersectional ways of being and doing.”





As I grow and move through this world, my vision of justice expands with that of disability advocates, artist-activists and my beloved friends who share these visions and values.

I choose to critically engage with institutions of health care, housing and workforce conditions alongside my community. As an emergency contact for fellow neurodivergent QTPOC and a committee member of the Occupational Safety and Health Association in support work, I practice Disability Justice in my relations and work in four holistic ways:

Psychologically: An essential part of my daily care routine is my journal. It reminds me to prioritize my body care, schedule health-related appointments, reflect on my needs, doodle my internal world into the external and meditate on my experiences of agency, people, changes and the world. Writing and drawing in my journal help me reclaim my authentic narrative.

Creatively: One of the greatest ways to engage in heart work and expand our tool kits is engaging with the media of first-person accounts as much as peer-reviewed literature. The full participation of people affected by abled supremacy need to be present. Black and Indigenous folks of Colour with disabilities are Disability Justice experts in their own right by their lived experiences.

Occupationally: There are many pathways here. Pay QTBIPOC for their art and labour. Institutions need to pay reparations and give back the land. Let's continue to restructure, reorient and bargain

in our unions for living wages and health benefits. Where discriminatory situations happen, legal and transformative justice alternatives should be used.

Spiritually: The lands on which I live and work are the Ancestral, Traditional, unceded Coast Salish territories of the Sḵwxwú7mesh, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Səlílŵətaʔ/Selil-witulh, and Stó:lō Nations. I recall legacies of resistance for grounding, community care and creative coping.

Channeling the values in The Journey to the West and Disability Justice, I can continue to live as I am, knowing that my capacity and boundaries are vital, true and affirming.

Like the quest for spiritual enlightenment, Disability Justice is essentially an everyday process and the people we meet along the way are just as impactful and meaningful as the destination.

In love and solidarity, we march on this path together, us folks with disabilities leading and guiding the pace.

JUDITH TUYẾT ANH NGUYỄN (THEY/ THEM) WORKS AS AN ART THERAPIST AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT WORKER ON THE ANCESTRAL, TRADITIONAL, UNCEDED COAST SALISH TERRITORIES OF THE Sḵwxwú7mesh, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Səlílŵətaʔ/SELILWITULH, AND STÓ:LŌ NATIONS.

Resources

The following projects approach accessibility as interconnection and justice, as well as encouraging the revolution of art-making and rest:

Disability Visibility Project, created by Alice Wong, she/her

Disability & Intersectionality Summit, founded by Sandy Ho, she/her

Sins Invalid, directed by Patty Berne, she/her and they/them

Cultural Humility in Art Therapy: Applications for Practice, Research, Social Justice, Self-Care, and Pedagogy by Louvenia Jackson, she/her (2020)

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Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. (2021). About. Brown Star Girl. <https://brownstargirl.org/about/>

Wong, Alice. (2021). About. Disability Visibility Project. <https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/about/> 



Planned Giving

You've always been there for others. It's part of who you are. Now, you can continue to give beyond your lifetime.

Planned Giving is the opportunity to think ahead about causes or organizations that you may want to financially support beyond your lifetime.

By planning ahead, you can research charities or have someone research charities for you that fit your values.

Why Consider a Planned Gift?

There are many benefits to Planned Giving. By writing down your wishes, you will have increased peace of mind and control over your finances.

You can also provide a significant future donation without reducing your income today.

A gift in your Will to DABC will help us to be here in the future for those who need us.

Tax Savings

You can realize significant tax savings with Planned Giving. For example, stocks, bonds and mutual funds

that you may have in a Trust can be transferred in your Will to a charity and a tax receipt will be issued.

We're Here to Help

Our donors are important to us and we'll work with you to be recognized in the way that you'd prefer.

If you would like more information about Planned Giving, please contact Justina at DABC at jloh@disabilityalliancebc.org or 604-875-0188. She will send you DABC's Planned Giving information to review with your financial planner or lawyer, family and friends.

Planned Giving Resources

- Brochure (<https://tinyurl.com/yxbmn3b2>)
- Information Sheet (<https://tinyurl.com/yxnhgs5f>)

Learn More About Us

- <https://www.disabilityalliancebc.org>

Glossary

Words are important. Remember “handicapped”? We can dismiss or dignify each other with the language we use. There are some terms in this edition that may be new to you and others that are important for broader discussions on social justice. We could not hope to publish a comprehensive glossary, but here are some key terms.

Ableism: Discrimination against people with mental and/or physical disabilities. Ableism is often deeply embedded in systemic discrimination that limits the participation, recognition and support available to people with a disability.

Ally: A person who supports people who are systemically marginalized, such as those who are transgender or living with a disability. An ally challenges oppressive actions of others, and willingly explores their own biases.

Cisgender: Individuals who identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Colonialism: Control by individuals or groups over the territory/behaviour of other individuals or groups.

Gender: Refers to socially and culturally constructed concepts of behaviours, activities, and norms that are used to create concepts such as masculinity and femininity.

Gender Fluid: A gender identity that is not fixed and may move among genders.

Heteronormative: When heterosexuals are held up as normal and/or superior and others are considered less than.

Heteropatriarchy: A hierarchical society or culture dominated by heterosexual males whose characteristic bias is unfavorable to gay people and females in general.

IBPOC: An acronym used to refer to Indigenous, Black and People of Colour. **QTBIPOC:** is used to refer to Queer and Trans Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Implicit Bias: A bias that results from the tendency to process information based on unconscious associations and feelings, even when these are contrary to one's conscious or declared beliefs.

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

LGBTQ2S: An acronym used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Two-Spirit (2S) people. Additional letters, or a + sign, are sometimes added. Making fun of the length of this acronym can have a trivializing effect on the group that longer acronyms seek to include.

Neurodiversity: This term embraces the differences in brain function and behavioral traits of autism, for example, as a natural variation in a diverse population.

Privilege: This refers to the advantages that are held by and extended to particular people, typically those from dominant or majority groups.

Queer: An umbrella term to refer to all 2SLGBTQIA+ people. It is a word that once was a derogatory term,

but has been reclaimed by the community.

Sanism: An irrational prejudice against people with mental illness. Sanism is largely invisible and socially acceptable.

Systemic Discrimination: A pattern of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage for groups identified under the Human Rights Code.

Transgender: Umbrella term for a person whose gender identity and/or expression is different to that which was assigned them at birth or people who do not conform to gender stereotypes.


Transphobia: An aversion or hostility to, or fear of, transgender people.

Two-Spirit/2 Spirit/2S: An Indigenous term to describe sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. Traditionally, Two-Spirit people have been a distinct gender status.

References

Creating Accessible Neighbourhoods, Guide to Gender and Sexuality Terms www.canbc.org/queer/terminology/

Qmunity, Queer Glossary: A to Q Terminology qmunity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Queer-Glossary_2019_02.pdf

Dalhousie University, Social Justice Terms www.dal.ca/dept/hres/education-campaigns/educational-resources/definitions.html 

Looking “Too Good” to Have a Disability

by Michael David Todaro

In the year that I was applying for my Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation, I have to admit I did a lot of soul-searching.

I knew I wouldn't be taken seriously. Apparently, I looked great, as people never stopped telling me.

“You don't know how good you have it,” said one friend, and others told me it was “all in my head.”

The reality was I was lethargic, could barely walk or talk most days and, as a rule, I didn't sleep. My pain levels were unbelievably high day and night. I was 20 pounds underweight, anxious, depressed and suffering from post-traumatic stress. The circles under my eyes were permanent and made me look like an unimpressed raccoon. I was dizzy all day long.

On the day of my appointment with the doctor who would evaluate me for PWD, I got dressed and tried to look my best. I had been taught that if you wanted to be taken seriously, you have to dress well, so I was determined to make the best impression I could.

Are you laughing yet?

Because my pain levels were so high that day, it took me three hours to get ready. The morning routine for

a person living with chronic health issues can be debilitating. Taking a shower, washing hair, getting dressed— all of these things take time and energy and, when you have neither and are in chronic pain, it makes for a rough day.

On this day, I was proud of myself because, despite wave after wave of pain, I was able to get it together and even looked pretty good to boot! In retrospect, I guess I looked too good. “Dressing for success” clearly doesn't work if, as a result, the doctor thinks you are faking your disability.

When I arrived at the doctor's office, instead of his usual friendly self, he scowled at me from behind his desk. I waited, watching this change in his demeanour.

After staring at me a few minutes, he said in a rage, “How dare you come into my office looking that good and expect me to help you with your disability application!”

In spite of being a well-educated doctor who had treated me for 14 months, he thought I looked too good to have a disability. To be honest, I had not been interested before in displaying my disability. I had kept it hidden. So he was surprised when I stopped hiding it.

His behaviour was pretty shocking. But it's something that people with less visible disabilities face every day.



In spite of being a well educated doctor who had treated me for 14 months, he thought I looked too good to have a disability.

It's true that people can sometimes be cruel, but, if we are kept ignorant and unaware of the needs and experiences of others, how can we be expected to know what to do? As a group, people with disabilities will remain vulnerable where this kind of ignorance prevails.

I don't believe the onus of responsibility for creating space for all people with disabilities lies with the uninformed public. It lies with the governing bodies and services we use. These are the organizations which have yet to champion legislation that supports and protects people with various types of disabilities.

Our signage on BC buses, for example, often reads like a suggestion: “Please remember who these seats are for.” I think this is misguided and, in my experience, not that effective because not every person or culture views disability with compassion. By comparison, a sign in the US reads, “Disabled use only, \$300 fine.” A clear message with a clear consequence.



It is time for all of us to do better for people living with invisible disabilities. London, England has found one way to do it. If you need to sit down on public transit, you can order a button that identifies you as someone who needs a seat.

People are not asked to justify their disability to receive a button. An education campaign told the public they were expected to offer a seat to someone who wore the button. TransLink could easily spearhead a similar program here in BC.

This takes the burden off the person with a disability to explain, each time, why they need a seat! Not everyone is always up for or well enough to fight that tiring battle.

I think this is an excellent approach to dealing with invisible disabilities while traveling because it legitimizes a person's needs in the minds of those who might find fault with them. This also helps to remove anger from the equation, and focuses on a sustainable solution for people who do not look like they have a disability.


For passengers with a disability who are often not believed or taken seriously, a small change in the way we do things in BC could ensure the safety of people with visible and invisible disabilities.

It is time for all of us to do better for people living with invisible disabilities. London, England has found one way to do it.

References

CDC: Lupus Symptoms <https://www.cdc.gov/lupus/basics/symptoms.htm>

Please Offer Me a Seat at the Transport for London government website: <https://tfl.gov.uk/transport-accessibility/please-offer-me-a-seat>

MICHAEL TODARO IS AN EDITOR, WRITER AND INSTRUCTOR LIVING IN THE VANCOUVER AREA. 

Free Self-help Financial Tools

Trove is a bilingual online portal providing free financial tools, worksheets and educational resources to help financially vulnerable Canadians take control of their finances.

The site provides tools, tips and worksheets to help individuals to budget and save; learn about tax filing and government benefits; and, tackle debt.

Trove also provides individuals with access to:

- **My Money in Canada** is a website offering simple, easy-to-use, learning modules on a range of topics.
- **The Financial Relief Navigator** is a search tool that enables users to search for emergency benefits and financial relief.
- **The RDSP Calculator for Canadians** will help you explore the benefits of opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan.

Benefits Wayfinder

- Also visit the new, comprehensive **Benefits Wayfinder**, your guide to both provincial and federal government benefits.

yourtrove.org
prospercanada.org
benefitswayfinder.org/





The Right Fit is a multi-partner service designed to address the crisis in wheelchair accessible housing by matching affordable, accessible homes and independent living supports with people who need them in the Vancouver region of British Columbia.

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) is the Right Fit's sponsoring organization and oversees the program. The Individualized Funding Resource Centre (IFRC) is responsible for client management.

If you are a wheelchair user or an organization representing wheelchair users and would like more information about vacant accessible units, please contact:

**Isabelle Groc
Right Fit Coordinator
rightfit@disabilityalliancebc.org**

If you are a housing provider and have an accessible vacant unit or if you would like to learn more about our Accessibility Checklist, contact:

**Dalton Finlay
Project Manager / Navigator
Individualized Funding Resource Centre Society
RightFit@IFRCSociety.org
604-777-7576**

Disability Justice Network of Ontario

Want to know what Disability Justice looks like in other places in Canada? Visit the Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO).

Two current grassroots programs of this committed community network are:

- Roots to Justice
- Abolish Long-term Care

Roots to Justice

Connecting community in the pursuit of food justice. We prioritize sustainable access to locally-grown food for Black and Indigenous, racialized, and disabled communities.

Roots to Justice is based upon:

- Mutual aid: coordinating a centralized delivery system connecting community members with free food and supplies delivered to their door steps at no cost and a no-questions-asked basis.
- Building capacity: delivering workshops and programming aimed at skill-sharing and empowering community members to grow and cultivate their own food.
- Localized relationships: distributing locally grown food throughout the community, prioritizing small-scale farms and other food providers.

Abolish Long Term Care

We believe that institutionalization is a result of the same systems of incarceration that removes, isolates and confines community members in psychiatric institutions, emergency shelters, and prisons.

We believe in an end to the warehousing, caging and incarcerating of people instead of providing care and justice.

All levels of government must work together to deinstitutionalize, and to invest in alternative solutions to long-term care. Long-term care must be abolished.

Mission

The Disability Justice Network of Ontario aims to build a just and accessible Ontario, wherein people with disabilities:

- Have personal and political agency
- Can thrive and foster community
- Build the power, capacity, and skills needed to hold people, communities, and institutions responsible for the spaces they create

info@djno.ca
<https://www.djno.ca/>



From Neil Squire Society's weekly newsletter on assistive technology.

4 tech innovations that support people with disabilities working from home.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/02/tech-innovations-people-with-disabilities-covid/>

Australia is behind on accessibility at music festivals and gigs. Fans with a disability are missing out.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-02-13/live-music-festivals-should-be-accessible/100776984>

New app seeks to identify, solve accessibility barriers at public sites in Laval, Quebec.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/laval-accessibility-app-1.6348086>

Humans and AI. Meet Kürşat : Episode 10.

<https://newtech.best/humans-and-ai-meet-kurat-episode-10.html>

NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER,
 FEBRUARY 13, 2022 EDITION, [PAPER.LI/NEILSQUIRESOC/1448776875](https://paper.li/NEILSQUIRESOC/1448776875). 



Tax Assistance & Information For People with Disabilities



Contact Tax AID DABC for Free Income Tax Assistance

SPECIALIZING IN MULTIPLE YEARS OF RETURNS

Program Manager | Disability Alliance BC

taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org

<https://taxaiddabc.org>

Appointments During COVID-19

You can book your remote appointment with DABC online at

<http://disabilityalliancebc.org/direct-service/file-income-taxes/tax-appointment/>.

We also offer our services by email and mail. Please send your tax slips and photo ID to taxaid@disabilityalliancebc.org. We will contact you for follow-up.

Tax AID DABC helps people with disabilities in BC file their income taxes. Please see details on the opposite page for our eligibility criteria.



vancouver
foundation

CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

- METRO VANCOUVER & FRASER VALLEY | VANCOUVER | DABC | 236-477-1717 | Toll Free 1-877-940-7797
- INTERIOR | KELOWNA | Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society | 250-763-4905 ext. 215



Yes, our income tax services are FREE.

Am I eligible for Tax AID DABC services?

We provide free tax-filing support to people receiving disability supports including: Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Persons with Persistent and Multiple Barriers to Employment (PPMB), Canada Pension Plan (CPP-D) Disability, WCB or the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). We also assist individuals with income below \$35,000 and those with family incomes below \$42,000.

What if I Haven't Filed Taxes for Years?

We help prepare simple income tax returns for the most recent tax year, as well as for previous years. One of our specialties is to help people who have multiple years of taxes to file.

What if I Don't Have All My Tax Documents (T5007, T4s)?

Don't worry! We'll contact government agencies to help you find them.

My Income is Low. Why Should I File Taxes?

There are many advantages to filing your income taxes! Our clients usually receive \$400 to \$600 in income tax credits for each year they file. People eligible for an income tax refund, and those with dependent children, often receive much more.

If you haven't filed your taxes for multiple years, your refunds may grow dramatically.

Other benefits you may be eligible for include:

- GST Credits
- BC Sales Tax and Climate Action Tax Credits
- Canada Workers Benefit
- Child Tax Benefits
- Registered Disability Savings Plan Grants and Bonds

Income tax filing can also help you qualify for MSP Premium Assistance coverage, subsidized housing, and other income-tested benefits.

What Should I do Next?

Contact Disability Alliance BC or one of our Regional Partners. We'll set up an appointment to meet with you. Call us today! We're here to help.

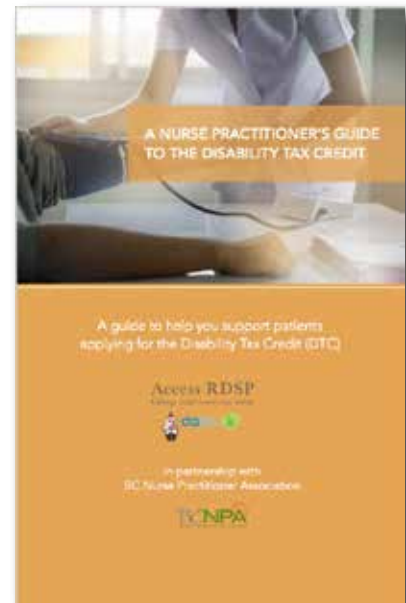
CONTACT THE TAX AID DABC REGIONAL PARTNER NEAREST YOU

- VANCOUVER ISLAND | VICTORIA | Together Against Poverty Society | 250-361-3521
- NORTHERN | PRINCE GEORGE | Active Support Against Poverty Society | Toll-Free 1-877-563-6112

DTC RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Access RDSP has created two booklets to help health professionals support clients with Disability Tax Credit applications:

- **A Nurse Practitioner's Guide to the Disability Tax Credit**
- **A Guide to the Disability Tax Credit for Occupational Therapists**



The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) offers significant benefits for people with disabilities who qualify.

With these guides, we explain the different sections of the form and offer suggestions for supporting patients' applications.

For more information, please contact the Access RDSP Out-reach Coordinator at DABC at 604-872-1278 or rdsp@disability-alliancebc.org.

ACCESS RDSP IS A PARTNERSHIP OF BC ABORIGINAL NETWORK ON DISABILITY SOCIETY, DISABILITY ALLIANCE BC AND PLAN INSTITUTE, MADE POSSIBLE WITH GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE VANCOUVER FOUNDATION.

THANK YOU TO THE BC NURSE PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR COLLABORATION ON THIS RESOURCE.



Dear Canadians: Please Care about Families like Mine

by Brenda Lenahan

I am part of an invisible demographic. Yet, my son and I can't leave the house without feeling noticed everywhere we go.

My seven-year-old son is defined in the medical world as a child with medical complexity. He is non-verbal, yet his smile will speak loudly to you. He is charming and silly, sensitive and loving. My son feels like my personal disruptor as well as my saviour from a life less lived.

He has introduced me to a world of love and beauty, as well as one of discrimination and injustice. He is disabled. Disabled by a world that is not designed for him and at times feels like it is actively trying to oppress and dismiss him.

My seven-year-old son is defined in the medical world as a child with medical complexity. He is non-verbal, yet his smile will speak loudly to you.



Let me share a bit of this with you.

Despite the privilege I inherently have, I find myself struggling to provide for our basic needs, and I am not alone. Thousands of families like mine across this country struggle every single day.

Disability poverty starts at birth for many kids in our country. Families like mine live with a painful juxtaposition. We strive to save and plan for our children's lives well beyond the age of 19, as they will always be fully dependent and need 24/7 assistance for their daily needs. In the same moment, we brace ourselves with the knowledge that they may not live to their next birthday. We routinely grieve alongside other parents and friends who have lost their children at very young ages.

Our kids certainly have a way of keeping it real and raw.

We live in a country and a society that is paying a lot of lip service these days to inclusion, diversity and disability equity. Yet, the financial burdens we bear are intense.

Families like mine don't have access to income support that recognizes the 24/7 demands of our kids' care and the barriers to employment that this creates.

The federal Child Disability Benefit is only around \$240 per month and limited to families with the lowest incomes in Canada. Although this benefit was slated in 2019 to be doubled, we are still waiting.

The federal Liberals have put forward a plan to bring \$10 a day child care to all Canadians. Why not

plant disabled children's needs at the forefront of policy discussions to ensure that this plan will truly be inclusive and equitable?

Let's also hope the promised Canada Disability Benefit for working age Canadians with disabilities becomes a reality.

As a solo mom, I worry deeply about the future for my son and so have stepped up to put my energy into the collective voice for change. I was honoured to join the Leadership Team of Disability Without Poverty.

This movement needs all Canadians to care. Ask your local MP what concrete actions and policies they will put forward specific to children with disabilities.

We are on the doorstep of an extraordinary opportunity.

Building back with human rights as our guide, is the only chance we have to ensure that social equity is in our future.

For more information on this movement and ways to support it, see: <https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca>. To find contact information for your MLA, see <https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members/>.

BRENDA LENAHA AND HER SON LIVE ON THE WEST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND. SHE IS THE FOUNDER OF BC COMPLEX KIDS AND ADVOCATES FOR ACCESS TO EQUITABLE SUPPORTS FOR KIDS WITH MEDICAL COMPLEXITY. T

Connect with DABC

ABOUT US

Our mission is to support people, with all disabilities, to live with dignity, independence and as equal and full participants in the community. We champion issues impacting the lives of people with disabilities through our direct services, community partnerships, advocacy, research and publications.

SERVICES & PROGRAMS

Our **Advocacy Access Program** provides one-on-one assistance with provincial and federal (Canada Pension Plan Disability) income supports and other benefits. The **Disability Law Clinic** provides free legal advice to people with disabilities about human rights and discrimination. We also offer advice to people having problems with their disability benefits. **Tax AID DABC** helps people with disabilities living on low incomes file their income

taxes year-round. **Access RDSP**

helps people with the Disability Tax Credit and with opening a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP).

Our programs and projects respond to community need and increase people's ability to participate and contribute.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS

We stay connected with a large network of community organizations across BC and regularly provide them with updates about issues of importance to the disability community.

FREE PUBLICATIONS

We publish a range of capacity-building, self-help guides and advocate resources, in reader-friendly language. Resources are provided free of charge, either by mail or from our website.

BECOME A DABC MEMBER

Numbers matter. The more members we have, the stronger our voice in the community.

Please become a Disability Alliance BC (DABC) member today. You can be a voting member or a non-voting member, and we welcome both individuals and groups.

I accept your invitation to join the DABC and enclose my membership fee of \$15 (individuals) and \$25 (groups).

I am also including a tax-deductible donation of \$_____.
(Donations over \$10 are tax deductible).

You can also become a member or donate online at:
<http://www.disabilityalliancebc.org/about-dabc/become-a-member>.

**Please return your payment/donation with this form to:
DABC, 1450- 605 Robson Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Please check the applicable boxes:

- ☐ New membership or ☐ Renewal
☐ Voting Member or ☐ Non-voting Member

Voting members are people with disabilities and self-help groups where at least 50% of members have a disability.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City/Prov _____ Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

SUPPORT DABC!

The rent for our new office space has increased by 100%.

If you support DABC's work, please consider a one-time contribution or become a monthly donor. Our monthly donors help us to create a funding base we can count on.

Please visit our Support page at <https://disabilityalliancebc.org/support-us> for ways you can give.

Thank you for helping us continue our work on behalf of people with disabilities.

Icons designed by EpicCoders from Flaticon

Good Reading About Disability Justice

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice (2018), by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. In their new, long-awaited collection of essays, Lambda Literary Award-winning writer and long-time Disability Justice activist and performance artist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha explores the politics and realities of Disability Justice. Leah writes passionately and personally about creating spaces by and for queer people of colour living with disability, and “collective access” -- access not as a chore, but as a collective responsibility and pleasure.

Care Work is a mapping of access as radical love, a celebration of the work to find each other and to build power and community. It is also a toolkit for everyone who wants to build radically resilient, sustainable communities of liberation where no one is left behind.

Disability Politics and Theory (2012), by A.J. Withers. An accessible introduction to disability studies which provides a concise survey of disability history. Critiquing the social model of disability that currently dominates the discipline, this book offers an alternative: the radical disability model. This model draws from feminism and critical race theory among others, to emphasize the role of intersecting oppressions in the marginalization of people with disabilities and the importance of addressing disability both independently and in conjunction with other oppressions.

Skin, Tooth, and Bone: The Basis of Movement is Our People, A Disability Justice Primer (2021), by Sins Invalid. This second edition is a Disability Justice primer based in the work of Patty Berne and Sins Invalid. The Disability Justice Primer offers concrete suggestions for moving beyond the socialization of ableism, such as mobilizing against police violence and how to commit to mixed ability organizing. Skin, Tooth, and Bone offers analysis, history and context for the growing Disability Justice Movement.



EDITOR’S PICK: The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible (2013), by Charles Eisenstein. I read this book over the winter and it lives up to its title. A deep look at how our current social values and structures affect all of us, explained with lots of inspiring stories. This “thought-provoking book serves as an empowering antidote to the... overwhelm so many of us are feeling, replacing it with a grounding reminder of what’s true: we are all connected, and our small, personal choices bear unsuspected transformational power.”

Photo: Charles Eisenstein (Sacred Economy) in de HUB in Amsterdam” by webted is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

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Thank
You

SUPPORTING THE DISABILITY JUSTICE MOVEMENT

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped gather and create this special edition, and who champion disability issues through Disability Justice. We look forward to continuing our work together.

Nousha
Bayrami

Harmony
Bongat

Deanna
Gestrin

Cat Hains and
Tai Jacob

Tuyết Anh
(Judith) Nguyễn

Michael David
Todaro

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