

When we reject who we are and speak up through the voice of art, chances are that we are going to be able to reach more people because art is universal. I apologize for moving around. Before we dive into it, I will pass the mic to Soulwing but I want to quickly address my access needs and model that for you. Access needs are part of Disability Justice.

As disabled people we are often so discouraged to go along with ableism and we fail to really express what we need exactly in order to be able to function. Part of my access needs today, I am drinking coffee because my body needs it. And there might be times when my dogs bark and if that happens, in order to become desperate need of reality here, I may be mute myself. Just be superb relax and I want you all to be super relaxed because this is a conversation, this is a safe space, and a place of mutual growth and learning.

We are excited to share what we know with you and we are excited to give you bits and pieces of ourselves and our experience as disabled people. And we are going to be touching on aspects of disabled life's and advocacy, and history that people often don't get close to. There are some communities that are so isolated and so segregated that access, even to the most basic resources is often negated to them. And that happens to be one of those communities, happens to be immigrant communities.

That is the energy of what we are bringing today. Again, my name is Maria Palacios and I am an artist, and activist... A community outreach coordinator for Sins Invalid. Artistically I am known as the Goddess on Wheels - that's my artistic name, which I just love. I always loved women, especially disabled women, but women in general, their power is amazing. I am on wheels and I might as well -- nicknamed myself as that. I will pass the space to Soulwing so she can tell us a little bit about her and we will just take it from there.

THO VINH BANH:

Thank you Maria, this is Soulwing. It is pronounced Soulwing, like sewing machine. I am ethnic -- Chinese from Vietnam. I share a little bit, maybe before I start, my pronouns are she and her. Visually, I have short hair, am an Asian woman with glasses and I have lots of plans. I've got palms, (Name), all around me, and in connection with access needs - they love me and I love them back and so they are always around me.

A little bit about me: I'm a refugee from Vietnam originally and I came when I was about six or seven years old. The expanse of that has shaped uniquely who I am. I am a person with a visual disability to my right eye. I had a lazy eye and Vietnam, and because of the war, there was no medical attention to it - I don't see the big E.

As a refugee coming to this country, I got to really see power dynamics as a person that was on welfare, we had food stamps, and we had section 8 vouchers. We expands that -- reality through the eyes of immigrant parents who didn't speak the language and I think that really shapes who I am and I'm grateful for all those experiences. I would not be the person I am without those experiences. That's a little bit about me and I would like to pass it back to Maria.

When we are not seen, are phases in the pictures that represent the passage of the ADA, or we don't hear our names, we don't see our stories, that is the invisibility that we are talking about. That is how we get divided, segregated, and forgotten - even by our own movement. And it hurts so much. That's the first thing that we need to realize and recognize: is how we ourselves continue to leave each other behind.

And we are doing this to one another as disabled people. As people who serve disabled people. We are leaving others behind and that's part of the reason why Disability Justice was needed. Why it came to the surface and white was born. We realize that we have been busy fighting for ramps and access to buildings, and architectural barriers to be removed, and fighting for human rights and civil rights, but we are forgetting humanity behind those rights.

We are forgetting there's a real blood and flesh person existing behind all the labels that we have created and all the statistics that tell us who was there and who wasn't. Behind all of the laws that we pass and everything that we do, there's real human beings and many of us have been forgotten. And continue to be left behind. Why?

We have to ask ourselves that question: why? We might not have all the answers but at least we have each other to begin asking that question and that's the beginning of finding the answer. Is asking one another: what did we forget? Who did we leave behind?

When this meeting for started, and I asked if there was any Deaf people here. "We not sure if anyone requested that accommodation." But the fact that is being offered is speaking volumes.

That this organization is doing the necessary steps to be inclusive. So going back... I get so passionate and get carried away! Fortunately, I have been told that I am not boring. Even if I derail myself, I will be taking you the fields of necessary...

I want to feel like again this is not me preaching at you. When we talk, when we are away from academia, we get away from the PowerPoint presentations that insult people's ability to recognize what is being presented to them, at least that is how I look at it. My presentation style is from the heart. I tell you what I feel in the moment and I get carried away by the vein of my passion, my heart, my love for people... It's what I do. This is what we do. Right?

So back to the why we are here. We are here speaking about disability justice because even in spaces created for us, we continue to leave each other out – out of the conversation. Even in spaces that are supposed to be cross disability spaces. What do we do to each other? We segregate each other we are like "deaf community. The blind over here." Wheelchair users, even the wheelchair user separate each other. Motorized rollers versus manual rollers (Laughs). Come on! We need to realize and recognize the power of togetherness. When we come together, that is when we begin recognizing that we are leaving others behind.

If we continue to organize in groups of disability identity according to ability or disability or whatever

little groups or whatever reason. Then, we are going to ensure that we leave others behind. Have to think cross disability and we have to think outside of the box of what the disability rights movement gave us. Yes, it gave us a lot! It gave us our damn rights. It gave us the foundation of how we advocate and how we fight for what we deserve as human beings. The disability rights movement gave us a voice. It gave us the ability to say "we are here. We exist as disabled people."

It let the world know that we needed a damn lot to be passed, in order to be visible, in order to be recognized, in order to fit through the damn door. That is how segregated we were! We were left out. I always like to do the metaphor and even in several of my pieces I say "while Rosa Parks was asked to move to the back of the bus," it is so fucked up to begin with. Disabled people were not even allowed to board the damn bus. We didn't even have a ramp leading to the bus stop! Right?

We have to reinvent ourselves to everything that we do every day of our disabled lives! Every day. Every day we have to fight for survival, no matter how we... No matter how we do it. We are constantly fighting. We constantly struggle to be seen, to be heard, to be given the opportunity to be who we are as human beings. You know?

Imagine all of the struggles that disabled people face already – ableism, the denial of having access to resources, invincibility, you name it. I can go on, and on, one of my obsessions is ableism – it is the root of all evil for all disabled people. I will say that again, ableism is at the root of all evil and oppression for all disabled people!

We have to understand ableism. We have to call it for what it is. We have to learn to recognize that, in order to combat this, fight it and get rid of it. If we don't understand ableism, we will internalize oppression and continue to think we are not worthy of equality and we are not worthy, we don't deserve to be saved when a hurricane hits or we deserve to be taken when evacuations take place. That is the reality. Disabled lives are being thrown away every single day because of ableism.

I remember that... Because of ableism, is part of the reason we are here. Because of ableism, disability justice exists. Ableism, the disability rate movement, like I said it gave us so much, but it left so many people out. The disability rights movement is a white man led movement. White men, Ed Roberts, Justin dart.

When we think about disability history, everybody forgets to women. Everybody forgets the people of color. Everybody forgets queer communities. You know? Despite the fact that we were there! We were there fighting for survival. We were there representing and doing our part. When a movement is credited to only a certain group of people, this is what happens. We get forgotten.

Please, don't think that I am ungrateful. That's not what this is about. Sometimes I have heard "if it wasn't for (unknown name) and Justin darts," it is true, we would not be where we are. That is not enough. It is not enough, we have to continue going back and gather the people that we left out. We have to go back and reopen the wounds in order to help everybody heal. Because we cannot do this alone! We need each other. We need...

We need each other. Disability justice was born because we continue being left out by the movement. Disability justice was born because intersectionality was not taking into consideration. Even to this day, I talked to spaces in independent living wing of things. The Disability Rights aspect of things. Even to this day, many of those groups refuse to see and recognize that intersectionality is a necessary and a Britt aspect of our advocacy, in order to continue moving forward. We are not our disability! Our disability is a very important part of our identity, but it's not the only part of our identity. It might be the most significant part of it for many of us, the one that makes says be like in the front lines of everything fighting for survival, because we are disabled.

Please, do not only see my disability. Do see it, please, do see it, because we are not ashamed of it. "Disability" is not a bad word. We want you to see it because that is what disability pride is. Being able to be proud of our disabled bodies, of our disabled lives. Be able to be proud of our survival and contributions.

Somebody once told me "I don't understand disability pride. I am a blind person but I am not necessarily proud to be blind." And I'm like "dude, it's not about that. It's about being proud of the fact that although you are polite, your kicking ass! You're surviving." Let's be proud of our accomplishments and let's be proud of the fact that we are alive in this ablest world that does not want us to be alive. The nondisabled world does not want us to be alive. No matter which way we look at it! Think about it. Think about all of the resources that are deny to us, we have to go through different loops to qualify for a damn wheelchair. Even though without it we will be dragging our asses on the floor.

We have to prove our need. We have to prove we deserve it. We have to prove we have insurance. We have to prove we are citizens. We have to prove... God, please, enough! Ableism is so brutal. That is how people get rich by disabled people's poverty.

Insurance companies a perfect example. There is an event every year that travels the country showcasing the most modern accessible, gorgeous technologies, resources. The most dream come true shit for crips is shown at this exhibit with thousands of disabled people go. It is like the poor man in front of the toy store looking at stuff, looking at the wheelchair with gold frames (?) and colorful wheels. "How much is this?" While "how much insurance do you have? Without insurance it will be \$5000." That is a manual wheelchair.

Most people don't realize that disabled people, the things that we need are not fucking charity. If it is essential to someone's survival, then give it to them! That is where disability justice comes in.

I will become a little bit more specific on disability justice now because I just had to frame that. I had to frame where it comes from and why it happened. You know? A lot of times people don't understand. They think that working in disability justice, and in reality they are doing Disability Rights will stop if you're an organization like yourself, your Disability Rights, it is so important what you do! Our rights are still denied every day - of our lives. The rights of disabled people continue to be denied. The work that you do is so, so, so important! It is at the root of everything that we need to. So thank you for that. Thank you. Thank you for protecting our rights. Thank you for caring about disabled people. We need you!

Now, the fact that you are here says so much to someone like me. It says so much! It tells me that you care. That you are not just some person picking up the phone, you know, giving someone a phone number, a piece of paper... That is what caseworkers end up doing after they exhaust all resources, social workers, medical model professionals – they are guided by the medical model. They are guided by Ableism. They are guided by... God, so much ignorance. I am sorry to say.

The fact that we have people like yourselves doing what you do, fighting for us! It means so, so, so much. It does. And I want you to remember that. I want you to know that when you have compassion, that when you are there giving it your best and learning from other people, that is exactly what needs to happen. What you are doing today, being present for this talk, for this conversation, for this whatever you want to call it, training, workshop, whatever. Thank you for being present.

Disability justice is not just for (indiscernible) if you're living breathing flesh and bones you need disability justice. Why? Because everyone eventually will be disabled! When I say that, I kind of laughed because there was one time a while back when I was – I was doing a protest. It was Christmas time. At some store here in Houston they had removed several of the accessible parking spaces to put Christmas trees there for sale. Therefore, only left to accessible parking spaces. To us, it sent a message that disabled customers didn't matter. They could sacrifice giving us access to just cater to the nondisabled shopping for Christmas trees.

We organize a group of protesters to go there and I rewrote the lyrics to several Christmas songs. To make protest songs. We were sitting there Christmas caroling are anti-Ableism song. There was a dude shuffling behind us and moving the trees looking at us with real anger. He was being completely put off by our demands of access.

So anyway, as we were leaving I said "you know, dude. One day you will be disabled yourself." I said it like this will stop I didn't say "you will be disabled! It is a curse!" (Laughs) And he said "how can you say that to me? Do you realize what you are wishing upon me?" And I said "I am not pushing anything on you. I'm telling you the truth. The truth is that the disabled community is the only, the only minority in the world that anyone can join at any given moment and also, the only minority that everyone will join sooner or later." Some sooner than later, but it will happen.

When we talk about disability justice, a lot of people, a lot of nondisabled people... They tend to say and think "I don't work with disabled people, I don't need disability justice." Dude, if you're a human being. If you live, breathe, eat, and exist as you need disability justice. Therefore, this extends to all forms of life! This extends to animal form, plant form, and anything that has life deserves disability justice. Why? Because we deserve to exist. Because everything that has life has something amazing, unique, and purposeful to contribute to this world.

On that note, I want to go over that 10 principles of disability justice. If there is anyway... I had sent them to Diane... Bear with me, because the way my brain works is I have to have my phone and laptop connecting with you all and I have my phone as my resource. I will put it out. I should have had it ready.

10 principles of disability justice. About 20 years ago... Started talking about the same things we are talking about, how many people in the disabled movement were left behind. I say we because we have been part of Sins Invalid since 2007 - their very first show was in 2006 and I came in very shortly after they had bounced into the world. Without really knowing, I saw the most wonderful things happen, sometimes by pure accident you just kind of invent and create something - never doubt the power of just being you and doing your thing in the world.

Disability activist started talking about this and realize that there was something more that needed to be done to recognize the many holes and cracks that have been left in the movement. How many disabled people were falling through those cracks and still being invisible and not being given a platform or voice. It is absolutely wild to me as a disabled person, to think back and realize that in my lifetime, this level of oppression has existed and continues to exist.

I get confused and I want to shake myself awake into a different reality, when I realized the level of ableism that tortures disabled people every day. And people hear me talk about that and they think I'm talking about some Third World nation. Imagine that: I'm talking about the United States. Imagine how things will be outside the United States for all of the Crips outside of the world. I want to take everything into perspective.

Soulwing and I are part of this coalition that was formed because the needs of immigrants with disabilities were completely being ignored. There is so little out there for certain members, even in the disabled communities, that people keep falling through the cracks. In recognition of that, Disability Justice as a movement was born without even realizing that it would become what it became.

The conversations around Disability Justice were, "what is the world forgetting about with us?" When it was born, what are the most biggest enemies in the capitalist ones - I tend to just get carried away and talk from the heart. Thank you, you sent them to us. Soulwing, I just saw that. Where is it? Thank you, my love.

OK, let's see. 10 principles of Disability Justice. I sent this to Diane so after I'm done covering this, we can maybe put the link in the chat for you guys to have to access and to learn from. To continue - hold on, give me a second.

Sorry, I just yelled at everybody to shut up. Sorry, again. I love that it's 10 the Bulls like the 10 Commandments. Any time that we make a list, 10 this or 10 that - so 10 printable's of Disability Justice.

What I would like to do, I would like to go over these principles one by one and kind of take it all in one by one. And then slow down for a minute and take a collective deep breath, right? I know that what I'm talking about is a lot and I know that - yeah. After this discussion in my presentation on these principles, what we would like to do is open it up and take a collective deep breath and open it up for comments or questions. And then I will pass it onto Soulwing to do a back-and-forth conversation of anything that might come up as a discussion.

And then after that, I will share with you one of my -- pieces about self-care and being a disabled person.

(Multiple speakers)

MARIA PALACIOS:

I'm sorry. 10 principles of Disability Justice. It says, click here – bear with me. So the first one is intersectionality. We kind of touched upon that a little bit when we talked about the roots of the movement and how it forgot many people.

Intersectionality is so -- important because all of us are not just one thing but when we are disabled we tend to only be seen as one thing: our disability and what it tends to be seen as. In the disability rights movement for example, the lack of intersectionality is what has led us to leave queer people out or Brown people out, or immigrants out, people of certain cultures out because the reasoning behind it is that while we are focusing on Disability Rights - meaning that everybody will get a ramp or access to this building. You know?

But in reality it has not been that way because not everybody is represented, only through our disabilities, intersectionality is externally important because it gives us the opportunity to see other aspects of our humanity. You know? Yes, disability is a very important part of who we are but when we allowed intersectionality to be part of the space, it lets us grow and see other things about people that otherwise we might not see because we are so focused only on that one part of things.

Audrey Lord said that none of us live just single issue lives, so let's think about that: nobody is just Black or queer. No person is just disabled and nothing else. Nobody is just a woman. There are so many intersections to our intersections, to our intersections, that I like to imagine it like the roots of a tree or branches - I love nature and plants. Imagine that, our ability to expand and grow different aspects of ourselves.

I apologize, I have a fly going around in my air conditioner broke. If you see one staring you in the face, it's not me (Laughs).

So yes, intersectionality, we have to be open-minded to the various intersections of life because when we are able to do that, then we are also able to offer the best aspects of ourselves! Diversity is beautiful - can you turn the fan on please? So yes, intersectionality is something that allows us to see culture, diversity, uniqueness at the same time as the many colors of who we are, the many flavors, languages and ways of communicating. The many kinds of disabled people that are part of the map but yet we are erased from that map.

When we open up our minds and our spaces to intersection, beautiful things can happen. That was intersectionality. Number two is leadership of those most impacted. I don't really think that I need to go too much into detail about this because it speaks for itself but let me put it this way: if there are spaces for disabled people, or I should say meant for disabled people but led by nondisabled folks, it's not that

we are being ungrateful. We thank you for the effort.

We thank you for the effort but we want to see ourselves reflected in the services provided. We want to see ourselves represented in the stories. We want to see ourselves as the ones sharing from the experience of our lives. We want the narrative of our disabled lives to be accurate. To be shared in the voices of disabled people. We deserve that! We deserve that.

Leadership of the most impacted - there is nothing more powerful. There is nothing more powerful than seeing people like yourselves being leaders because that gives you permission to see yourself as one as well. To know that people like yourself are there - that is so, so powerful and so valuable, and so often denied to us.

As a disabled person, I tend to be overly suspicious now. Overly suspicious of events or organizations that are meant for disabled people but not led by disabled people. Ableism tends to be driving that wheel more often than not, even with the best of intentions. If the efforts being led by your organization, by your event, or whatever you are doing for disabled people, are not putting disabled people in leadership positions then this is not Disability Justice. It's barely Disability Rights.

And notice that I said it like that. You know, there are too many disabled people out there for us to continue having nondisabled spaces led by nondisabled people for disabled people. The nondisabled world wants to make people believe that there are not disabled qualified applicants for this job or the other. The truth is it is keeping organizations, entities, programs and opportunities from really offering that space to disabled people.

You know, it's very sad - ableism is so real and oppressive. I will give another example on how it oppresses us. As wonderful as disability justice is, and as amazing as Sins Invalid is as creating that opportunity, I will give you an example at how ableism can traumatize disabled people so much - even in the spaces that are led by disabled people.

Last year, we were interviewing for a position to hire a Disability Justice trainer, which we ended up hiring somebody but at that time we had this one applicant that we really loved and he was Deaf. When we talk about diversity, leadership of the most impacted, Deaf people are among the most oppressed when it comes to employment. Deaf and blind communities are the most difficult to find work and ableism is so brutal. I'm probably bleeding into other areas of the 10 principles but that's OK.

Anyway, we wanted to hire this dude who was amazing. He had all the experience and we wanted him! He was Spanish, English and death. And bilingual in English and Spanish ASL. We wanted him so much. We interviewed him and he passed with flying colors. We scheduled an on boarding welcome to the staff and then a few days into when he was supposed to start, we started sending him the schedules and regular on boarding stuff, we got this email saying that because of ableism and out-ism, that he had suffered in his previous job. And even though the previous job was not necessarily a disability justice-based and he understood that --Sins would be different, the trauma that he had experienced, the performance expectations had traumatized him so much that his fear of failure - and I feel like fucking crying realizing how many disabled people out there deny themselves the opportunity

when there is one, but also denied the opportunity because of ableism.

The level of oppression is so much that it's traumatizing when given the opportunity and it broke our hearts! The reasons why he turned down the job. You know? All of us wanted to reassure him and tell him, you know, but we couldn't because we had to respect the choices of each person.

But yes, that's the level of ableism that oppresses us. That is how painful it is, how painful. When we say "we looked and we didn't find them.." It's hard for disabled people because the opportunities are not given to them enough or they haven't had the chance to really hone their skills, or polish up whatever talents they had, and therefore they become, they get deemed nonmaterial friendly interview or whatever. Ableism is so brutal!

Leadership of the most impacted. Leadership of the most impacted! Repeat that your heads over, and over and over. We want allies. We want allies that are so much allies that they get intertwined, intermingled and confused with each other! We want allies that are so much our allies that we no longer know who is disabled and who is not. Who is queer and who is not. Who is Brown and who is not. That is what an ally looks like. When you're able to navigate the space "you care so much about is that we no longer give a shit whether you're disabled or not. You are our ally." Leadership is the most impacted needs that you learn from disabled people.

You don't come in your disabled spaces with your three-piece suit and nondisabled wisdom and tell us how to live. We are the only ones existing in our disabled bodies. I will say that again, we are the only ones existing in our disabled bodies! It is so part of me now that I would not be surprised if I repeat that later through the piece that I am going to share with you.

So, leadership of the most impacted. Number three: anticapitalism. Nature of the beast! Makes us automatically have to fight capitalism, because capitalism will throw us away. Capitalism says that we are not worthy. Capitalism says that our broken bodies, our broken lives are too broken to be productive. Capitalism says that we have nothing to contribute. Capitalism says we are worthless! Therefore, just that the pure nature of the beast, disability justice and disability justice spaces have to be anti-capitalist. We have to, otherwise we do not survive.

Fighting capitalism also means fighting the medical model and the medical industrial complex. It also means teaching, teaching the world how crip productivity works and I have beautiful examples to share about this.

For example, our director Patty Byrne is a disabled person who is significantly disabled. Patty operates 95% of the time from her bed. Yes! And she puts amazing shows together. She manages a national organization. She moves mountains. We all do! The fact that we do it from our wheelchairs, the toilet, the potty chair, from the bed, from whatever space is allowed to us! Make no mistake, disabled people are working hard for our survival. Every day of our lives. And every day of our lives we have to fight capitalism because if we don't fight it, then we will drown! Or get devoured by Starks – capitalist sharks at that. Capitalist sharks will bite you and eat you and then ask if you have leftovers to share. Imagine that. Right?

Anti-capitalism is definitely part of disability justice. We fight capitalism by creating spaces that understand our access needs. We fight capitalism by speaking up about who we are, by not accepting less than what we deserve. We fight capitalism by showing that productivity looks like from our crip spaces and offering realistic access. You know? Before COVID happen, for anybody but especially a disabled person – to request an accommodation of working from home on Zoom or doing something virtual, it was looked at is if we were asking for the moon and the stars. "I want (indiscernible) water to." Guess what? In this particular hell, we get our water (Laughs).

Before COVID happens, this was only certain privileged groups – only the CEOs like "I will be sipping on my coffee from work while the workers at the office are busting their ass." That is capitalism for you, baby. That is capitalism. When we fight capitalism, we are teaching people that disabled people don't necessarily have the same 24 hours in the day that nondisabled people have. Because at least half of that time is occupied by making sure that our bodies are getting, I able to function and survive.

To give you an example and I know that we know this. I know we knew this because we see this all the time in our own lives and the lives of other disabled people. We see how difficult it is. I always use the example, I live in Houston which is geographically huge. To get from point A to point B, doing it without transportation is almost impossible. Even with transportation it takes a long ass time to get from point A to point B. What happens if you are disabled and the transportation is public transportation? Not only public transportation, share – it gets you there whenever you get there get you back when you get back this up that's a reality you have to live with.

Capitalism does not give us room to do things the regular way, because half of that time has to be spent making sure that we have everything that we need – just to make it to the damn door. OK? No, it is not true. There is a huge difference between equity and equality. Inequality gives everybody the same damn thing, but the same thing doesn't always work because our needs are always different. We are all unique!

Cross movement solidarity, as you notice, will be talking about these things. As we go on, everything is interconnected. Everything, everything, all of these principles are connected. All of them! I was like the metaphor of the hands, because it is such a beautiful metaphor – hands are gorgeous and important. Even though they are all different, you know, and even though people – not everybody has hands, but the metaphor of the hands, the metaphor of the keyboard or any kind of keyboard, we need each other to function. If you type in a keyboard, if one key doesn't work, the rest of the keyboard will be affected. You know? We need each other.

Cross disability organizing and cross disability friendships are so important and so beautiful! So beautiful! I am so proud to say that I am one of those disabled people who has disabled friends of all kinds. All kinds of disabilities – blind, deaf, CP, cognitive disabilities, autism, nonvisible disabilities... You name it and I can be your friend. Not just a friend like Trump (?), not like that. A friend that I can call at midnight. A friend that I can borrow sugar from. A friend that I love.

Cross disability means cross disability! It means that we find ways to coexist, to save each other. One of my favorite stories is about cross disabilities. Matt Frazier, you've heard about Matt Frazier?

cofounder. Matt and I, I am in the wheelchair and my stall with arms that are short. We were in the elevator and as the door shuts, he goes "we think we are not getting stuck in the elevator because you and I would be really, really, really poor evacuation buddies. With my short arms, how would I reach up there to help you? And what we start talking about how this cross disability collaboration would look like from the two of us – a woman in a wheelchair with a tall guy with short arms. How would we help each other in the event that some emergency? We would have to evacuate and climb something, that was a fun conversation imagining what cross disability collaboration would look like.

As impossible as it may seem, crips make things happen. They say that necessity is the mother of invention and it is true. Cross disability collaboration from disability justice lens looks like something like that. It looks like inventing, reimagining, creating, making things happen, making crip hacks happen.

I want to move forward with the principles because I think I am dragging too much. Hold on. It is Diane's fault because Diane said we have time. Don't tell Maria that I have time because I will never stop.

The were things we are broken but we define wholeness, completely. As something absolutely different than our... Our physical or other kind of brokenness that the world sees as broken is our wholeness. We redefine what "whole" means, baby. Wholeness is part... Wholeness also involves not just us and our personal whole spaces, it involves the wholeness of us, collectively. You know?

Sustainability. I love sustainability because it is such an important part of disability justice and it is one of the things that Disability Rights is not. Because yes, you are fighting – we are fighting for rights in general, but after the ramp was built and after that, it sustained us in a disparate way. It doesn't necessarily keep people together. Disability justice. The way that I like to elaborate on sustainability and I know that many of you already know the story of Stone soup. Even if you know what, it is worth hearing again.

When you are disabled, we find ways of making stone soup. Anyway, stone soup is the story of the soldier who gets back home after the war and finds his community completely frightened, impoverished, hungry and hiding. He goes home to an empty place with absolutely nothing to eat and when he can rely on.

He goes out and starts knocking on doors in his neighborhood and starts asking and people are like "no, dude. I barely have anything for myself. I can't help you." It tends to be the mentality a lot.

What he did is he started a fire in the middle of his community and put a huge cauldron with water and picked up a few stones from the road and he started boiling them. People relate "what is he making?" Curiosity killed the cat, you know (Laughs). People started going up and asking what are you doing?" And he would say "I am making stone soup. It is delicious." You have no idea if you've never - tasted stone soup." He said "it would taste way better if I had a potato. Long story short, everybody started bringing what they had. Someone had an onion, someone had a piece of me, someone had a court...

Long story short, they had a huge cauldron with the community, not just the one soldier. Sustainability for disabled people is that. It is knowing that we have to pass on our experiences and resources and our love for one another. We have to share. We have to share what we know. We have to share their resources. We have to sustain one another through crip love. The nondisabled world is so ready to get rid of us that we tend to internalize the hatred and really feel that we deserve to be left behind, but we don't. We don't.

This is especially true for the communities that are most marginalized. When we deal with disabled immigrants, for example – let's remember how oppressed these people have been. Let's remember that it takes a little bit of an extra onion or an extra potato to feed our communities.

Also, let's remember that even when we think that we have nothing, we always have something. There is always something that we can do or give. I do not like hearing people say "somebody else needs to do that because I can't." Maybe that is true. Maybe you cannot do that one thing, but let's focus on the one thing we can do.

Let me promise you and I guarantee that one thing you can do is interconnected to other things - that you can't do. Chances are, that if we put our needs out there and if we voice our survival, other disabled people will know and they also will know that they deserve to survive and that is what sustainability is about.

It's not just about financial resources. Yes, money moves mountains and makes anybody talk and dance. Disabled people have been so oppressed that even money cannot do something, money cannot teach compassion and solidarity to truly be there for one another.

When we think of sustainability, let's think about sustainability in an extra, extra, extra way. Let's think in terms of being able to give that one thing we can give. To do that one thing we can do. As we can. Because we must. Cross-disability solidarity... Interdependence, I love that. I'm a product of the movement, like I said. Independence has its values, especially to disabled people because it has been so much denied to us. We have been denied the ability to go out there on our own and to live by ourselves. We get treated like children and it's part of the oppression.

So interdependence allows us to recognize that needing each other is not a weakness. It is a strength because when we need each other, we recognize our value. I'm needed and therefore I have value. Don't forget that! Having needs is human. We are not a burden - no human being, no life is ever a burden, ever. Ever! And I have tears burning in my eyes when I say those words because God, ableism is so brutal. It teaches people we are burdens and we are not.

So yeah, interdependence is our power. Interdependence is our superpower because we need each other to survive. Because we need each other we develop programs and move forward. It is very powerful.

Collective access - I think by now you are beginning to realize how everything is really connected. You see how all these things come together and how they are really come together? This is not just some

10 random things that we put on a piece of paper. These are the things that connect us to each other. These are the things that will save our lives! These are the things that will allow you, the people helping other disabled people to truly help disabled people without ableism. And that's what Disability Justice is.

We keep fighting ableism through everything that we do. Interdependence is our crip superpower. We do everything through interdependence. It's not a weakness, needing each other is how we stay alive.

Collective access, yes. Collective access is again connected to having access everything that we need without having to explain our need or justified our needs. Collective access means all those things that we already discussed: solidarity, interdependence - it means that we are actually able to open the door with the keys we have been given to each other. You know? There are so many ways to gain collective access. It is so important!

In all of this leads to collective liberation because we have to move together. We have to move together! Disability Justice says we cannot leave people behind. I know we are not perfect and we are still learning. Disability Justice is very new, even in disabled spaces, you know 20 years is nothing. Just think about the ADA going on 34, however long it's been and people still act like, "Americans With Disabilities Act." So 20 years am a not even 20 years of Disability Justice being the framework for this movement.

We are still building and adding walls. We are still adding windows and connecting hallways through each other. The beauty of this is that we have the ability to develop this together, to co-create and exist and really love one another! People think that I'm just preaching about love all the time but if you grew up thinking you were unlovable, you grew up thinking that your body was something to be dreaded and feared, and not touched - when you grew up and you exist in spaces that negate you the opportunity to access love, then love becomes the dam key to everything.

I say this with all my heart: I love disabled people so damn much because I see myself in them. I see myself and all of you! Disabled people are resilient and strong, and funny, and survivors - I always laugh and say whenever shit hits the fan, people in positions of power, the people who struggle the most are those that have no clue what to do. They don't know who to lean on. Those of us who have been poor and struggle, those of us who have been oppressed and had to fight for survival, we know what the fuck to do. Even we have to take a machete and cut everything down - we know how to use a machete! The privileged people have no clue what to do and that is our power.

And make no mistake, that when you work with people who have been oppressed, the nondisabled world and people who have no idea, they who believe that we have nothing to give, that believe that we are so weak and incapable - damn! Man, all we have to do is infiltrate the space a little bit and get to know that - Soulwing can tell you in the meetings that we attend that there so much laughter and joy. We laughed about shit, about ableism and its face. I love her so much and a lot of times we laugh and say, "man, the view is beautiful from here." She will say shit like that, you know? That's just language. Life is beautiful even when you are disabled.

Life is so worth it! And we have got to stop throwing each other away. That was the 10 principles of Disability Justice. I know it's a lot and I probably have dry mouth now. I'm getting ready to alleviate that cottonmouth from talking so damn much. I will meet my cell for a minute or two and I want us to take a collective breath and to just come together for a second in this energy of acceptance. In this energy of crip love and sustainability. Liberation. And all the things that make us move forward together.

We are worthy! We are worthy of love and so much. -- Breathe in and let's exhale all of the ableism and open our minds to Disability Justice. Seeing it for just what it is: the beauty, the power, the strength, the magnificence, the love, the resource, the resilience - we are all that and more.

Collectively, one last deep breath. And do whatever you need to do to take care of yourself. To love yourself, to give yourself permission to learn with others. I am so grateful for each and every one of you. I am so grateful for this space. We are badassess, baby. Now I will --unmute myself and open the space for questions. Feel free to put them in the chat or raise your hand.

Unfortunately, I have -- difficulties seeing the chat. Soulwing, feel free to jump in at any time. We know that I'm the talker of the two but she can talk as well.

DIANE HOWARD:

I will read anything that comes into the chat.

THO VINH BANH:

Maria and I and other staff are in the space that work with intersectional, undocumented, Spanish-speaking majority blind, low vision. So I invite everyone who's here to look in your own work and what you are doing to see if there's creation of spaces where there is collaboration with communities.

So not outreach like you need to meet numbers and you check it off the list - you've got a come, I don't know if you can come with as much love as Maria does but you have to come with love for that particular -- community, none of that rescuing dynamic comes into play.

The meetings are in Spanish with English interpreters and so centering disability and language, and access. Looking at your own budget, are there budgets for interpretation. If there is not, really think about that.

The other thing I wanted to share is, back to what Maria was sharing, that we have to be mindful that the -- barriers are never on the community. If it's never - it's never they don't speak Spanish, it's that you don't speak Spanish. It's never that they don't speak, it's that we did not provide ASL interpreters. A reminder to shift the narrative that we are the ones that were provided the money and resources to do the things that we are doing, so that anytime there is a barrier, it is not on the community and it is on us.

I know that Diane, we will leave a little bit of time to share but the community as a practice for those who work with refugees, so we will open it up to ask questions but I don't one a leave out Diane to also share that.

MARIA PALACIOS:

The whole time I thought it was muted, sorry.

SPEAKER:

Hi, this is Maren speaking. I am from California. I was curious and wanted to ask the question for Maria: so in Washington state, you know they adopted the 10 principles for Disability Justice and the one issue that we have, well I will say that one of the issues because there are a few, one that we are right now facing is trying to figure out - within the policies, it says, talking about the state organizations, how they are not able to actually adopt and support Disability Justice principles. And because, for example for our limited funding and limitations, you know, we have the grant limitations from federal and state levels - there so many different requirements.

We are kind of facing that right now and trying to balance the things that we really cherish and disability justice but also things within the grant limitations that we are facing. I'm curious if you have any help or advice that you would be able to give us from your experience? From your really beautiful and very deep experience?

MARIA PALACIOS:

Thank you so much. I just want to remind everyone that we are still learning and this is not by any stretch of the imagination, a final draft, even though the 10 principles do appear like the 10 Commandments, so to speak. There's always room for growth and the most important part I guess, how to answer the question is that there is no formula.

We are figuring things out as we go. Literally, as we go. You know? One of the criticisms of Disability Justice, for example I believe, even though we talk about intersectionality and that there are certain groups, that for example people with cognitive disabilities are not represented and were still moving forward.

I'm curious with your question - I'm sorry to answer with another question. Can you give me specifics on when you say that there are parts that are not sustainable to practice Disability Justice I am a having a hard time putting in my head what she key people from organizations. What aspects from the disability justice are the ones that you are struggling to practice – if you don't mind me asking.

SPEAKER:

Of course. So, you know, let me think... Our grants, our purposes, those have been...

MARIA PALACIOS:

I get it. I get it. OK, OK OK. Sorry about that. Yes, it is so very hard. Yes, and that has been the battle and continues to be. For example and I think I can be specific in some of the things.

A lot of organizations receive funding from places that do not – literally do not allow them to serve undocumented immigrants, for example. That is kind of tying one hand behind your back because even if you wanted to, you are restricted from that kind of funding. Therefore, you are not able to really

forcefully practice disability justice.

I don't have the answers myself because I am not a numbers person, first of all, but I know their ways of thinking creatively – really, there are ways of thinking creatively. I am not sure, maybe you can jump in and help me.

For example, the coalition, we have members of the coalition who were compensated for part of what they do – like the advocacy they do, the participation of the coalition and they are undocumented (?) and we are able to go around without breaking the law and finding ways of compensating people, of making sure we don't leave them behind.

For example, 1 Creative Way of doing this instead of money and checks that require (indiscernible), we offer gift cards. It is finding creative ways of accounting for the things that we are not able to do. So it takes a lot of creativity. It takes love, again. I am not saying that it is easy, but again, we have to invent things as we go. We have to figure out ways in which we can include people, and it is so, so hard, it is so very hard and the funding restriction BS...

I am a board member for an organization here in Houston that does wonderful work for survivors of spinal cord injuries and stuff. Over the years, they've got a lot of new funding, but some of the funding is restricted because it comes from a religious sources and therefore, they have had to turn down funding in cases.

Another thing that we do often that harms us financially is that we turn down funding that does not aligned with our beliefs. By accepting funding that is homophobic, racist or ableist, then we are tying our own hands behind our back. You know? Thinking creatively also means finding other funding sources and kind of taking bigger risks. It takes creative thinking. It takes creative financing. It takes knocking on extra doors and it also takes standing up for other people. Standing up for other people and having the courage to say "OK. We will lose this funding over here," you know what? Another example that I can give you. This is been such a great conversation!

Another example I can give you this issue specifically, until three years ago... Women (?) did not speak Spanish. It wasn't until 2020 and we had a show, I personally dedicated my piece of the show to the group here in Houston which is a group of undocumented disabled immigrants. I had said and even on the credits after the show, I said "part of the show is dedicated to our friends from living hope and undocumented lives..." After the show we were doing they debrief and I said "you know what? I loved the show. I love the theme. I love what we were doing, but I really hurt me was to not be able to share my pieces and my dedication to the people I dedicated to because they don't speaking was. There's no reason why we couldn't do our work also in Spanish."

Ever since then, Sid said "we hear you, Maria." And since that moment, Patty and the group, I wasn't on staff yet. I started my stop position in October 2021 even though I was with them since 2007 as a performer. When I brought this up to their attention, it's not like they were like "oh yeah..." They heard me and they immediately went into language, justice specialists and we started interpreting and translating all of our material. Our whole new level of commitment. It takes us wanting to reach a whole

When we think of institutions that contain disabled people, a lot of times we tend to forget that institutions are not just jails. You know? Nursing homes, rehab centers, facilities... Any places that contains people are pretty much Prisons, imprisonment. You don't have to be sentenced by Judge to be serving time in doing time because of Ableism and oppression.

Am I imagining or do we only have five minutes?

(Multiple speakers)

MARIA PALACIOS:

Oh, my god!

THO VINH BANH:

I think we should invite Diane to speak a little bit of that community.

DIANA SMITH HOWARD:

I will jump in here and do that but before I start that piece, just want to make sure before we run out of time that everybody jumps off the line to say thank you to both Maria and Tho Vinh Banh. This is been a great conversation I most excited to think of it as the first of many.

MARIA PALACIOS:

Thank you!

DIANA SMITH HOWARD:

Super quickly. Once a month we have a community of practice meeting for PNA network members and our affiliates were doing...

(Multiple speakers)

SPEAKER:

Excuse me. My audio was not connected, but can I ask a question or make a comment?

DIANA SMITH HOWARD:

Please, go ahead and I will put the community practice stuff in the chat. Go ahead, Shawn.

SPEAKER:

Good. So, how I always say - you hear it on the air, how can we call this a great nation but yet, we don't (indiscernible) those that have the disabilities. By right, being disabled is a constitutional right. So, how do you think that we can push that disability agenda forward?

MARIA PALACIOS:

By doing what we are doing. By continuing to do the work. Keep speaking up and being visible, even when we get pushed aside and denied the spaces. We forge ourselves and force ourselves. We continue opening the doors like a shot on our faces! So, yes, we do everything that we are already

Feel free to invite us again. We will fuel your ear again no problem.

DIANA SMITH HOWARD:

Take care, everybody. Bye.

(End of Webinar)

Live Captioning by Ai-Media